Your FREE essential entertainment guide for the Midlands

COMEDIAN SINDHU VEE VISITS BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL



Birmingham

What's On

ISSUE 478 NOVEMBER 2026

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inside:

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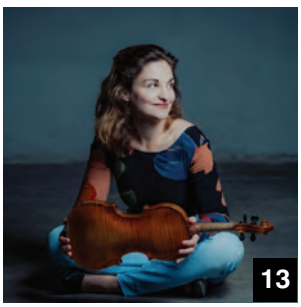
What's On

November 2026

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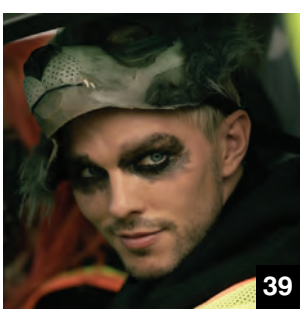


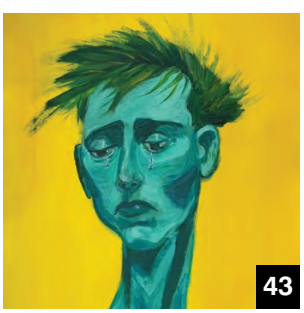














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What's On MEDIA GROUP

Managing Director: **Davina Evans** davina@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281708
Sales & Marketing: hello@whatsonlive.co.uk
Editorial: **Lauren Foster** lauren@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281707 : **Brian O'Faolain** brian@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281701 : **Abi Whitehouse** abi@whatsonlive.co.uk : **Jessica Clixby** jessica@whatsonlive.co.uk Subscriptions: subscriptions@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281714
Contributors: Graham Bostock, Diane Parkes, Patsy Moss, Steve Adams, Sue Hull, Reggie White, Sue Jones, Chris Eldon Lee, Rachel Smith
Publisher and CEO: **Martin Monahan** Accounts Administrator: **Louise Hunter** louise@21stcd.com 01743 281717

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More Mrs Doubtfire...



The hit stage-musical version of much-loved Robin Williams film Mrs Doubtfire will return to the region next autumn, showing at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Friday 1 to Sunday 17 October. To find out more and book your tickets, visit grandtheatre.co.uk

The Rep wins big with Demon Barber musical



Birmingham Repertory Theatre's critically acclaimed production of Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street has been named Best Musical Production at this year's UK Theatre Awards.
The hit show - which was helmed by the Rep's artistic director, Joe Murphy, and starred musical-theatre favourites Ramin Karimloo, Meow Meow and David Bedella - ran at the venue back in the summer and took nearly £1.4million at the box office. Congratulations to all concerned on a truly magnificent achievement!

Cultural network shines a light on Midlands festivals



A major new initiative is showcasing the transformative power of light art, culture and creativity across the West Midlands this autumn and winter.
Funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Illuminate The Midlands is a network of light art festivals which includes events taking place in Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and Worcester.
After delivering festivals independently for several years, partners have come together to work collaboratively in sharing expertise, supporting cultural development and strengthening the region's reputation for high-quality light-based events.
Included in the network are Worcester's Bridges Of Light - which took place late last month - Birmingham Light Festival and Stoke-on-Trent's Light Up Winter, both of which will be held early next year.

The Fellowship Of The Ring film - in concert



A concert celebrating the 25th anniversary of Academy Award-winning film The Lord Of The Rings: The Fellowship Of The Ring is coming to the Midlands next month.
The sure-to-be-popular event, which will see Howard Shore's original score performed live to a screening of the epic movie, shows twice at Birmingham's bp pulse LIVE venue on Saturday 19 December - once at 11.30am and then again at 5.30pm. For more information and tickets, visit myticket.gigantic.com

Wartime ambulance tales told at the Institute

Birmingham & Midland Institute is hosting a mid-month lunchtime talk about four West Midlanders who served with field ambulances in the Far East during World War Two. Tickets for the Monday 16 November event are available at eventbrite.co.uk

BOA to present Dickens' classic Christmas story



Birmingham's BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy and BOA Creative, Digital & Performing Arts Academy are coming together this festive season to present a new production of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. The production runs at BOA Theatre from Monday 30 November to Tuesday 15 December. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit ticketsource.com/boa

Jo Bannon brings new solo show to the city



Performance artist Jo Bannon brings her new show The Dirty Work to the second city this month (Birmingham Hippodrome, Saturday 7 November). A disabled woman with albinism, Jo will be inviting her audience 'to glimpse a world where truth and illusion, performance and reality converge'.
To find out more and purchase tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

New home show in Brum

The first-ever Ideal Home Show Birmingham will bring 'more than 100 years of home inspiration, innovation and shopping' to the West Midlands next summer.
Running at the NEC from Thursday 10 to Sunday 13 June, the event will include talks, demonstrations, hands-on creative workshops and a line-up of independent retailers. For more information and tickets, visit idealhomeshowbirmingham.co.uk

Emmerdale actor to star in Singin' In The Rain



Emmerdale actor Natalie Anderson will play the role of Lina Lamont in a new touring production of hit musical Singin' In The Rain when it visits Birmingham Hippodrome next spring (Tuesday 11 - Saturday 15 May). To find out more about the show and purchase tickets, head to birminghamhippodrome.com

Plans submitted for new Birmingham venue



Plans have been submitted to open a Museum Of Illusions venue in Birmingham.
If approved, the global chain will open at The Pavilions on High Street.
Commenting on the news, a spokesperson said: "Museum Of Illusions Birmingham will be an interactive and family-friendly edutainment attraction offering visual and sensory experiences built around illusions, perception and basic scientific principles. Visitors will move freely through a series of immersive rooms, installations and framed illusions, engaging with exhibits at their own pace."

Erasure on tour...

Synth-pop duo Erasure will head to Birmingham with their Radio!! Radio!! tour next spring, playing the city's Utilita Arena on Friday 30 April.
For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at utilitaarenabham.co.uk

Christmas concert with Karl Jenkins

A concert conducted by acclaimed composer Sir Karl Jenkins is among the festive-season treats on offer at Birmingham's Symphony Hall next month.
Taking place at the venue on Sunday 20 December, Christmas With Sir Karl Jenkins features a programme of timeless seasonal favourites presented alongside some of Sir Karl's most celebrated music, including Benedictus from The Armed Man.
To check out Symphony Hall's full line-up of Christmas concerts, visit bmusic.co.uk



Midlands date for Bianca Del Rio

Drag comedy icon Bianca Del Rio will make a stop-off at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra on Thursday 1 April 2027 with her brand-new stand-up show, It Gets Bitter.
For more information and to book tickets, visit the website at myticket.co.uk





Strictly Live to kickstart arena tour at Birmingham venue

The Strictly Come Dancing Live arena tour is once again hitting the road in the new year - and as usual will be launching with three nights in Birmingham.
Judges Shirley Ballas, Anton Du Beke and Craig Revel Horwood will join presenter Janette Manrara and a new line-up of celebrities and professionals when the show kicks off its tour at the city's Utilita Arena from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 January.
For further information and to book tickets, visit the website at StrictlyComeDancingLive.com



Totally Tom

Comedian Tom Allen is bringing his new show Totally to the Midlands in 2028.
Tom will visit Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre on Thursday 6 January, Birmingham Hippodrome on Saturday 5 February, the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday 6 February and Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre on Saturday 20 May. For further information and to book tickets, visit the website of the relevant theatre.

Polka Dot Pantomimes bring Beauty And The Beast to The Old Rep

Birmingham theatre The Old Rep will this Christmas play host to its first-ever professional panto when the award-winning Polka Dot Pantomimes present their production of Beauty And The Beast at the venue.
Commenting on the show, which runs at the theatre from Saturday 21 November to New Year's Eve, Polka Dot's creative director, Darren Maddison, said: "Beauty And The Beast promises to have all the usual ingredients of a perfect panto, including stunning scenery, dazzling costumes, lots of audience participation and an amazing professional cast! We can't wait for you to join us!" To book tickets, head to the website oldrep.co.uk

Unplugged Live at the Hippodrome...



Birmingham Hippodrome is hosting a relaxed evening of acoustic performances, original compositions and works in progress in the middle of the month (Saturday 14 November). Bringing together emerging and established musicians, singers and songwriters, Unplugged Live features contributions from rising artists Karima Jannat, Saazib and Ayon Paul. Renowned singer Dr Imtiaz Ahmed 'and friends' will perform music from their Tagore And The West project. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

Grants made available to Birmingham charities

Charities and good causes across Birmingham are being invited to apply for a share of £15,000 to help continue or support their work in the community.
The money is being made available by cashback fundraising platform Easyfundraising, which has opened applications for grant funding for a second time this year through its Impact Fund initiative. Organisations have until Sunday 8 November to submit an application via easyfundraising.org.uk/impact-fund

Three-day festival set to celebrate William Morris

A three-day festival celebrating the life, work, ideas and continuing influence of textile designer William Morris takes place at Birmingham & Midland Institute from Friday 20 to Sunday 22 November.
To find out more about MorrisFest 2026, visit the website at williammorrissociety.org

Dance artist Vidya Patel back in her home city

Dance artist Vidya Patel is returning to her home city of Birmingham to host an evening of dance, music and creative exchange. Presented in partnership with Sampad South Asian Arts & Heritage, An Evening With Vidya Patel shows at Birmingham Repertory Theatre on Saturday 21 November. For further information and to book your tickets, visit birmingham-rep.co.uk

Saturday afternoon Bottomless Brunch fun...



If you've got a birthday or hen party to plan, or maybe just a long-overdue get-together with friends, Resorts World Birmingham's High Line Bar & Lounge - situated inside the venue's Genting Casino - is now offering a Bottomless Brunch experience.
Running on Saturday afternoons between midday and 6pm, the initiative provides visitors with the chance to enjoy '90 minutes of selected bottomless drinks paired with a delicious brunch dish'. To find out more, visit resortsworldbirmingham.co.uk - but do bear in mind that High Line is located within the casino, meaning all guests must be aged 18 or over.



Two world premieres in RSC's new season of shows

A stage adaptation of the Virginia Woolf novel Mrs Dalloway is one of two world premieres being presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in the spring and summer next year.
Joining the production in the RSC's Stratford-upon-Avon line-up of shows are four Shakespeare plays (Coriolanus, Richard II, Romeo And Juliet and The Comedy Of Errors) and a second world premiere, Piranesi, based on Susanna Clarke's 2020 novel of the same name. The programme also features Born With Teeth, a two-hander reimagining the relationship between Shakespeare and fellow Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe.
To find out more about the line-up of shows, visit the Company's website at rsc.org.uk

Free backstage tours at BOA Stage and Screen

Young people aged between 14 and 17 are being invited to explore their creative potential at a series of free Backstage Workshops hosted by Birmingham's BOA Stage & Screen on Saturday 14 November.
The workshops offer an opportunity for aspiring performers, filmmakers and backstage creatives to gain practical experience across a range of disciplines, including screen acting, filmmaking, lighting & sound, SFX make-up, and theatre crafts... For further information, visit the website at boa-stageandscreen.co.uk



A Town Hall Christmas visit from The Snowman

Birmingham Town Hall is hosting a screening of the classic 1982 film The Snowman on Sunday 20 December.
The much-loved animation, based on Raymond Briggs' 1978 book of the same name, will be shown alongside a professional orchestra playing its soundtrack. The show will also include a short Christmas film featuring Shaun the Sheep, the soundtrack of which will also be performed live. For more information and to purchase your tickets, visit bmusic.co.uk

Andrea Bocelli to bring anniversary tour to Brum



Andrea Bocelli will next autumn perform at Birmingham's Utilita Arena in celebration of the 30th anniversary of his breakthrough album, Romanza.
Further information about his Wednesday 29 September concert is available at utilitaarenabham.co.uk, where you can also purchase your tickets.

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Town Hall & Symphony Hall

NOVEMBER

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Sholay in Concert
01.11 | Symphony Hall

MOZART | WILLIAMS | DVOŘÁK



Flanders Symphony Orchestra: from England to Bohemia
05.11 | Symphony Hall

STAR LINEUP | TRIBUTE | CELEBRATION



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The Dinosaur That Pooped A Rock Show
08.11 | Town Hall

STORIES | Q&A | BEHIND THE SCENES



A Shameless Night: An Evening with the Cast of Shameless
08.11 | Town Hall



Smashed Avocado & Garlic Mushrooms on Toast | B:Eats at Symphony Hall:
11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show

SWING | CHARM | FESTIVE



Tony Hadley: The Christmas Big Band Tour
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20 & 21.11 | Symphony Hall

BERNSTEIN | MAHLER | SEASON HIGHLIGHT



Marin Alsop conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra
22.11 | Symphony Hall

REQUESTS VIA PAPER AIRPLANE!



Ben Folds Paper Airplane Request Tour
24.11 | Symphony Hall

FILM | LIVE MUSIC | FESTIVE



The Holiday in Concert: Film with Orchestra
28.11 & 10.12 | Symphony Hall

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A SPARKLING SEASON AWAITS



Mon 2 – Sat 21 Nov
AD Thu 12 Nov 7.30pm, **CAP** Thu 19 Nov 7.30pm



Mon 23 Nov



Wed 25 Nov



Wed 9 Dec



Mon 14 Dec – Sat 2 Jan
CAP Sat 2 Dec 2.30pm



Tue 5 – Sat 9 Jan
CAP Thu 7 Jan 7.30pm



Tue 12 – Sat 16 Jan
Sat 16 Jan 2.30pm



Tue 19 – Sat 23 Jan
Thu 21 Jan 7.30pm



Tue 16 – Sat 20 Feb
AD Sat 20 Feb 2.30pm

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By Rosi Byard-Jones

COMIC STRIP TEASE

Launched in 1982 - on the very first night Channel Four started broadcasting to the nation - The Comic Strip Presents... brought alternative comedy to the masses. As part of the annual Square Eyes TV Festival - a mouthwatering mix of archive rarities, classic series and recent favourites - MAC Cinema will host a special event with Comic Strip writer/director/godfather Peter Richardson and impressionist Phil Cornwell. What's On spoke to Peter (pictured with Adrian Edmondson below) about how it all began...

How did The Comic Strip Presents... begin back in the 1980s?

Well, The Comic Strip started as a club in Soho, which I opened in the Raymond Revue Bar. They had a spare theatre that we managed to rent from them, and that's where I met Rik Mayall, Adrian Edmondson, Alexei Sayle and Nigel Planer. I think the show had been going for about four months, and then these two ladies turned up to audition, to see if they could be guests in the show - that was French and Saunders. So we all became a big troupe of people and did a year in Soho.

I always wanted to make films. I went to Channel Four and said, 'Look, we've got a great bunch of comedy actors here. Rik, Alexei, Nigel and Adrian can do anything, play any parts. They don't have to play just one character for multiple series - we can make separate 30-minute films.' So one week we might do Five Go Mad In Dorset (which was a take on Enid Blyton and how awful those kids could be), then another week we'd be taking the mickey out of racism, sexism, all that stuff. I gave them a list of six fims, and they gave us the okay.

How did you come up with the idea to screen the films as part of a UK-wide tour?

We made about 40/45 films in total. Out of those, about 10/12 really stood up well. They still play very well in cinemas too, because they look great on the big screen. So we started touring with these, playing to audiences who loved The Comic Strip when the films first started airing.

You're seeing it with a bunch of people on the big screen, which is a very different experience because everything's illuminated, and some of the films really work well like that. One example is Red Nose Of Courage, which we're showing at MAC. That one is set in a circus, and it's about [former prime minister] John Major, who gets into politics because he's bored of being a clown. We did another prime-minister story called The Hunt For Tony Blair, which is a black-and-white film where Tony Blair is on the run for murder following the Iraq War.

What's funny is that these two films in particular don't seem to age. I mean, the Blair film is set in the early 60s and black-and-white, so we removed it from the present day to another period to give it a sort of theatrical glamour - it doesn't feel like a documentary.

Phil Cornwell and [the late] John Sessions are brilliant impressionists, as seen in the cult BBC comedy Stella Street, clips of which also feature in the show. What's special about their comedy offering?

They don't just do voices - they create an inner world. They make the stars [who they impersonate] their own characters, but they also create generic characters - like the cleaner or the gardener - which are just as interesting as the celebrities they take on. We've got Mick and Keith from the Rolling Stones running the corner shop, always arguing about prices and stuff, and it's quite funny - it's just these two great giants of rock & roll doing very mundane jobs, and people come in and out. Jack Nicholson comes in to buy Shreddies, you know, and Michael Caine pops in all the time...

You were a longtime collaborator and friend of the late Rik Mayall - how did you meet?

Nigel Planer phoned me up one day and said, 'You know, there's this club called The Comedy Store going - let's go down there and see if we can do an act with just the two of us.' Back then, you could just go in and say, 'I want to go on stage', and they'd let you go on; if you weren't funny within five or so minutes, Alexei Sayle would bang this gong and you had to get off. He was really funny but an absolutely brutal compere...

There, standing in the shadows, was Rik Mayall and his long-haired friend Adrian Edmondson. Rik went on before us and did this brilliant act where he recited really rubbish, crap poetry, but it was designed to make the audience laugh. What was lovely about Rik's act is that when they laughed, he'd get upset. He'd go, 'Please, please shut up! Listen, please don't do this. Don't do this to me,' like a sensitive poet. It was so funny - the more they laughed, the more upset he got, and the more upset he got, the more they laughed. It was just a brilliant act!

How is the comedy landscape different today, and are there any comedians you've been watching recently?

Instagram, TikTok and YouTube seem to be where people get discovered now - television comedy in the UK seems to have just become a series of panel shows, as far as I can see. They don't put as much money into it on television, and it seems to have gone out of fashion a little bit.

YouTube seems to produce some wonderful people now, particularly from the States. Stanzi Potenza is a great talent from Boston, and there's also Gianmarco Soresi, who seems to be able to tackle difficult, serious current-affairs topics with this amazingly funny approach. And my son, Red, is conquering the world through YouTube. He's become big in the States and tours all over the place now, which would never have happened without the internet. Not to blow my own son's trumpet, but I think he's doing some amazing stuff!

The Comic Strip Presents... + Q&A shows at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) on Sunday 15 November, as part of Square Eyes TV Festival which runs from Friday 6 to Sunday 15 November



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Nigel Price, Lorne Lofsky,
Tom Barford, Jeremy Brown



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An Evening with
The Magic Numbers



The Masked Ball -
a celebration of Les Six



An Early Christmas



RBC Symphony Orchestra:
Enigma Variations



Eastside Jazz Festival



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Myles Smith

bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham, Thurs 12 November

Breakout 2024 EP You Promised A Lifetime set Myles Smith on the road to stardom, his intimate acoustic sound quickly finding a global audience. A three-time Brit Award nominee last year - he bagged the prestigious Rising Star title - Myles also supported Ed Sheeran on the European leg of his 2025 tour. He's visiting the second city just a handful of months after the release of his debut album, My Mess, My Heart, My Life, a record which did okay critically without ever threatening to set the music scene alight.



Jack Savoretti

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 16 November

Blessed with a husky and hugely captivating voice, and inheriting his brooding good looks from his mother - a Polish-German model - and his Italian father, Jack Savoretti released debut offering Between The Minds in 2007... His Birmingham stop-off this month comes in support of ninth studio album We Will Always Be The Way We Were, a record which marked a return to the raw storytelling and cinematic soul that defined Jack's earliest work.





Shabaka **Castle & Falcon, Birmingham, Sun 8 November**

London-born and Birmingham- and Barbados-raised composer, bandleader and multi-instrumentalist Shabaka Hutchings - operating mononymously as Shabaka - is a central figure on the UK contemporary jazz scene.

A BBC New Generation Artist from 2010 to 2012, he developed a style which, although rooted in American jazz, was heavily influenced by Afro-Caribbean traditions, London dance music and spiritual jazz.

In late 2023, after years spent playing the saxophone both solo and in bands such as Sons Of Kemet and The Comet Is Coming, Shabaka announced that he was setting aside the instrument for a period of time, instead focusing on a more meditative practice centred around global flutes. It's a move which he credits for slowly changing the scope of his musical inner landscape.

The Allergies

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Fri 20 November

Employing a meticulous formula of past-meets-future, Bristol duo The Allergies - aka DJ Moneyshot and Rackabeat - extract soulful hooks from forgotten vinyl and infuse them with driving drums and hip-hop energy. An evening of vintage funk and contemporary dancefloor grooves awaits...

Rebecca Ferguson

The Jam House, Birmingham, Thurs 19 November

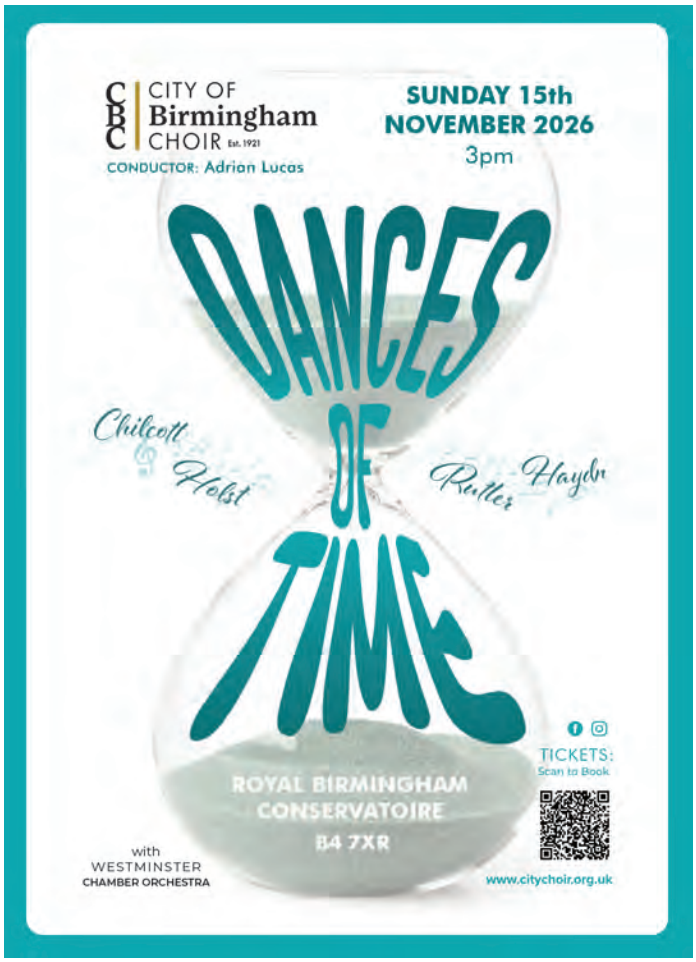
Singer-songwriter Rebecca Ferguson came to prominence in 2010 when she finished runner-up to Matt Cardle on the seventh series of The X Factor. She subsequently signed a record deal with Simon Cowell's label, Syco Music, and released critically acclaimed debut album Heaven, which peaked at number three in the UK charts. Since then, the multi-genre artist has established herself as one of the country's most talented singer-songwriters.

Julia Wolf

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Sun 22 November

Boasting a 'gothic babe' aesthetic, New York indie-pop singer-songwriter Julia Wolf blends ethereal vocals with honest lyrics to sing about self-doubt and suburban anxiety. Last year's album, Pressure, saw her steering her style towards a heavy metal and grunge motif-influenced darker alt-rock sound - a move designed to shift her musical output from being palatable to powerful.




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Ex Cathedra
Ex Cathedra
Britten at Christmas
Ex Cathedra join forces with the CBSO to perform three festive gems by Benjamin Britten – *A Ceremony of Carols*, *St Nicolas* and *A Boy was born*.
Town Hall, Birmingham
Sat 5 Dec, 3pm
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Book at www.excathedra.co.uk


Christmas Music by Candlelight
Step out of the winter rush and discover the quiet magic of Ex Cathedra's much-loved Christmas concerts, performed in the warm glow of candlelight. Once experienced, they're never forgotten. Early booking is strongly recommended.
St John's Church, Hagley
Wed 2 Dec, 7pm
Lichfield Cathedral
Fri 4 Dec, 7.15pm
St James the Greater, Leicester
Mon 7 Dec, 7pm
St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury
Tue 8 Dec, 7pm
St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton
Thu 10 Dec, 7pm
St Martin-in-the-Fields, London
Fri 11 & Mon 14 Dec, 7pm
Hereford Cathedral
Wed 16 Dec, 7pm
Coventry Cathedral
Thu 17 Dec, 7pm
Great Hall, University of Birmingham
Fri 18 Dec, 7pm
St Paul's Church, Birmingham
Sat 19 Dec, 7pm
Mon 21 Dec, 7pm
Tue 22 Dec, 7pm



Flanders Symphony Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 5 November

Belgium's highly regarded Flanders Symphony Orchestra here get their teeth into much-loved works by four composers. Widely acclaimed French violinist Alexandra Soumm (pictured) is the soloist for both Mozart's fifth Violin Concerto and Ralph Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending. The latter is one of two pastoral idylls of pre-First World War England which are featured in the concert, the other being A Shropshire Lad by George Butterworth.
The concert programme is completed by Dvořák's Eighth Symphony, a work in part inspired by the folk traditions of the composer's native Bohemia...
Much-in-demand British conductor Duncan Ward is the man with the baton.

Ex Cathedra: Words Apart

St Francis Church, Bournville, Birmingham, Sat 14 November



Two composers from different centuries - the 18th and the 20th - respond to the same sacred texts in Ex Cathedra's mid-month concert at Bournville's St Francis' Church.
James Burton (pictured) picks up the reins for a concert that pairs masterworks by Johann Sebastian Bach with contrasting choral interpretations by modern Swedish composer Sven-David Sandström...
James will be taking over Ex Cathedra conducting duties on a full-time basis when Jeffrey Skidmore steps back next autumn.



The City of Birmingham Choir: Dances Of Time

Bradhsaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Sun 15 November

The City of Birmingham Choir team up with the Westminster Chamber Orchestra to present a sequence of works that reflect on the effects of time passing.
The programme includes Bob Chilcott's wide-ranging Dances Of Time and John Rutter's settings of poems by Shakespeare and Campion in When Icicles Hang.
Joseph Haydn's Mass In Time Of War brings proceedings to a close. The mid-afternoon concert is conducted by Adrian Lucas.

Marin Alsop & The Philharmonia Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 22 November

The trailblazing Marin Alsop makes a welcome return to Birmingham as the principal guest conductor of the world-class Philharmonia Orchestra.
A passionate advocate for female conductors, Marin here picks up the baton for a performance of Leonard Bernstein's Serenade (after Plato's Symposium), a series of musical dialogues between orchestra and solo violin (played by Esther Yoo). Also featuring on the concert programme is Mahler's sixth symphony, a work which has been described as a monumental tour-de-force.

CBSO: Beethoven's Violin Concerto

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 29 November

Ludwig van Beethoven gets a whole concert to himself at the end of the month, when the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) perform four works which represent the composer at his romantic and dramatic best.
Three overtures - Leonore, Egmont and Coriolan - are followed by his 1806 Violin Concerto, a work which was so fussy and difficult that critics initially deemed it unplayable by all but the very finest of soloists. Indeed, it would be nearly half a century before the concerto would become part of the standard concert-hall repertory.
The CBSO's very own Eugene Tzikindelean here plays the solo part in what has since become one of Beethoven's best-loved compositions. The talented Romanian also takes on conducting responsibilities for this mid-afternoon concert.

K'antu Ensemble: Midwinter Merriment

Selly Manor, Bournville, Birmingham, Thurs 26 November

Exploring the less-trodden territories of early music, K'antu Ensemble combine elements of folk and world music with historically informed techniques.
Their late-month visit to Selly Manor sees them bringing together familiar carols with some lesser-known seasonal sounds from across the centuries. Alongside the hour-long concert, audience members can also enjoy a glass of mulled wine.

TALL TALES

A Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler favourite gets a festive twist at MAC next month...



By Jessica Clixby

In the world of picture books, Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler need no introduction, creating hits such as The Gruffalo, Zog, and Room On The Broom, all of which boast hugely popular stage and screen adaptations. Next month, Midlands Arts Centre presents another Donaldson/Scheffler favourite: Tales From Acorn Wood At Christmas. The show features familiar Acorn Wood characters in puppet form, along with lively songs and audience interaction aplenty. What's On chatted to the play's director, Grace Goulding, to find out more...

Originally based on the charming 'lift-the-flap' book series, Midlands Arts Centre's (MAC) festive production, Tales From Acorn Wood At Christmas, brings the work of picture-book powerhouses Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler to the stage.

Packed with puppetry, toe-tapping tunes and interactive moments, the hour-long show is performed by five actors, who between them operate 17 animal puppets...

"We tell five main stories in this production," explains the play's director, Grace Goulding. "Fox's Socks, Hide-And-Seek Pig, Rabbit's Nap, Postman Bear, and then we'll finish with Squirrel's Snowman - which should make everyone feel Christmassy!"

Hailed as 'a festive lift-the-flap experience', the play draws on the interactive nature of the picture books in ways which would only be possible in a live stage production.

"Axel Scheffler's artwork is projected onto a big wall at the back of our stage," says Grace. "It's a white wall with lots of gaps - holes, doors and windows - but when you project his work onto it, it looks like we're following the book. Between each story, the projection moves like we're turning the page. Then we might knock on a door, and as the projection 'opens', there will be a 'live' flap that reveals the puppets behind it. It's the most magical thing when you see a one- or two-year-old that really knows the language of the book sit down and see the whole thing magnified."

The page-to-stage design naturally also extends to the puppets - which have been especially created to bring these familiar illustrated characters into three dimensions.

"They've been designed so that they look exactly like Axel Scheffler's drawings. When you look at Bear, it's the bear from the book... The puppetry becomes less about 'War Horse realism' and more about the joy of whatever we're trying to communicate in that moment."

Tales From Acorn Wood At Christmas is made by Norwell Lapley Productions (NLP), who last year scored another wintery hit at MAC with The Owl Who Came For Christmas.

"We love the MAC. We were there last Christmas. They're just a beautiful company of people with a really great space. It's very intimate, the stage space that we're performing in. You feel like you're in the story with us."

After working with NLP for some time - during which she's become very familiar with Tales From Acorn Wood - Grace's role has moved from being the show's puppet director and choreographer, to directing the whole production.

"Normally I'm in a team of about five people - this time it's a one-woman show in terms of the rehearsal room content. The joy for me is actually teaching people new skill sets. A lot of actors, when they come through this show, will go, 'Wow, I can really throw puppetry in my CV quite strongly now, because I've been given all of the tools...' It's something I really love doing."

The play's hard-working performers have their work cut out, required to multi-task as they sing, move and act - all while wrangling their puppet alter egos.

"They're little one-man bands! It's like five Dick Van Dykes on stage, doing multiple things at once... For example, in Hide-And-Seek Pig, every time you find a new character, we will sing a song, and that character gets added to our 'hide-and-seek'. I think at one point you've got five puppeteers all puppeteering at least two animals at the same time - it builds and builds."

Tales From Acorn Wood At Christmas is aimed at young people aged between 18 months and six years - and the production promises to meet the challenge of keeping a broad spectrum of children entertained.

"We have strategic moments where the children join in - or they get asked to join us in some way - which keeps it fresh. It also means that they're not doing the same thing all the way through the hour. They're looking at different characters; they're being asked to interact in different ways. And the way that the story is told is different each time. Some animals you don't see till near the end - it's something new, a little gift in each story."

Grace understands the importance of providing on-stage representation for the different young people in attendance - and finding creative ways to communicate.

"We're using things like British Sign Language in the show, and Makaton - it's important tonally to find joy but make it universal. Regardless of whether a child speaks English, for example, they can understand the slapstick storytelling. A bit of a spoiler - we've got a Mexican actress playing the Pig, so we have Spanish in the show. We also have some French, when Bear's cooking. We have these various moments where we jump into different languages. Again, it just gives [the audience] a fuller show, with lots of interactive elements and different ways to hear the story.

"We get a lot of feedback from parents of either neurodiverse children or children with hearing impairments who say, 'I can watch this show, not worrying about how it's going to impact my child. I can just have a moment where I'm not having to check they're not getting overstimulated; they're not going to get scared.'"

It also helps that the stories have been drawn straight from the popular picture books of 'kids lit' mega-stars Donaldson and Scheffler. Many of the duo's works have found huge success on page, stage and screen - The Gruffalo, Room On The Broom and Stick Man, to name just a few. Grace aims to harness the books' spirit in the production, and has a theory why the stories translate so well across different media: "There's a big part of our rehearsal process where we're looking at the books and going, 'Look at how simple that is. Look at how joyful that character is.' All of the language is positive. If someone jumps out, it's not to create a negative impact on that other character. It's to add to the excitement or to add to the story. If somebody's done something wrong or forgets something, then we don't shame them in any way.

"I think [Donaldson's] stories really capture the innocence of being a child. There's no sarcasm in them. There's a real duty of care, telling a story with genuine emotion and encouraging basic things like friendship and excitement; getting a present for a bear because it's on its own on its birthday. It's really wholesome, and when we're thinking about stage adaptations, it's not just a children's story that we're lifting and popping on the stage. We're also trying to capture that innocence."

Tales From Acorn Wood At Christmas shows at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, from Tuesday 1 to Sunday 27 December

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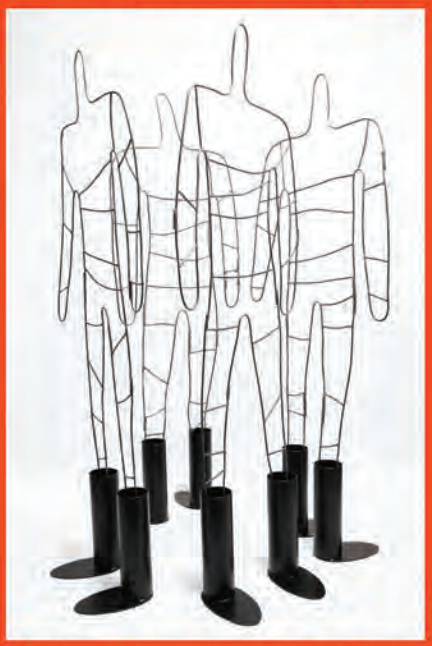
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Adam Rowe

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 29 November

Adam Rowe well remembers the day he died in Stockport (only on stage, of course). "It was the day I got my A-Level results and realised I wasn't going to university for another year," recalls the Liverpool-born comedian. "I decided to rant about my day and not do my material. I died on my arse and got gonged off. Awful."

Fortunately for Adam, most of his gigs bear no resemblance to that one. Blending an affable persona with a quick wit and clever material, he's now well established on the UK comedy circuit and is definitely worth a look.



Sindhu Vee

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 13 November & Sat 17 April

Former bonds tradeswoman Sindhu Vee makes a welcome return to the Midlands this autumn with a brand-new show. Sindhu stumbled across a career in comedy by chance. Having quit her job as a banker in order to look after her children, she then found out that one of the least funny people she knew was doing stand-up.

"If she could do it, then so could I," says Sindhu. "And my career as a comedian has gone very well. Comedy is like a fire in my belly, and I feel incredibly lucky to have found it. It's hard work, for sure, but it's also my calling."

Sindhu stops off in the region this month with Swanky, a brand-new stand-up show about 'falling through the cracks you didn't make, avoiding the friendships you don't want, and embracing the self-love you definitely need'.



Josh Pugh

hmv Empire, Coventry, Thurs 19 November; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 29 November



Hailing from Warwickshire, Josh Pugh made his stand-up debut in the spring of 2014 and within 18 months had won the Birmingham Comedy Festival Breaking Talent Award.

Then, in 2016, he picked up the English Comedian of the Year title - the prize for which included a string of Australian gigs. "The weirdest thing about that," recalls Josh, "was the ex-pats who came to the show because I was billed as English Comedian of the Year. I'd have people coming up to me saying, 'I used to live in Coventry,' or 'I've been to The Roadhouse in Birmingham."

I found that dead odd - being so far away, on the other side of the world, and having people coming up to me who knew where I lived!"

Bangla Month presents Comedy Special

The Rep, Birmingham, Sat 21 November

BBC Asian Network presenter Hashu Mohammed, better known as Smashbengali, is the host for this returning event. Expect an evening of fresh and insightful humour, delivered by some of the UK's most promising up-and-coming comedic talent.

Fatiha El-Ghorri

King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 15 November; Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 19 November; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 21 November



With her swaggest hijab apparently ironed and ready to wear, Taskmaster breakout star Fatiha El-Ghorri is this month visiting three Midlands venues as part of her debut stand-up tour. Taking the title Cockney Stacking Doll, the show faired well in Edinburgh back in the summer. Critics hailed not only Fatiha's surly, pugnacious style but also the effectiveness of her material in laying to rest a host of long-held stereotypes about Muslim women.

Tez Ilyas

Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 11 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 22 November



Silly, smart and subversive humour is the name of Tez Ilyas' comedy game. And as the rapid growth of his fanbase ably illustrates, he's extremely good at what he does.

Tez's political stand-up has been likened to candyfloss with a razor-blade hidden inside, while his television work has brought him to the attention of a whole new audience.

The fact that he's been able to hit the right notes with so many people doesn't come as a surprise to the man himself, though: "It doesn't matter what walk of life we're from, I think we're all united by the British sense of humour. Whatever creed, colour, sexual orientation or gender type we are, we have a connection based around a mutual appreciation of that sort of comedy."

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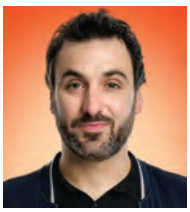


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Patrick Monahan

The Anstice, Madeley, Shropshire, Thurs 12 November



Half Iranian, half Irish stand-up comic Patrick Monahan is no slouch when it comes to bringing up the subject of his own ethnicity on stage. And why would he be... his material includes a quality joke about having to spend the whole of his holiday in customs - and he's not afraid to use it!

"I guess I like to think that maybe I'm breaking down stereotypes," explains Patrick, who's eager to make it clear that his comedy isn't just political. "I think it's important to look for positive stuff in life. Focusing on the bad stuff all the time would mean that the only people who'd come to my shows would be the ones who thought the end of the world was nigh!"

Comedy All Stars

Dudley Town Hall, Fri 6 November



Dudley's ever-popular evening of high-quality comedy makes a welcome return.

The show's latest line-up of laughter merchants features Fern Brady (pictured), Iain Stirling, Phil Ellis and Paul Sinha.

Ginger Johnson

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 14 November; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 6 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 20 February



Ginger Johnson is promising an evening that's outrageous, untamed and completely off the reins - which is pretty much exactly what fans would expect from the much-loved RuPaul's Drag Race UK winner and Celebrity Masterchef champion.

Publicised as 'a surprisingly psychedelic adventure into the outer reaches of Ginger's tiny little mind', Show Pony offers a winning blend of high-camp ridiculousness and whip-smart comedy, all cleverly presented by a performer who was once described as 'the unholy drag spawn of Evel Knievel, Lucille Ball and Danny La Rue'.



Jonny Cole

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Tues 3 November

Comedian Jonny Cole's seemingly meteoric rise has seen him graduate from the back rooms of pubs in his native Black Country to comedy clubs, theatres and - for one night only this month - Birmingham's Utilita Arena.

His overnight success has actually been a decade in the making, and the former diesel salesman is determined not to leave anything in the tank. So much so, in fact, that he's even given up alcohol.

"I'd get very drunk before going on stage. I mean *really* drunk. So that just had to stop. I came from a rock & roll background, where you'd get hammered and then go and play. When I transitioned into comedy, no one told me that wasn't the gig. One night, when I was warming up for Joe Lycett, I drank a whole bottle of JD Honey. I then went on and did the same song three times!"

Rosie Holt

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 November; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Thurs 19 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 13 February



Rosie Holt's online videos became so popular that her podcast hit number two in the charts before it had even been released.

A jobbing actor before the pandemic, lockdown saw her holed up with her parents and itching for something to do with the acres of spare time at her disposal. So she put her acting talents to good use by tweeting clips of herself 'skewering the political landscape', as she puts it.

Much to Rosie's surprise and delight, she became an online sensation, her up-to-the-minute satirising of Westminster life seeing her Twitter following rising from 3,000 to a quarter of a million in the proverbial blink of an eye.

Rosie is back on the road this month with The Illegal Aliens Have Landed!, a brand-new show which she describes as a 'sci-fi streaked satire'.

Bill Bailey

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 10 November; Utilita Arena Birmingham, Wed 11 November; Coventry Building Society Arena, Fri 13 November

Bill Bailey presents an act that nicely mixes displays of his musical virtuosity with straight-down-the-line stand-up.

He visits three Midlands venues this month with Vaudeville!, a show which he describes as a celebration of comedy, songs, and multifarious skills.

Ed Patrick

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent, Thurs 5 November

There's an obvious irony about being an entertainer when you're also a qualified anaesthetist, but stand-up comedian Ed Patrick hasn't yet put an audience to sleep.

Ed scored a major hit at venues around the UK last year with touring show Catch Your Breath: The Sleepless Life Of An Anaesthetist. He's back on the road this autumn with brand-new offering Numb And Number, a show in which he's presenting a fresh batch of stories from the sometimes-surreal world of the hospital ward.



“I think the notion of surprise, both in the story and how you’re doing it, keeps an audience engaged. Sometimes we don’t realise how important the notion of surprise is in telling something - and this version is full of surprises and not what you expect.”

ONE FOR ALL

The Three Musketeers are bringing swashbuckling fun to Stratford-upon-Avon this festive season...

By Steve Adams

This year's Royal Shakespeare Company Christmas show is an all-new adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' The Three Musketeers by innovative theatre company Told By An Idiot. The classic swashbuckling adventure will be a real festive treat for all the family, says its director, Paul Hunter...

Alexandre Dumas' classic 19th-century historical adventure The Three Musketeers has been adapted for stage and screen no end of times, with more than 50 film and TV versions alone.

One particular rendering made a big impact on a youngster growing up in the Birmingham suburb of Harborne. Paul Hunter, co-founder & artistic director of London-based theatre company Told By An Idiot, was still at school when his father took him to see Richard Lester's 1973 movie starring such acting luminaries as Richard Chamberlain, Oliver Reed, Christopher Lee, Raquel Welch and even Spike Milligan.

"It left a big impression on me," says the actor, writer & director, whose memories of movie-going, and seeing that film in particular, ignited his interest in acting, storytelling and performance.

"When I was a kid, certainly up to the early teenage years, I used to be taken by my dad to the cinema. He worked nights, so he would often take me on a Friday afternoon after school. In 1974 we went to the Odeon in Selly Oak and saw Richard Lester's film version of The Three Musketeers and I absolutely loved it. It was that classic adventure story told brilliantly - I just adored it."

The movie clearly made an impression, as Paul has carried the idea of a stage adaptation in the back of his mind for the best part of a decade. When Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) artistic directors Tamara Harvey and Daniel Evans offered him the chance to create a Christmas show for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST), it was the first thing that came to his mind.

"I suddenly thought I wanted to tackle a big story and do something that goes back to my childhood. In a way, the whole aim of the production was to make a show for my seven-year-old self - I thought that if I can do that, then the chances are that everybody else will enjoy it as well."

Paul has now lived in London longer than he resided in the second city, so his gently cheerful voice contains negligible Brummie twang, although he drops a variety of local references (he's worked at loads of regional venues) and admits the accent quickly returns whenever he's back "and certainly when I'm with my sisters or old school friends".

But what about the musketeers? Who will they sound like? Will they be speaking in French, or with French accents?

"That's a good question. And I don't know that I want to say!" he laughs. "Let's just say there might be some French spoken, but I don't think you'll hear a French accent.

"That was a conscious decision while I was adapting it, but we've got quite an international company of performers who speak a variety of languages, so we'll be including that in the action at some point."

Speaking of action, the production features plenty of swashbuckling and adventure, as well as a predominantly female cast, which the director thinks will enable audiences to view the tale from a fresh perspective.

"I wanted to explore the notion that the musketeers - Athos, Aramis and Porthos - were all women playing men, and it produced some really interesting ideas and dynamics in a story that can be quite male-oriented.

"Suddenly it opened up more possibilities when you saw these brilliant women - and the three women I've got are fantastic - and what they can do. What kind of happens is the audience forget that they're women playing musketeers but don't forget, if that makes sense?

"There's also one of the most iconic female villains; Milady is an absolute corker of a villain. I really like the fact that, as well as three women playing musketeers, you have a very dangerous and charismatic woman taking them on."

The show will be one of the biggest that Told By An Idiot - which typically specialises in experimental visual comedy - has ever put on, but Paul is embracing the challenge and the opportunities which playing in a big theatre will bring.

"Some people find it a bit intimidating, but I love the space as an actor with the audience around you on three sides. I think the key thing is to absolutely embrace that, because it's a wonderful theatrical space that audiences can get totally involved in."

He also has a way of dealing with things if he ever gets worried about the enormity of the project.

"I just imagine we're doing this in a tiny theatre above a pub in Digbeth," he laughs, admitting he sized up the RST while he was playing Pistol in an RSC production of Henry V earlier this year.

"I had to be very focused during performances, but you're sitting around a lot in technical rehearsals, so I spent all my time thinking 'what about that space?', and 'what about if that could happen there?'

"The best way for me to get to grips with that space was to play in it, so I can take that understanding. And hopefully, the brilliant acting company we've assembled will feel reassured by the fact that I've been in that space fairly recently."

Paul is also acutely aware of the importance of putting on a quality show during the festive season, which is often the only time families visit the theatre en masse.

"I'm very conscious that it's expensive and might be some people's first time at the theatre, and I take that responsibility very seriously. I want them to go home having had a great time."

Creating a family appeal is especially important for a production that's clearly not a pantomime or even a festive story, although Paul claims there's a Christmas element within the piece and teases "we might discover more".

"What this brings, which I think works as a Christmas show for all the family, is that it taps into some of those big adventure movies - Indiana Jones, Raiders Of The Lost Ark and so on - that we all watch together on telly."

The production also contains a number of surprises that he won't be drawn on, albeit dropping a huge hint about something else inspired by his childhood.

"My favourite band of the day was Slade, so my two influences were Richard Lester's film and the music of Slade - I won't go any further, but I'll leave that with you!"

He can't possibly reveal whether that means we're going to hear Noddy Holder screaming "It's Christmaaaas!", but he's confident to claim that the "funny, romantic adventure" will entertain families "in the style that only live theatre can do", and that the show has been created "in a way that feels inventive and surprising".

The latter element is especially appealing to someone who has regularly worked on children's productions and can liken the whole thing to wrapping up a Christmas gift for attendees.

"I think the notion of surprise, both in the story and how you're doing it, keeps an audience engaged. Sometimes we don't realise how important the notion of surprise is in telling something - and this version is full of surprises and not what you expect."

The Three Musketeers shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Saturday 28 November to Saturday 9 January



Christmas Carol Goes Wrong

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 10 - Sat 14 November; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 16 - Sat 20 February 2027

Now here's an interesting spin on Charles Dickens' most famous and fantastic festive-season story...

The highly acclaimed Mischief theatre company are past masters at presenting productions that 'go wrong' - think The Play That Goes Wrong, Peter Pan Goes Wrong and Magic Goes Wrong, not to mention the BBC comedy series The Goes Wrong Show. This latest addition to that list sees the return of the Cornley Amateur Drama Society, an organisation whose byword is disorganisation.

Miscommunication, delays to their set, actors missing in action, and a growing feud over who will play the lead role are numbered among the Society's many and varied splendidly comedic trials and tribulations... Suitable for audience members aged eight-plus.

The Borrowers

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Fri 13 November - Sat 23 January

The New Vic is this Christmas once again turning its attention to Mary Norton's 1952 children's fantasy - a dozen years after the show was first staged by the theatre to great critical acclaim.

Living happily beneath the floorboards of a quiet old house, The Borrowers suddenly find their way of life compromised when young Arrietty gets itchy feet and goes exploring...

The New Vic team is here promising a yuletide package of 'magical storytelling, original music and thrilling live-on-stage effects'.

So if you're on the lookout for a Christmas show that's free of custard pies, rouged-up Dames and cries of "He's behind you!", this could well be the production for you.

Austentatious

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sat 28 November

Austentatious stops off in the Midlands having garnered plenty of praise on its previous visits. Lighthearted and delightfully throwaway, the production sees its actors utilising audience suggestions to develop a laughter-laden play that pays loving homage to Jane Austen. Performed in period costume with live musical accompaniment, the show is described by its publicity as 'a riotous, razor-sharp production where swooning is guaranteed'.



The Three Musketeers

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 28 November - Sat 9 January

Get set for some serious swashing of bucklers as three of literature's finest rapier-thrusting heroes comically cavort in Stratford-upon-Avon this festive season.

In an imaginative collaboration between the Royal Shakespeare Company and the ever-brilliant Told By An Idiot, the legendary trio of fabulous fictional fighters are here all played by women.

"Alexandre Dumas' story is one of the great adventures," says the show's director, Paul Hunter, "full of friendship, courage, romance and reckless abandon. With Told By An Idiot's trademark blend of visual invention, physical comedy and joyful anarchy, we're creating a version that celebrates the sheer pleasure of live theatre."

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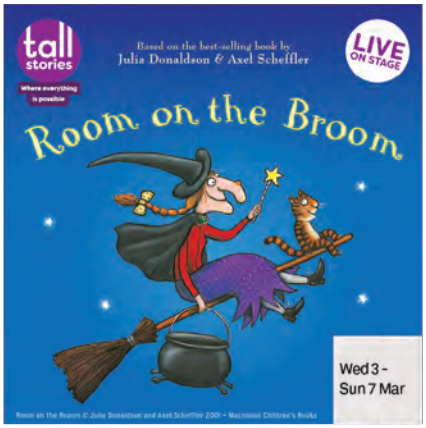
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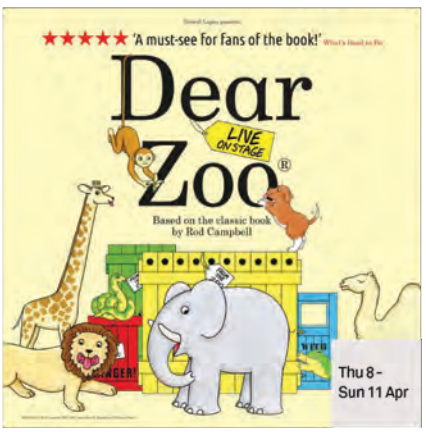
Tue 2 - Sat 6 Mar



Wed 3 - Sun 7 Mar



Tue 9 Mar - Sat 10 Apr



Thu 8 - Sun 11 Apr



Tue 13 - Sat 17 Apr



Tue 20 - Sat 24 Apr



Image credit: Mark Senior

Cats The Musical

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sat 7 November

A spectacular and captivating adaptation of TS Eliot's Old Possum's Book Of Practical Cats, this Andrew Lloyd Webber-composed extravaganza premiered 45 years ago.
The show is widely considered to be the production that redefined the modern musical, not only paving the way for a seemingly relentless stream of blockbuster hits but also giving starring roles to Elaine Page and Sarah Brightman. Indeed, even an execrable film version a handful of years back failed to make a dent in the stage production's longstanding global popularity - a fact supported by this brand-new and extensive tour. Featured songs include Old Deuteronomy, Macavity: The Mystery Cat, Jellicle Ball - and, of course, the production's famous anthem, Memory.
West End favourite Louise Dearman stars as Grizabella.

Jersey Boys

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 2 - Sat 21 November; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 15 - Sat 27 March



Rockin' and rollin' New Jersey boys Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons scored some truly massive hits during the mid-1960s - and this award-winning jukebox musical tells their story. Presented in a documentary-style format, the show is structured as four 'seasons', each being narrated by a different member of the band. Featured hits include Walk Like A Man, Bye Bye Baby, Big Girls Don't Cry, Sherry, Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Working My Way Back To You and December 1963 (Oh, What A Night).

Legally Blonde The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 17 - Sat 21 November



Based on the hit 2001 movie starring Reese Witherspoon, this critically acclaimed musical follows the story of college sweetheart and homecoming queen Elle Woods, a girl who just doesn't take no for an answer. So when her boyfriend, Warner, announces that he's dumping her for someone more serious, Elle puts down the credit card, hits the books and heads for Harvard Law School...
One-time Love Island winner and Strictly Come Dancing finalist Amber Davies tops the bill as Elle.

Mamma Mia!

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, until Sat 7 November



As most people will know, this long-adored show is a nicely contrived vehicle for the chart-topping music of 1970s super troupers Abba.
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 girl group, Donna led a crazy, carefree existence when she was younger. 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 then 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...

Dirty Dancing

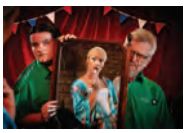
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 24 - Sat 28 November



Seen by millions across the globe, Eleanor Bergstein's smash-hit musical tells the classic story of Baby and Johnny, two fiercely independent young spirits from different worlds who come together for what will prove to be the most challenging and triumphant summer of their lives.
Hit numbers include Hungry Eyes, Hey Baby, Do You Love Me? and I've Had The Time Of My Life.

George And The Drag Queen

Charlton School Theatre, Wellington, Shropshire, Sat 14 November; Clungunford Village Hall, S. Shropshire, Sun 15 November



Publicity for Pipeline Theatre's latest play describes it as 'a bittersweet, bonkers cake-mix of the epic and the outlandish, beaten together with the everyday and the plain silly'...
The show focuses on two bantering first-aid volunteers at a village fête who find their stories becoming entwined with that of a Lebanese Drag Queen - leading to explosive results...

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As You Like It

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

Royal Shakespeare Company Co-Artistic Director Daniel Evans takes the helm for this brand-new, *all-male* version of the bard's hugely likable comedy.
The story revolves around the character of Rosalind, banished by her usurping uncle to the Forest of Arden, where her exiled father is already living. Revelling in the naturalness of the surroundings, Rosalind and her devoted cousin, Celia, find a happiness they hadn't known existed...
Tony and Grammy Award-winning American actor Jonathan Groff makes his RSC debut in the role of Rosalind, while veteran musical theatre star Gary Wilmot plays both Duke Frederick and Duke Senior.

Once Upon A Time In Sokoto

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 November

An award-winning new play about the unlikely friendship between a slave and her former master in pre-colonial Nigeria, Once Upon A Time In Sokoto is a powerful family drama set against the backdrop of traumatic real events.
"The play is mostly about business actually," explains its writer, Inua Ellams. "It's about trying to trade, trying to make money. And the backdrop is religious differences, cultural differences, class, commerce, love, relationships. It's an epic story but told through the lives of four people who lived through those incredible times."



Middlemarch Parts 1 & 2

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 16 January

George Eliot's classic 1871 novel - a study of provincial life set in her Warwickshire homeland - is here condensed into one play presented in two parts.
"Middlemarch is an entertaining story full of great humanity, wisdom and wit," says the play's director, Jeremy Herrin. "Theatre is a great form for a story that luxuriates in how we are all essentially connected."



The Accrington Pals

Wolverhampton Arts Centre, Wed 11 - Fri 13 November

In the Lancashire mill town of Accrington, with the men away fighting for king and country, their mothers, wives, sisters and sweethearts find daily life being dramatically reshaped by the faraway conflict...
This is an amateur production of Midlands-born Peter Whelan's acclaimed 1981 drama - a thought-provoking exploration of the emotional realities of life on the home front during the First World War.

The Elephant Man

Oldbury Rep, Sat 7 - Sat 14 November

The Victorian-era Elephant Man - aka Joseph Merrick - came to real prominence when legendary director David Lynch made a film about him way back in 1980.
The tale of Merrick is certainly one of great courage and fortitude. A badly disfigured man shunned by society, he eked out a living for himself by making appearances as a 'fairground freak'... This amateur production of Bernard Pomerance's 1977 play is being performed by the Oldbury Rep Players.

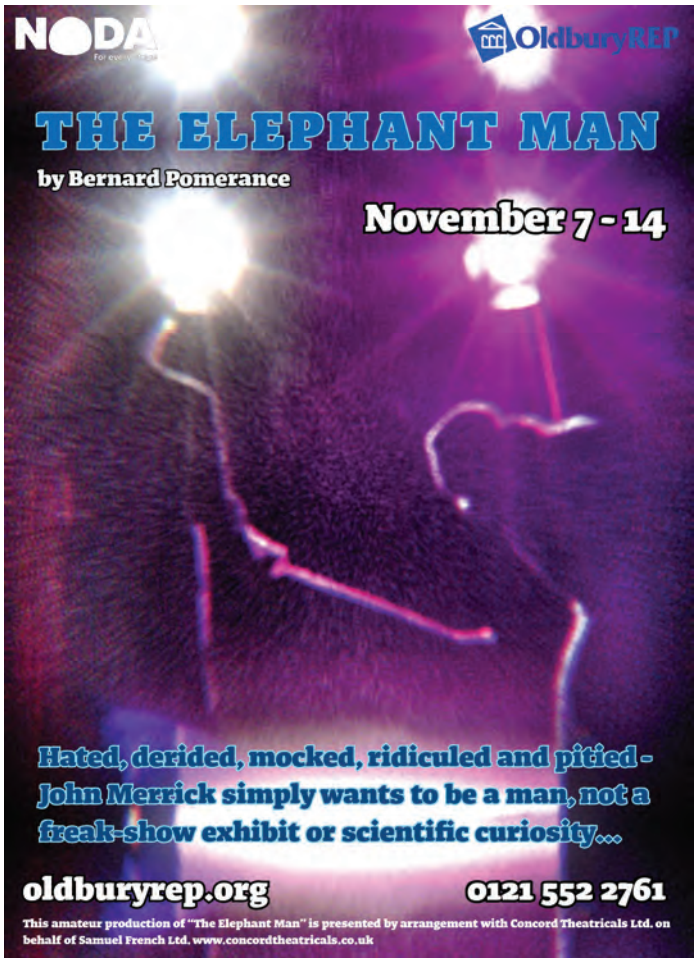
A Christmas Carol

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 16 & Tues 17 November; Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Sat 28 November

Of all Charles Dickens' festive stories, A Christmas Carol reigns supreme...
The covetous sinning of the miserly Scrooge, the eternal hope offered by Tiny Tim, and the eerie visions of redemption - visiting Ebenezer in the shape of three seasonal ghosts and the spirit of his deceased business partner Jacob Marley - all combine to give the tale a real olde worlde charm.
The acclaimed Dickens Theatre Company (pictured) are the ensemble performing a two-man Carol at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn, with the equally well regarded Dyad Productions presenting their one-man version of the story at the Bridge House Theatre in Warwick.




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BOOK BY MIKE OCKRANT & LYNN AHRENS
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Treasure Island

**Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Sat 28 November - Sun 3 January**

Robert Louis Stevenson's high-seas caper here gets the pantomime treatment, as young Jim Hawkins heads off on the adventure of a lifetime - one which will see him not only setting sail in search of buried treasure, but also spending time in the company of a one-legged pirate with misdeeds in mind...
The production stars comedian Richard Blackwood as Long John Silver. Solomon Davy, Tam Ryan and Ian Adams - the latter celebrating his 10th year as Wolverhampton's dame - all make a welcome return.
Last year's Grand Theatre panto production of Sleeping Beauty took the top accolade at the prestigious UK Pantomime Awards - so be sure to check out this latest festive-season offering.

Robin Hood

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 20 November - Sun 10 January; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 28 November - Sun 3 January

As if Robin Hood didn't already have enough on his plate dealing with the dastardly Sheriff of Nottingham and wooing the beautiful Maid Marion, the festive season also finds Sherwood Forest's most famous resident getting tangled up in all manner of pantomime traditions (custard pie in the boar-race, anyone?)...
There's a new dame in town at Lichfield Garrick this year, with Ben Stock taking on the role of Nurse Nellie (pictured), while another Ben - Thornton - stars as the eponymous hero.
The show marks the venue's first in-house-produced pantomime in over a decade.
Meanwhile, over at the Swan, the Worcester Repertory Company are promising a production that's positively awash with traditional panto mischief, mayhem and slapstick silliness.





Beauty And The Beast

**Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Wed 18 November - Sat 2 January**

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

The Beast, too, is trapped - seemingly forever - inside the grotesquery of his physical appearance, the consequence of a spell cast upon him by an evil witch. Only Beauty's ability to look beyond his ugliness and see the person within can save him...
So that's the basic storyline. Now... what about the Belgrade's festive-season version? Well, as usual, Coventry's favourite dame, Iain Lauchlan, has both written and stars in the show. And also as usual, Iain is promising a production that's replete with breathtaking sets, crazy costumes and seasonal silliness. Festive fun is a guarantee.



Peter Pan

**The Rep, Birmingham,
Wed 18 November - Sun 17 January**

Fly away to Neverland with the boy who wouldn't grow up, meet a real fairy, marvellous mermaids, wonderful Wendy and the down-on-their-luck Lost Boys. Oh, and beware the ever-so-wicked Captain Hook and a very hungry crocodile who goes tick-tock (he swallowed a clock!). The Rep's artistic director, Joe Murphy, takes the helm for this faithful re-telling of JM Barrie's much-loved children's story.
Read our interview with Joe on page 30.

Snow White

**Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham,
Fri 20 November - Sun 6 December**

Modern pantomime versions of Snow White don't always include her 'magnificent seven' mining pals - but whether the fellas are present-and-correct or missing in action, there's always plenty to enjoy in the much-loved fairytale. And that's certainly the case with this Blue Orange Theatre production. Expect 'adventure, comedy, lots of magical songs, dances, sweets, glorious costumes and buckets of audience participation'...

Aladdin

**Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Fri 27 November - Sun 3 January**



If you're a dyed-in-the-wool fan of the Theatre Severn panto experience, you'll be delighted to know that this year's offering is following the usual recipe for success.
What does that mean in practice? Well, to put some meat on the bone, it means Telford-born Paul Hendy is writing it, Evolution is producing it, and Brad Fitt is both starring in it and taking the directorial reins.
"There are pantos out there that go a bit near the knuckle - but I don't think ours does," says Brad, who is this year appearing as Dame Dolly in what will be his 15th Theatre Severn pantomime. "I would never tell a joke that was offensive or rude. Sometimes, you can use a double entendre - but then that's in *your* mind; that's not me. You have to blame yourself!"



POLES APART

The Hippodrome's My First Musical returns to the Patrick Studio with a brand-new snowy adventure...

By Jessica Clixby

Songs, puppetry and adventure abound in One Tiny Penguin. A brand-new show for ages three and older, the production is the latest festive-season offering from Birmingham Hippodrome's acclaimed My First Musical scheme. Written by Julie Tsang and Jordan Li-Smith, the story follows title character Lumi on a globetrotting adventure from the North to the South Pole.
What's On chatted to Julie, along with the play's director, Laura Ryder, to find out what's in store for Lumi, his friends, and One Tiny Penguin's family audiences this Christmas...

A brand-new musical for brand-new theatregoers slides into Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio this month.

Co-written by Julie Tsang and Jordan Li-Smith, One Tiny Penguin features a puppet penguin on a journey of self-discovery. Aimed at audiences aged three upwards, it promises to be an ideal introduction to the world of musical theatre.

Julie met Jordan on the Hippodrome's residency for playwrights, writers and composers, when the pair proposed a children's musical to be developed at the theatre this festive season.

"We had an intensive two days, which was just a delight," Julie told What's On. "A bit of playfulness to discover if it was something that we wanted to do. At the end of it, you could match up with someone - a bit like speed dating - and pitch your ideas."

The story which Julie and Jordan pitched concerns Lumi, the 'tiny penguin' of the title, who lives with polar bears in the North Pole - a place which penguin fans will know is not the bird's natural habitat.

"That's his family,"explains Julie. "That's the world that he knows, and it's a really beautiful, lovely and loving, caring world, but he does feel a little bit different.

"He's tasked with going on a huge journey to the South Pole, to get some ice to help light up the Northern sky. On the way, he meets lots of penguins - in Chile, in South Africa.

"Jordan and I were talking about being of mixed heritage and coming from two different backgrounds. When you spend time in that heritage, you feel like you belong, but you're still a bit different."

"I read the script and I fell madly in love with it," says Laura Ryder, the show's director. "It's beautiful. It's a really rich story. I was excited by how ambitious it is in terms of its storytelling and its scale, but also how ambitious the Hippodrome are with their production and the quality of what they want to make for children."

The ongoing development of One Tiny Penguin is supported by the Hippodrome's My First Musical scheme. The initiative is now in its third year - following the success of newly produced children's musicals The Jingleclaw and No Such Thing As Wolves.

"They've really supported us; they've helped us through that journey," says Julie. "I don't think there are many theatre venues that would do that, especially when you're going into something new you've never done before. It's been lovely to know that you can take risks, make mistakes, and that it's okay because everyone's in it together. It feels very collaborative."

The scheme is intended to foster working relationships, and then at the end of the process to present high-quality theatre for younger audiences. This makes for a dynamic and collaborative environment, according to Laura: "It's been great to get scenes on their feet, and then Julie and Jordan will walk away and rework them and play with them in live time. To have such a rich, creative process - with lots of different creative voices, skill and craft - has been lovely."

Laura's role as director includes working with designers to combine Julie and Jordan's words and music with visual storytelling.

"From the get-go, when we were looking at the story, there's so much scale," she says. "Lumi travels around the world, and I was really excited by what storytelling we could do when we 'zoom out' and Lumi can be really small as a puppet.

"We start in the North Pole, and then he journeys around the whole world. Our designer has come up with the most beautiful design that allows us to play with scale, that allows us to travel round the space and arrive at different locations. I'm a big fan of spectacle - I think it's important at Christmas to have moments which make an audience go 'Wow!' or 'Ooh!' There's lots of elements of that in the set, and in the design. It's going to look very visually beautiful."

For Julie, an important moment came when she first saw her penguin protagonist, portrayed by actor & puppeteer Dylan Collymore.

"To see him as a puppet is just the icing on the cake," she says. "It just makes it more real - and I can't wait to see the children's faces when they see Lumi. What I would love for them to do is look at Lumi and think 'Wow, if Lumi can do this big thing, maybe *I* can do whatever *I* want to do!' That sense of belonging is going to be lovely for families as well. Regardless of your family makeup, it's all about love and friendship."

With the Midlands' biggest panto just next door, My First Musical provides a theatrical festive offering for younger audiences in the venue's more intimate Patrick Studio.

Laura explains just how important those first experiences in the theatre can be: "I love family theatre at Christmas time. Sometimes it can be a child's very first theatre show, sometimes it can be an *adult's* very first theatre show. I've had lots of chats with the creative team on this - we can all pinpoint the first show we saw, or the first moment in theatre that made you go 'Wow!' Children navigate the world with play, and to be part of that, they engage with the storytelling of theatre so easily and so excitedly.

"We record the soundtrack, which will be available later. The idea of being able to re-listen and dance around your living room, and act out some of the moments, or be on a long car journey and listen to the album for the third time or whatever, is really joyful - a shared experience; all together. The story is beautiful, and fundamentally I think that's what good children's theatre needs - a good story. Julie and Jordan have created a story that hopefully really speaks to children who are learning about themselves, but also learning what it is to be brave, and learning to celebrate difference."

One Tiny Penguin shows at Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio from Saturday 5 December to Sunday 3 January

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The Gruffalo's Child © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 2004 – Macmillan Children's Books



The Gruffalo's Child

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 28 November - Sun 27 December

With millions of copies having been sold in double-quick time after it was published in 1999, it's fair to say that Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's picture book The Gruffalo captured the hearts and minds of children everywhere. So it was no surprise when the dynamic duo then produced this sequel story five years later...

Despite her dad's warning to stay away from the deep, dark wood, the Gruffalo's child decides it's time to go and explore, caring not a jot about the legend of the Big Bad Mouse...

Award-winning theatre company Tall Stories, who certainly know a thing or two about adapting Donaldson/Scheffler books for the stage, here present a production that brings together 'songs, laughs and scary fun for everyone aged three to 103'.

Disney On Ice: Discover The Magic

bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham, until Sun 8 November

Disney On Ice makes a welcome return with another fast-paced family-friendly adventure. Cutting-edge figure-skating, eye-catching costumes, impressive set designs, innovative lighting, attention-grabbing special effects and high-flying jumps all feature in Discover The Magic, a show which brings together a cast of beloved Mouse House characters. Families are invited to explore the colourful spirit realm of Coco with Miguel, brave the ocean with Moana, marvel at Belle's enchanted chandelier, and sing along with Elsa. Memorable moments from Aladdin, Toy Story and The Little Mermaid also feature.



Toto The Ninja Cat And The Great Snake Escape

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 31 October & Sun 1 November

Little Angel Theatre return to the region with a stage show based on Dermot O'Leary's bestselling children's book about an almost completely blind cat who has incredible ninja skills. Accompanied by her cheeky brother, Silver, Toto needs to use every ounce of her courage and cunning to save the day when a deadly King Cobra escapes onto the streets of London...



Little Red Riding Hood

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 28 November

This 50-minute show, suitable for youngsters between the ages of three and eight, takes families into the darkness of the woods for an adventure with Little Red Riding Hood.

A young girl who takes good care of her grandmother, she also knows a thing or two about outwitting big hairy wolves who'd very much like to make a meal out of her...

Mr Sleepybum's Dream Machine

The Little Theatre, Dawley, Shropshire, Sat 21 November

With accolades and glittering gongs aplenty to recommend it, Mr Sleepybum was a show well worth checking out. Now, the title character - a fella who has 'stupid, silly dreams' at night - is making a welcome return with this new production.

Running for one hour and suitable for children aged between three and eight, the show sees Mr Sleepybum invent a machine that magically brings to life all manner of dreams, including ones featuring dinosaurs, robots, car chases and, er, the world's largest blanket!



The Dinosaur That Pooped A Rock Show

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 8 November

Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter's touring production features new songs, a lot of laughs and (not surprisingly given the show's title) a whole load of poo!

Based on Tom and Dougie's bestselling children's books, The Dinosaur That Pooped follows Danny and Dino as they try to get hold of the last two tickets to their favourite rock band's final concert.

But with a villainous band manager lurking, nothing goes according to plan...

Will the band perform? Will Danny rock out? Or will Dino's rumbling tummy save the day?...





FLY AWAY TO NEVERLAND

A new production of Peter Pan opens at Birmingham Repertory Theatre this month

By Diane Parkes

JM Barrie's Peter Pan, telling the terrific tale of a young boy who refuses to grow up, has been enchanting audiences for generations. A firm family favourite, the classic children's story receives a sprinkling of Birmingham Repertory Theatre magic this Christmas, with a brand-new adaptation being presented on the venue's main stage. The Rep's artistic director, Joe Murphy, is helming the production and recently chatted to What's On about his love of Peter Pan...

When Birmingham Rep artistic director Joe Murphy was a child, one of his favourite stories was Peter Pan. Which is why Joe has chosen to create a new production of this ever-popular adventure tale for the venue's Christmas show this year.

"I deeply love Peter Pan," he says. "The original book and the original play are among my earliest memories of storytelling, and of me using my imagination to pretend to be other people and build other worlds.

"All I wanted to do as a kid was fly away with Peter Pan to Neverland. It really stuck with me. The adventures and the gang and never growing old just felt so exciting to me."

Joe believes JM Barrie's classic story of the boy who never grows up and the Darling children, who are whisked away to the magical Neverland and battle evil pirate Captain Hook, is a truly timeless tale: "It's so funny and chaotic and exciting, but it's also got a beautiful melancholia, a real emotional punch to it. In the end, I think those are the stories that really stay with you; the stories which, even through a childhood lens, are really wrestling with something important.

"I think ultimately Peter Pan is wrestling with the idea of 'is time our enemy or is time our ally?' It beautifully charts its way through that possibility and flips the script a lot of times on which way round that is.

"Instinctually you think 'time is the enemy and Peter Pan is immortally young, and isn't that amazing? He has awesome adventures and Hook is old and cranky'. But as the story goes on and you begin to see it through Wendy's lens, you start to realise that eternal youth is amazing but it can't accumulate experience or love or wisdom and all these things which give life its texture and its rarity and its beauty.

"So it comes to that bittersweet moment that I think we've all had, where you have to say goodbye to childhood."

The new production, adapted by Phil Porter, features around 20 original new songs - composed by Ruth Chan - and designs by Hayley Grindle. Joe and the team have been keen to ensure the production gets to the heart of the story of Peter Pan.

"We want to try and offer quite a definitive or iconic Peter Pan that de-pantos it, that de-Disneyfies it, and takes us back to that original source material, celebrating all the wonderful parts of that story which make it funny, exciting, moving and for all ages.

"Our roots as a producing drama house mean we always want to engage with the story and the characters as much as we can. Panto is fantastic and I love a panto, but it's a very specific form and doesn't lend itself to our Christmas show.

"Our family Christmas show is based on a fantastic story with compelling characters, beautiful scenery, magical moments and gorgeous songs, all originally created and produced for that production. It's something to offer audiences which is unique in the city."

And Joe is convinced the production will appeal across the generations: "It's a family show, so whether you're seven or 70, you're going to have a fantastic experience with us. I think that's why Peter Pan really endures. Like any of the best kids' stories, it's dealing with lots of different things, like childhood does. Childhood veers from great anarchy and wildness and wonder to sadness and growing up and responsibility, and I think Peter Pan captures that in such a light and deft way.

"The best family stories wrestle with real-world things in a safe, fun environment that allows children to subconsciously experience all these parts of growing up and give space to experiencing that. I think the book and the original play do it so well that we're just following that roadmap really."

Joe was keen for music to be at the heart of the show, and a cast of actor-musicians will perform the songs: "To me, Christmas is as much about music and singing as it is about socialising with friends and storytelling. I always want music running through the Christmas shows I want to see - and so, too, the ones I want to make.

"Peter Pan is also such rich territory for music. There are so many different worlds and characters, so the different worlds of music you can open up can feel really exciting.

"And it gives us this extra element we can give to our audiences. We love to celebrate live performance in all its ways, so to have a show that will feature flying and fighting and live music and beautiful costumes and brilliant actors... I love it when all of those elements come together to give a singular vision of a story; it's the most exciting brand of theatre."

For Joe, theatre has a huge role to play in bringing families together during the festive period: "I think people yearn for connection at Christmas. There's a reason that A Christmas Carol and Peter Pan are enduring Christmas stories. They are both joyous but also get to the heart of what Christmas is about, what family is about, what love for each other is about."

While Peter Pan plays the Main House, The Rep's smaller space, The Door, is given over to another classic story: Hans Christian Andersen's The Ugly Duckling.

"Our aim is that if you are seven and up, you know you can go to the Main House and see a wonderful Peter Pan, and if you're six and under, you know you can go to The Door. Caroline Wilkes, who's directing The Ugly Duckling, is such a wonderful director anyway, but for that age group she is utterly fantastic.

"We've been growing a fabulous Christmas audience for years. They know what to expect from The Rep and hopefully come back time and time again. Peter Pan and The Ugly Duckling are complementary - whatever age your kids are, you know there's a show for them at The Rep this Christmas."

Peter Pan shows at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from Wednesday 18 November to Sunday 17 January.
The Ugly Duckling shows at The Door from Thursday 3 December to Sunday 10 January.


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Christmas In Ireland

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 6 & Sat 7 November; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 8 November; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 13 November; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 23 November

Timeless Irish classics, powerful ballads and much-loved seasonal songs are all present and correct in this feelgood family offering. Performed live by a cast of musicians and singers, the show features a selection of popular hits, with Dirty Old Town, Driving Home For Christmas and Fairytale Of New York all featuring.

Fatt Butcher: Congregational

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 27 & Sat 28 November



"Nightclubs have saved countless queer lives," says Birmingham composer & vocalist Fatt Butcher, the creative force behind this brand-new show. "Congregational is about honouring those spaces and asks what happens when those venues die?...

"It's joyful, messy, emotional, funny, spiritual, sweaty and loud - just like queer nightlife has always been."

Using ritual and song to transform the theatre into a nightclub, this avante-garde musical boasts a thumping original score of newly composed 'hymns for the dancefloor', with house, trance, gospel, classical and experimental music all featuring.

I'm Sorry, I Haven't A Clue

Birmingham Hippodrome, Sat 14 November



One-time Young Ones favourite Adrian Edmondson has called it "the most ridiculous, most surreal, most incomprehensibly funny show on any medium," while The Radio Times confidently described it as "indisputably the greatest radio comedy of all time."

Having garnered plenty more similarly effusive praise across its 54 years and 80-plus series, I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue continues to strike chords with BBC Radio Four listeners throughout the country. The comedy panel game has been touring to theatres since 2007 and here makes a welcome return to the Midlands region.

This particular evening of inspired nonsense sees host Jack Dee joined by Colin Sell at the piano and a panel of quick-witted comedians.

Whisky Tango Foxtrot

Stourbridge Town Hall, Fri 27 November



Described as a tragi-comedy journey through modern British policing, Whisky Tango Foxtrot sees Jack Bryan presenting a humorous and at times challenging autobiographical account of his 30-year career in the force.

Alongside his day-to-day policing, Jack also describes entering a bizarre parallel world hidden from the public - a space governed by dark, surreal and unpredictable rules...

Dom Joly: Trigger Happy TV - The 25th Anniversary

Dudley Town Hall, Fri 20 November



From a launchpad provided by Trigger Happy TV, Dom Joly has led an extraordinary life. Some of his more memorable experiences include skiing down volcanoes and trying to fly across the Grand Canyon strapped to an eight-foot rocket...

...Oh, and he's also eaten from the pants of Dr Gillian McKeith (remember her?) while imprisoned in the Australian jungle during a series of I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!... As his latest show's title makes clear, Dom will be visiting the region in celebration of a quarter-century of Trigger Happy TV.

Ben Folds' Paper Airplane Request Tour

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 24 November



Now here's a novel idea for a concert...

After performing a standard set list before the show's interval, Ben Folds will then sing songs requested by his fans - but requested in a somewhat unusual way: the audience will be invited to write their song requests on paper, fold them into airplanes, and launch them toward the stage... Those attending are encouraged to bring pre-made paper airplanes to the show - although paper and pens *will* be available at the merchandise table for anyone needing to make a paper airplane on site.

Step Into Christmas

The Assembly, Leamington Spa, Sat 21 November; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 22 November; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Mon 23 November; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Tues 24 November; Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 6 & Fri 11 December; Kidderminster Town Hall, Sun 13 December; Dudley Town Hall, Mon 21 December

This warm-hearted family spectacular is the ideal show for anybody who fancies spending a relaxing evening enjoying a jukebox-worth of festive-season hits.

Expect all the favourites - from heartwarming ballads to upbeat Christmas anthems - in a show which is being publicised as 'bigger, brighter and more festive than ever before'.





DANCE ON!

South Asian arts & heritage organisation Sampad is 36 years old and still going strong...

By Diane Parkes

It's another busy season of dance for South Asian arts & heritage organisation Sampad, as director, Piali Ray recently told What's On...

Sampad South Asian Arts & Heritage is promising a new season packed with opportunities for people to watch, engage with and take part in activities across the city.

The organisation, which was founded in 1990 to foster and promote South Asian arts and heritage in Birmingham and the West Midlands, has announced a new programme featuring theatre, an interactive walk, music, dance and community engagement.

It's a busy season, says Sampad's director, Piali Ray, but also one that's emblematic of the work the organisation does: "When the story of Sampad started as a foundation arts development organisation, we were trying to raise awareness through doing arts activities. Now, the foundation of the organisation remains the same - we want to connect with people in the city, in the region, nationally and internationally wherever possible.

"And we want to connect with people in different ways, whether they are artists or participants or our audiences - and particularly with specific groups who have specific needs, whether they are in a school environment or a community space.

"That principle remains with the organisation, and the programme reflects that. We are really committed to ensuring that we give the best possible experience of South Asian arts to each and every person or group we are connecting with."

One season highlight is An Evening With Vidya Patel (Birmingham Rep, Saturday 21 November), in which the nationally renowned Birmingham-born performer will present a blend of conversation and dance.

"Vidya is an amazing dancer," says Piali. "She has worked with remarkable companies and choreographers across the country and Europe. It is essentially *her* evening, and it will be her journey back to Birmingham; that is what she will talk about and dance.

"She has achieved what many South Asian dancers would aspire to, so as a role model, she is an inspiration. And she is also a beautiful Kathak dancer who has trained in other forms and worked with other choreographers. Here, she is coming back to her roots."

Another key event is Midday Mantra, a season of Saturday afternoon concerts taking place in Symphony Hall's Jennifer Blackwell performance space.

Featuring a host of different music traditions, from South Asian folk and jazz through to Indian classical and contemporary, the team are always willing to hear from new musicians who would like to perform at the event.

"One of the things we are constantly looking out for is an exciting British Asian sound," Piali says. "A new generation of artists are creating work that has a strong South Asian element alongside narratives of their life in the UK.

"It is always exciting to look at the new British Asian sounds that are coming through, whether that's intercultural or within particular genres of music."

The new season kicks off with Bedlam Arts & Mental Health Symposium, in which Sampad is a partner alongside Birmingham Rep and Midlands Arts Centre. This year's get-together features a number of Sampad events, including Can We Talk?, Birmingham-based writer & actor Rochi Rampal's new short play exploring artificial intelligence (MAC, Friday 6 & Saturday 7 November).

Speaking about the production, Sampad's programme manager, James Vegnuti, said: "Can We Talk? is very much a family story. Rochi has been workshopping it with lots of different people: head teachers, health-care professionals - and with 17-year-olds, the teenagers that the story is centred around.

"The piece lasts about 35 minutes and will be followed by a conversation which we feel is really important. Our audiences usually love a bit of discussion and debate, and this will be a perfect opportunity for people to hear about things they have been reading a lot about."

Also in the festival is a chance to take part in a gentle movement workshop called Let's Dance, while Sampad's Stratford Road Walking Tour: Diwali Special (Saturday 7 November) opens the door into a host of diverse stories and experiences.

"Our Stratford Road Walking Tour has been going on for about six years," says James. "It's one of our most recommended events in Birmingham. You learn about all kinds of migration stories and the importance of the Stratford Road.

"For this time, our guide, Vimal Korpal, is working on some brand-new stories, including Diwali. It will be the day before Diwali - so expect the shops to be really busy, and there will be a real buzz down the high street. Vimal is able to get access inside Grade One listed churches, inside Hindu temples, Sikh Gurdwaras, Yemeni coffee shops, Gohil's Emporium. Each one of these locations has a story, whether it be from the founder, from longstanding customers or from another member of the community who feels that the space is very important to them."

Another Sampad event is Chai And Chat: From Fast Fashion To Upcycling, a discussion with sustainable fashion entrepreneur Rukhsana Sardar which takes place at the National Trust's Back to Backs on Thursday 12 November.

"Rukhsana will be talking a bit about her story, as well as giving practical advice about upcycling," says James. "And hopefully the discussion afterwards turns into a bit of a learning and shared experience for everyone. What's really cool about this event is that there's an actual call to action for people to bring along their own upcycling project."

The season's finale, Asian Spring, takes place next year and is one of Sampad's most popular events - as Piali explains: "People love it. As soon as the evening is finished, people start asking 'so what's the date for next year?'

"Asian Spring is a showcase of community South Asian dance in all its variety - classical, Bollywood, folk. We've even seen Bharatanatyam and Morris dancing together in the past! It's a celebration of dance in the region, with a lot of teachers and groups profiling their work. At least 15 or 16 groups perform side by side. Each and every group puts immense effort into it, into creating the piece, the look, the costumes, the endless hours of practice. We really appreciate the amount of effort that goes in.

"Some of the groups have been in it since the very first programme, and we are now in about the 25th or 26th version of it. And we are always on the look-out for new groups and artists, because that brings freshness to the stage."

In many ways, says Piali, Asian Spring is the epitome not just of Sampad's 2026/27 season but of its entire philosophy: "We try to do the best for our artists, for our audiences and our communities. That is at the heart of Sampad. There are challenges, particularly as resources become more and more difficult to access, but we have brilliant partnerships, and we are grateful that we have such a thriving cultural scene in Birmingham so we can have those conversations.

"We have a loyal audience of people who have known us for a long time and come back, but there are also people who do not know about Sampad. I would like to invite them to come and join us this season, in whatever way they want to.

"Come and see our events, come and talk to us, and hopefully there will be something there for you - whether it's through performance or workshops. Or if you are a young person who wants to share your talent, please come and work with us."

For more information on individual events, visit sampad.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Director Carlos Acosta



Rosanna Ely-Savage © Manvir Rai.

Sir Peter Wright's

The Nutcracker

20 November – 12 December

"Still the best *Nutcracker* on offer in the UK"
The Guardian

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Silvia Gribaudi - Graces

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 20 November

Antonio Canova's sculpture The Three Graces - representing Zeus' daughters Euphrosyne, Aglaea and Thalia - provides the inspiration for this award-winning show from Italian choreographer Silvia Gribaudi, whose recent work has seen her questioning gender stereotypes and female and male identities. The work sees three male performers, together with Silvia herself, embark on a search for new meanings of the word 'grace'. In so doing, the quartet embrace a comic style that blurs the boundaries between dance, theatre and performance.

Protein Dance: The Magic Flute

Walsall Arena, Wed 18 November



The Magic Flute tells the story of two young lovers who, on a perilous journey through a mysterious land of sorcerers and magic, find themselves being assisted by a curious cosmic character who dresses as a bird...

Mozart's famous fairytale-opera has here been adapted by Protein Dance's artistic director, Luca Silvestrini, and comes to life through the company's playful mix of dance, storytelling, singing and striking visuals. Suitable for family members aged seven and older, the production is performed twice on Wednesday the 18th, at 1pm and 7pm.

Amina Khayyam Dance

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Thurs 19 November

High-energy Kathak is the vehicle by which the story of Bird, Amina Khayyam's widely praised dancework, is expressed.



A stage sequel to her company's critically acclaimed lockdown-era film, Catch The Bird Who Won't Fly, the 55-minute production does what Amina's work does best: investigates hard-hitting subject matter... In this particular case, the award-winning choreographer is exploring the issue of women living with domestic abuse.

New English Ballet Theatre: The Nutcracker

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 3 & Wed 4 November

The Nutcracker tells the story of a young girl named Clara as she's swept up in a fantasy of soldiers, giant rats, snow fairies, magic and mystery, before finally being transformed into a beautiful ballerina.

The production is presented by New English Ballet Theatre, who toured the work for the first time last autumn, to great critical acclaim.

Anatomy Of Survival

Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 26 November



"Anatomy Of Survival is a theatre/dance show with drumming," explains its choreographer, the psychotherapist Frauke Requardt, to therecs.co.uk. "The show revisits an interaction which has gone wrong in a coffee shop, where a woman loses her sh*t."

Running for 60 minutes without an interval and produced by Frauke in collaboration with award-winning playwright Vivienne Franzmann, the offbeat collaboration comprises 22 very different eyewitness accounts of the very public altercation.

"The show's proposal is that everybody's reality has merit," continues Frauke. "You can have yours, and perhaps at the same time let in someone else's reality too, to get a fuller picture."

Ace Dance & Music: The World As We See It

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 17 November

Committed to the presentation of contemporary dance inspired by the African Diaspora, ACE Dance & Music here present a double bill of work which they describe as 'powerful contrasting visions of our world today'.

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

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





Images from last year's opening night at Birmingham Hippodrome (c) Johan Persson 2025

FLIGHT OF FANCY

Festive favourite The Nutcracker makes a welcome return this month, brought to the Birmingham Hippodrome stage by Birmingham Royal Ballet. A mainstay of Christmas programming at the Hippodrome since being gifted to the city by Sir Peter Wright in 1990, the production continues to inspire audiences with the spirit of the season. Take a look behind the magic, and find out more about this Christmas classic, with our round-up of fascinating facts and figures...

MAKING HISTORY

The Nutcracker was first performed in 1892, featuring music by Tchaikovsky and a story based on a fairytale called The Nutcracker And The Mouse King by ETA Hoffmann.

Thanks to its festive setting and fantastical story, which continue to delight audiences of all ages, it has since become a staple of the Christmas period around the world.

Sir Peter Wright created a new production of The Nutcracker in 1984, to be performed by the Royal Ballet. When the Sadler Wells Royal Ballet moved to Birmingham in 1990 - becoming Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), with Sir Peter at the helm - he staged a new version of the production.

Making numerous departures from the 1892 original, the show leans into the magic and wonder of the journey that's undertaken by the story's 15-year-old protagonist, Clara.

The Nutcracker has since become a firm festive favourite with Midlands ballet fans, performed by Birmingham's very own company, accompanied by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, and set against the sumptuous backdrop of John Macfarlane's design.

LIGHT AND SHADE

While the warm, festive feeling of The Nutcracker undoubtedly adds to its enduring charm and popularity, the show contains moments of darkness, too.

From the uncanny battle with the Rat King, to the unknown powers of the magician Drosselmeyer, and even the slightly eerie music which accompanies the Sugar Plum Fairy, protagonist Clara encounters plenty of sinister strangeness on her travels, as well as many magical wonders.

A CHRISTMAS CLASSIC

Set at that magical moment when the clock strikes midnight to welcome in Christmas Day, it's no surprise that The Nutcracker has become synonymous with the season. The spectacle is undeniably festive, featuring swirling snowflakes, sweet treats, treasured gifts, and of course a magnificent Christmas tree, which grows in size before the audience's very eyes.

Accompanied by Tchaikovsky's evocative score, The Nutcracker remains one of the very best ways to harness the spirit of the festive season.

LASTING LEGACY

First staged by Birmingham Royal Ballet in 1990, The Nutcracker has since become a much-loved addition to the Midlands' cultural calendar, the magical production regularly welcoming audience members of all ages. Those who saw the show as children now revisit the experience with their own children and grandchildren, making it a real family affair.

By Jessica Clixby

WHO'S WHO IN BRB'S THE NUTCRACKER?

CLARA

Fifteen-year-old Clara is training to be a dancer - just like her mother, who is a former ballerina. On Christmas Eve, Clara is strangely drawn to one of her gifts - a Nutcracker toy, which magically mends itself after being broken by her brother.
On the stroke of midnight, as Clara is searching for the Nutcracker, something strange happens: the world seems to grow enormous around her, and she finds herself embarking on a magical adventure. Clara flies to a dream-like land, helps to defeat the villainous Rat King, and joins in the dancing...

DROSSELMEYER

Drosselmeyer is a magician, invited to the Christmas Eve party at Clara's house by her parents, to provide entertainment. He brings gifts for the children, including the Nutcracker doll.
Drosselmeyer conjures up a magical land, which Clara visits, flying through the clouds on the back of a white goose. Another altercation with the Rat King ensues, but he is defeated by the Nutcracker Prince and Drosselmeyer, who arranges a grand celebration in Clara's honour.

THE NUTCRACKER

Given to Clara as a Christmas gift, the Nutcracker begins the story as a doll but then comes to life, accompanied by an army of toy soldiers. They are soon set upon by a swarm of giant rats - led by their king - who attack Clara.
The Nutcracker is about to be overpowered by the Rat King, when Clara intervenes, but he falls down, exhausted. Clara tries to revive him, and he comes back to life - just as he was magically mended when he was merely a toy.
To Clara's amazement, the Nutcracker turns into a handsome prince and they dance together.

THE SUGAR PLUM FAIRY

As the celebrations begin in Drosselmeyer's fantasy world, dancers from many different lands come together. Clara joins in and - in this version of the story - is finally transformed into the ballerina of her dreams: The Sugar Plum Fairy.
The Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy is one of the most iconic musical moments in Tchaikovsky's score, utilising the bell-like sounds of the orchestra's celeste.
The Sugar Plum Fairy dances alone, before being joined by the Nutcracker Prince, as Clara's adventure comes to an end...



THE NUTCRACKER BY NUMBERS...

To date, The Nutcracker has been performed **669** times at Birmingham Hippodrome.

The production features **118** different character roles, performed by the Company's **63** dancers.

The flying goose that transports Clara travels **20** metres across the stage every performance. Since 1990, the goose has flown more than **8** miles at Birmingham Hippodrome.

5 set changes transport the audience through the story, while more than **200** people work on- and off-stage each year to bring The Nutcracker to life.

The Christmas tree is **3.7** metres tall at first, then grows to an impressive **7.5** metres.

Approximately **1** tonne of dry ice and **75** kilograms of artificial snow is used during the production.

Clara has approximately **1** minute to change from her day dress into her nightdress during Act One.
2 members of BRB's costume team assist with this quick change.

Each performance involves **61** musicians and **12** singers.

Dancers across the company will use more than **350** pairs of pointe shoes during the run's **20** performances.

Tchaikovsky's famous score requires more than **20** types of instrument, including the celeste, whose magical sound is synonymous with Christmas.

BRB's The Nutcracker shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Friday 20 November to Saturday 12 December
Visit brb.org.uk for further information and tickets

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The Hunger Games: Sunrise On The Reaping CERT 12a (158 mins)

Starring **Joseph Zada, Jesse Plemons, Ralph Fiennes, Glenn Close, Kieran Culkin, Elle Fanning**
Directed by **Francis Lawrence**

This sci-fi action-adventure prequel film is set four decades after its immediate predecessor in the franchise, The Ballad Of Songbirds And Snakes, but 24 years before the events of the original Hunger Games trilogy.
Based on the same-named 2025 novel by Suzanne Collins, the latest movie focuses on the character of 16-year-old Haymitch Abernathy, a fan favourite who was played as an adult in the original Hunger Games films by Woody Harrelson.
Reaped into the Games, Haymitch forms an alliance with fellow tribute Maysilee Donner, becoming part of a broader resistance effort to challenge the oppressive control of President Snow (Ralph Fiennes)...
Most of which will mean precious little to anybody who's not an actual fan of The Hunger Games!
I Am Legend director Francis Lawrence helms this eagerly anticipated sixth entry.

Released Fri 20 November



Being Heumann

CERT **12a (127 mins)**

Starring **Ruth Madeley, Mark Ruffalo, Dylan O'Brien, Rob Delaney, Ray Fisher, Jon Beavers**
Directed by **Sian Heder**

At first glance, the subject matter of Being Heumann may seem somewhat dry and uninteresting. Thankfully, director Sian Heder has done an excellent job of corralling all of the true-life story's essential elements into a cinematic experience that manages to be both absorbing and uplifting.
The movie chronicles a historic fight for disability rights that took place way back in 1977. Central to the narrative is wheelchair-using Judy Heumann, who inspired more than 100 disabled activists to occupy the federal building in San Francisco for 28 days. Their aim? To demand that the government sign and enforce a law protecting people with disabilities from discrimination in federally funded programmes...
Ruth Madeley has earned glowing praise for her powerhouse portrayal of the tenacious Heumann.

Released Fri 6 November

Ebenezer CERT tbc

Starring **Johnny Depp, Daisy Ridley, Sam Claflin, Ian McKellen, Rupert Grint, Andrea Riseborough** Directed by **Ti West**



Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a retelling or several of Charles Dickens' most famous festive-season story of them all.
This latest cinematic adaptation sees Johnny Depp - on the comeback trail following well-documented personal-life trials and tribulations - disappearing beneath the old-man make-up to play Victorian London's most famous 'squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner'.
But no traditional heartwarming holiday tale is this, with man-at-the-helm Ti West choosing to ramp up the story's supernatural elements and go heavy as a festive snowfall on the jump scares. This is hardly a surprise - West is, first and foremost, an indie horror director, with a CV that includes terrifying trilogy X, Pearl, and MaXXXine...
Ebenezer is certainly shaping up to be an intriguing release - although one wonders whether it might have more of a Halloween feel about it than a Christmas one.

Released Fri 13 November

How To Rob A Bank

CERT **15 (122 mins)**

Starring **Nicholas Hoult, Christian Slater, Zoë Kravitz, Anna Sawai, John C Reilly, Pete Davidson** Directed by **David Leitch**

David Leitch is the man in the director's chair for a film which focuses on a crew of social-media-savvy bank robbers who not only carry out daring heists but also have the audacity to broadcast them.
Their viral fame comes at a cost, though, depositing them in the crosshairs of a veteran FBI agent and a brilliant software engineer. Despite the unlikely duo closing in, the crime ring pushes past their limits, putting everything on the line for their most ambitious heist yet...
The film is being billed as Point Break meets Fast And Furious. Director Leitch has experience of the latter, having helmed the 2019 spinoff movie Hobbs & Shaw.

Released Fri 13 November




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Focker-In-Law CERT tbc (100 mins)

Starring **Robert De Niro, Skyler Gisondo, Owen Wilson, Ben Stiller, Ariana Grande, Teri Polo** Directed by **John Hamburg**



If you've seen the original film in the Meet The Parents franchise, the storyline of Focker-In-Law will be very familiar to you: grown-up child brings home new partner to meet Mum and Dad, only to find that Dad is suspicious as hell of the new arrival. The main plot difference between that first and this fourth installment in the series is that Ben Stiller's character, Greg Focker, is now the suspicious father.

In the original film, Greg was the new partner brought home by his girlfriend to meet her sceptical dad, Jack - brilliantly played by Robert De Niro. This time round, Greg and his wife Pam's son, Henry, brings home his new partner - trained FBI hostage negotiator Olivia (Ariana Grande) - and announces his intention to propose. But Greg is seriously concerned that his future daughter-in-law might be a terrible mismatch. Jack, on the other hand - a retired CIA counterintelligence agent - takes rather a liking to her...

Released Wed 25 November



Prima Facie CERT 13 (106 mins)

Starring **Cynthia Erivo, Daniel Ings, Harry Treadaway, Noma Dumezweni, Toheeb Jimoh, Simon Russell Beale** Directed by **Susanna White**

From page to stage and now to film, Suzie Miller's Prima Facie is best known as the vehicle via which Jodie Comer showed just how brilliant and accomplished an actor she is. The Killing Eve star performed the two-hour one-woman play to universal acclaim both in the West End and on Broadway.

The film version sees Wicked's Cynthia Erivo taking on the Comer role of Tessa Ensler.

A brilliant criminal defence barrister, Tessa is sexually assaulted by a colleague and forced to confront the flaws of the legal system from the perspective of a survivor.

Premiered at the Toronto Film Festival, the movie received a lukewarm response from the critics. The prevailing feeling was that much of the original play's intensity had been lost as a result of the decision to introduce a supporting cast of characters.

Released Fri 13 November

A Talent For Murder

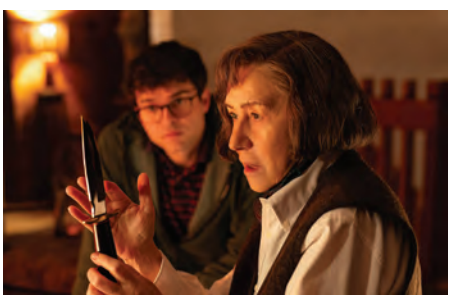
CERT tbc (106 mins)

Starring **Olivia Cooke, Helen Mirren, Alden Ehrenreich, Juliet Stevenson, James Faulkner, Brid Brennan** Directed by **Anton Corbijn**

Helen Mirren stars as real-life novelist and Talented Mr Ripley author Patricia Highsmith in this mid-1990s-set psychological noir thriller. The storyline sees a young editor named Edward Ridgeway dispatched by a New York publisher to Highsmith's isolated chalet in the Alps. His mission: to persuade the reclusive and cantankerous novelist to write a final, long-awaited installment in her Tom Ripley book series.

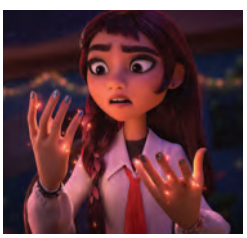
But Highsmith is having none of it - unless, that is, Edward first agrees to engage in a dangerous and disturbing game of cat-and-mouse, collaborating with her to plot a 'perfect murder' that blurs the lines between reality, fiction and psychological manipulation.

Released Fri 20 November



Hexed CERT PG

With the voices of **Hailee Steinfeld, Tracey Ullman,Walton Goggins, Alan Tudyk, Jodie Foster, Rashida Jones** Directed by **Jason Hand, Josie Trinidad** and **Fawn Veerasunthorn**



Walt Disney Animation Studios' latest fantasy-adventure film focuses on the character of Billie Doe, an impulsive teenage girl who accidentally unleashes magical abilities that she didn't know she had.

But that's not all. Her newly discovered powers rip her out of suburbia and into Hexe - a vast, hidden realm of witches, where wild and unhinged magic positively thrives.

Along with her mother, Alice, she begins to investigate family secrets connected to the world of witches...

When Hexed was announced by Disney last year, the hero was a teenage boy, but by this summer, the main character had undergone a gender change.

"A parent-child relationship was always the core of the story," explained director Jason Hand, "and we found the strongest story was between a mother and a daughter. It spoke to the idea of being a witch. It spoke to this empowerment that she was looking for."

Released Fri 27 November



BORROWERS TIME

There's a family of tiny people - and the promise of a big show - at Staffordshire's New Vic Theatre this Christmas...

By Steve Adams

This year's Christmas show at the New Vic Theatre sees a welcome return for Artistic Director Theresa Heskins' 2014 adaptation of children's fantasy tale The Borrowers. And the critically acclaimed show isn't the only 'revival' to be presented at the Newcastle-under-Lyme venue in 2026 - to mark its 40th anniversary, the theatre has been revisiting some of its most popular productions. What's On caught up with Theresa to find out more...

"When I came here, I had a list of five plays that I thought we couldn't do 'in the round'. The Borrowers was one of them."

Theresa Heskins, artistic director of the New Vic Theatre, has never been one to shy away from a challenge, as her work at the Staffordshire venue - one of the UK's handful of permanent in-the-round theatres - emphatically confirms. Recent productions have featured trains, boats and an elephant (Around The World In 80 Days), tunnels in POW camps (Tom, Dick & Harry), acrobatic canines (The Company Of Wolves) and even swimmers with tails instead of legs (The Little Mermaid).

Theresa laughs when I mention the absurd levels of ambition that have become characteristic of her work.

"It's so lovely to hear that thought - thank you! We do want to make sure audiences are being constantly surprised and delighted by what they find here, and part of that is the scale of ambition that we try to achieve."

This year's Christmas production, The Borrowers, shares that same aspiration, just as it did before, since it's the revival of a production that was first staged in 2014. It's being brought back as part of the theatre's 40th anniversary celebrations, which have been taking place for most of the year, with a selection of audience favourites returning for an encore.

"To celebrate the 40 years, we thought we should do some of the shows that have made the biggest impact or been the most popular," explains Theresa. "We asked people what shows they should be, and we've been doing them all year. We did Good Golly Miss Molly in the spring, and in summer we did Around The World In 80 Days, which was one of the most lovely experiences to bring back again.

"When we asked what Christmas show people would most like to see, we were really delighted as well as surprised that the answer was The Borrowers, which was a really memorable production.

"I've had a lovely time revisiting these gorgeous shows, but with new audiences as well - 80 per cent of the people who came to Around The World In 80 Days hadn't been to see it before."

It's been 12 years since the original production of The Borrowers, so Theresa - who celebrates two decades at the venue next year - is expecting a similar split between original and first-time audience members.

"I think we'll find, like we did with 80 Days, that people who saw and loved it are now bringing their children along, who were young before but are now teens and young adults. And of course there'll be a whole new cohort of school children."

Adapted from the children's fantasy novel by Mary Norton, the show tells the story of the miniature Clock family, who secretly live beneath the floorboards of a regular human home, surviving by 'borrowing' items from the house above. The Clocks' existence is threatened when a member of the family is spotted by one of the house's habitants, leading to an exciting chase-fuelled story that mixes adventure and bravery with family and friendship. Throw in some lively music by James Atherton and it's the perfect festive family show, following the theatre's tradition of providing an alternative to the seasonal pantomime.

"When I came to the Vic, it was already established that the Christmas show would explore children's literature," says Theresa. "What was interesting for me is that I didn't come from a family who did reading, so I was doing shows without ever having read [the books] as a kid.

"I've been so lucky to be able to catch up on all that. And to think about those stories, not from the lens of my own past and how they impacted me when I was a child, but what they mean for people here locally, and the young people who might be our audiences.

"So it's been a real joy to discover all these stories and think about how to bring them to the stage."

Since they're children's books, they largely live in the imagination - doesn't that make them impossible to stage?

"Ha! Yeah, exactly - almost all of them! But one of the lovely things about being 'in the round' is that it invites the audience to use their imaginations. They're very aware of being in the space, and they can see each other, and a kind of creative collaboration takes place."

Theresa says audiences can expect a number of changes from the show's original incarnation, including an all-new (and bigger) cast, expanded climbing scenes ("we're bringing in an aerial circus specialist to help us to polish them up a bit"), more music and "clearer and crisper sound", courtesy of a new sound system installed over the summer.

"It's been a nice opportunity to brush it up and do something a little bit new with it," she says, noting that the show's fantastic props include a giant toothbrush, as well as a huge safety pin and enormous cheese grater.

"They're taller than I am, but they actually work! On the other hand, we've got this beautiful model village of tiny little houses - you can look into the windows and see fully fitted kitchens and even a bath with bubble bath in."

The theatre's configuration means audiences will have a chance to do just that when they're filing in and out of their seats. Theresa is hoping it adds to the magic, as well as reaffirming the quality of the work being produced by the venue, which continues to punch above its weight on the world stage. Its latest success saw a 2024 co-production of The Princess And The Pea being performed on Broadway, as well as at the Southbank Centre in London.

"We never thought a show like that would play a venue of that scale," she says, with more than a hint of glee. "Having started here, it's been so exciting to see it going further afield and meeting new audiences.

"I'm so proud of the work being made here by people who live locally, as well as for local audiences to know that it's out there on the international stage, doing our area credit. The Potteries is a place that traditionally exported its culture to the rest of the world, and I'm really proud that we're following in that tradition."

Theresa's positivity clearly extends to the upcoming production, which is proving so popular that its run has already been extended way beyond the traditional festive season.

"I think we've now got one of the longest-running Christmas shows in the country, and it's just down to audience demand," she says, acknowledging that focusing on families and festive values, rather than Santa Claus or presents, will hopefully work in its favour come mid-January.

"We have those values that celebrate Christmas - for example, families that have been parted coming back together, which is a strong theme in all of our lives at this time of year - but also a story that will tide us through into January, where we don't have all that warmth and tradition. It can be quite a bleak month where people need a bit of cheering up, and I think we'll manage to do that!"

The Borrowers shows at the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, from Friday 13 November to Saturday 23 January



Installation view of British Art Show 10: A Chorus of Strangers. Image courtesy Hayward Gallery Touring. Photo: David Parry.

British Art Show 10

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry; Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry; Coventry University, until Sun 10 January

Painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation all feature in British Art Show 10. Comprising works by more than 30 artists, the Southbank Centre Hayward Gallery touring exhibition, taking the title A Chorus Of Strangers, launched across three Coventry venues at the start of last month.

Providing an overview of the most exciting art produced in the UK across the past five years, the landmark exhibition explores the ways in which people are relating to one another - and to the planet - during a period of 'profound social, cultural and environmental change'.

Commenting on the exhibition, Brian Cass, Head of Hayward Gallery Touring, said: "This 10th edition of the British Art Show is an invitation to shift perspective and see the world from multiple positions at once. As it travels to five UK cities, A Chorus Of Strangers will illuminate the power of art to transform uncertainty into a shared journey of kinship and possibility."





Permindar Kaur: Dread Naught

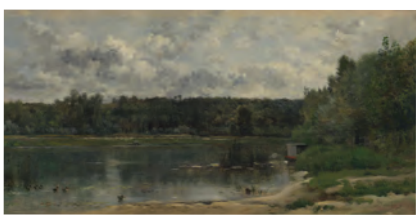
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 11 April

This recently opened exhibition features both new commissions and examples of early-career work by leading British sculptor & installation artist Permindar Kaur.

"I always want people to have some sort of emotional response to my work," says Permindar. "I use such basic and generic forms - and because I do that, it's quite open for people to have a response to, or for them to imagine what they think the figures are and what they represent.

"I don't want the work to be closed off and didactic and say it's about this or that. But also the work has complexity, so it can be read in different ways.

"I'm always trying to create this balance in my art, where you don't know how to feel. There are boundaries, and you don't know which side to be on."



Reflections

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, until Sun 3 January

Immerse yourself in the fluid beauty and immense power of water...

That's the suggestion being made by Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum in its publicity for this thought-provoking exhibition.

Featuring works from Worcester City's own collection - presented alongside high-profile loans from national collections and numerous pieces by contemporary artists - Reflections aims to inspire the viewer's imagination. It also serves as a vital reminder of the human responsibility to protect seas, rivers, streams and waterways, all of which are so important for the future.

Image credit: River Scene with Ducks, Charles-François Daubigny, 1859 © The National Gallery, London. Salting Bequest, 1910.

Raqib Shaw: Night Sonnets

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 21 February

It's been more than a decade since Raqib Shaw mounted an exhibition of new work in the UK, so his admirers will surely be eager to check out this brand-new offering.

Night Sonnets brings together a cycle of nocturnal paintings and tapestry which has been informed by the 52-year-old artist's lifelong interest in moonlight and the conditions of the night.

The paintings act as vehicles via which Raqib contemplates difficult issues such as human consciousness, environmental loss and destruction of knowledge, in the process exploring questions about the complexities of modern-day existence.

The exhibition includes a number of works which have never before been exhibited in the UK. These include The Retrospective 2002-2022, an epic, highly detailed painting which functions as a visual inventory of the Calcutta-born artist's impressive career.

MADE At MAC: Capturing The Human Form

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Sun 7 February



This Made At MAC exhibition showcases work produced by participants across the full breadth of the venue's artistic courses.

Featuring everything from life drawing to dance, and sculpture to photography, the show explores the ways in which tutors and students create work which takes its inspiration from the human form. The exhibition also aims to highlight the commitment of MAC's team of life models, 'whose tireless efforts enable study, creation and experimentation'.

Discovering Lisel Haas

Library of Birmingham, until Sat 12 December

Library of Birmingham's free-to-view exhibition features photographs, archive material and new pieces of art inspired by the life and work of Lisel Haas. A German-born Jewish photographer, Lisel left her home town of Mönchengladbach in 1938, emigrating to Birmingham with her partner Grete Bermbach. Once settled, she quickly established herself as a creative force, despite facing both institutional and cultural barriers.

Rooted In Recovery

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, until Mon 9 November



A powerful and thought-provoking collection of artwork exploring recovery, resilience and connection awaits early-November visitors to Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery.

Bringing together work created by participants in a nature-based art psychotherapy programme, Rooted In Recovery is inspired by local woodlands and features a varied collection of watercolours, mixed-media pieces, ceramics and photography, presented alongside audio and video work.

Commenting on the exhibition, Councillor Alex Wagner, Shropshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Culture, said: "Rooted In Recovery is living proof that arts and culture have a major role to play in supporting the health and wellbeing of people across our county. It shows how creativity can provide a voice, build confidence, and help people reconnect with themselves, with others, and with the world around them."


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Festive Good Food Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 November

The countdown to Christmas gets a delicious kick-start when the Festive Good Food Show returns to the NEC this month.

Bringing together top chefs, food experts, artisan producers and household brands, the four-day event promises plenty of inspiration for festive entertaining, seasonal recipes and Christmas shopping.

Visitors can check out live cooking demonstrations by well-known culinary stars including John Torode and James Martin (pictured), pick up tips and tricks for Christmas feasts, and enjoy tastings, workshops and interactive experiences.

More than 350 independent food & drink producers will be showcasing their products, offering everything from gourmet treats and festive ingredients to unique gifts and kitchen essentials.



Crafting, cakes and Christmas at the NEC...

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 November

Creative enthusiasts are invited to enjoy a packed day of inspiration, shopping and festive fun when four popular events come together under one roof at the NEC early this month.

One ticket gives visitors access to The Creative Craft Show, Sewing For Pleasure Winter, Simply Christmas and Cake & Bake International, creating what organisers describe as the biggest and best-value creative day out.

Shoppers can browse hundreds of exhibitors offering everything from craft supplies, fabrics and sewing essentials to handmade gifts, festive decorations, jewellery and home accessories. Demonstrations, workshops and expert advice, for anyone looking to learn new skills or find inspiration for their next project, also feature.

Cake lovers can marvel at spectacular edible creations - including a life-size display featuring the Prince and Princess of Wales - alongside thousands of competition entries.

Baking stars Cherish Finden and Andrew Fuller, from Netflix's Is It Cake?, will also be in attendance.

Mind Body Spirit Festival

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 13 - Sun 15 November

The Mind Body Spirit Festival is offering three days of wellbeing, spirituality and self-care at the NEC mid-month.

Visitors can explore a packed programme of talks, workshops, classes and experiences designed to inspire healthier, more mindful living.

The festival features a bustling Wellbeing Market, free stages, expert speakers and wide-ranging opportunities to engage with holistic practices including yoga, meditation, energy healing and mindfulness.

Attendees can also take part in interactive experiences, explore different therapies and connect with like-minded people from across the wellbeing community.



The National Festival Of Railway Modelling

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 21 & Sun 22 November

Widely regarded as the UK's largest model railway exhibition, The National Festival Of Railway Modelling is a two-day event bringing together over 120 manufacturers, retailers, clubs and societies from across the country and more than 60 expertly crafted layouts.

Visitors can access live demonstrations, expert talks and practical modelling advice at the World of Railways Stage, while family-friendly attractions include the Marble Express Train Game and a free ride-on train.

Netball Aid

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sun 15 November

Sport, entertainment and fundraising come together in Birmingham this month as star-studded charity event Netball Aid makes a return. The popular get-together will see celebrities, former netball stars and special guests join forces for an afternoon of netball action, music and family-friendly activities and entertainment. The annually held event is raising vital funds and awareness for Shelter, the long-established homelessness charity which works to support people facing housing insecurity across the country.

The Elf Express

28, 29 NOVEMBER
5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 23, 24 DECEMBER



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SANTA'S STEAM SPECIALS

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museumsworcestershire.org.uk

MUSEUMS WORCESTERSHIRE



Santa Steam Specials

Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster, Sat 28 & Sun 29 November, Sat 5 & Sun 6, Sat 12 & Sun 13, Sat 19 & Sun 20 and Thurs 24 December

All aboard Severn Valley Railway's Santa's Steam Specials, running on selected dates from the end of the month.

The family-focused experience combines a heritage steam-train journey - from Kidderminster to Arley Station - with a brand-new musical adventure entitled The Recipe For Christmas.

Every child will receive a special gift to take home, while selected departures also offer visitors the opportunity to explore Bewdley during the return journey.

Relaxed performances, designed for visitors who prefer a calmer environment, will be available at 10am on Sundays in December.



THE POLAR EXPRESS Train Ride

Birmingham Moor Street Station, Sun 22, Sat 28 & Sun 29 November, Sat 5 & Sun 6, Sat 12 & Sun 13, Fri 18 - Tues 23 December

THE POLAR EXPRESS Train Ride returns to Birmingham for Christmas 2026 with a brand-new show, inviting families to step into the magic of the much-loved festive story.

Departing from Birmingham Moor Street Station, the immersive theatrical experience brings to life the world of the 2004 film aboard a heritage steam train. Passengers can enjoy live performances, festive music and storytelling, as familiar characters help recreate the enchanting adventure.

Guests are encouraged to wear their favourite pyjamas and dressing gowns as they settle in for a journey that comes complete with singing chefs, hot chocolate and a cookie. Santa Claus will also make a special appearance, presenting every guest with the treasured First Gift of Christmas - a silver sleigh bell.

Neverland

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 3 January

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery's Gas Hall has transformed into the magical world of Neverland for Christmas. The immersive festive experience, inspired by JM Barrie's classic children's story Peter Pan, features twinkling fairy lights, pirate ships, whimsical forests and familiar characters including Peter Pan, Wendy, Captain Hook, Tinkerbell and the alarm-clock-swallowing crocodile.

The Neverland experience is supporting a meaningful cause, with £1 from every ticket sold being donated to Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity, helping to support seriously ill children and their families.



Christmas Tree Festival

Worcester Cathedral, Fri 27 November - Tues 5 January

Worcester Cathedral's historic cloisters and Chapter House are once again playing host to hundreds of individually decorated Christmas trees created by local schools, charities, businesses and community groups.

Visitors can explore the displays and discover the stories behind the decorations, with Dedication Trees offering an opportunity to remember loved ones or celebrate someone special. The festival will also introduce new Community Trees, wooden trees made by Men's Shed Worcester, which have been decorated by individuals, families, schools and other groups.



THE WINTER LIGHT EXPERIENCE

Make this Christmas one to remember.





Follow a trail of light and mystery at the Winter Light Experience, taking place at The Belfry Hotel and Resort. Explore over a mile of illuminated landscapes filled with live characters, interactive games and more!

There's a festive mystery waiting to be unravelled... After an unexpected landing, Santa's presents, reindeer and Christmas magic are scattered along the trail. Follow the clues, explore the installations and see if you can help set things right before the night is through.



What to expect:

- ✦ 60–90 minute illuminated journey, over a mile long
- ✦ 30+ brand-new light installations & interactive games
- ✦ Festive food & a fully licensed Après Bar
- ✦ Live actors throughout the experience
- ✦ Dedicated dog-friendly & sensory nights
- ✦ Free-to-access Christmas Courtyard

Scan here to book your tickets!

@winterlightexperience

SPARKLE & SHINE

Four fabulous light events taking place across the region in the lead-up to Christmas



Winter Light Experience

The Belfry Hotel & Resort, Sutton Coldfield,
Fri 27 November - Sat 2 January

A brand-new Christmas-season attraction, Winter Light Experience features more than 30 illuminated installations and takes visitors on a magical journey across part of the iconic Brabazon golf course.
The after-dark trail follows a festive storyline in which Santa has made an unexpected landing. Visitors can follow the lights, uncover clues and help restore Christmas magic as they travel the route.
Festive food & drink, fire pits for toasting marshmallows and a fully licensed après bar within a free-to-access Christmas courtyard are also available to enjoy. Sensory-friendly and dog-friendly sessions will take place on selected dates.

Spectacle Of Light

Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe, Fri 20 November - Wed 30 December

Spectacle Of Light, one of the Cotswolds' most popular Christmas attractions, makes a welcome return this month, transforming the grounds of Sudeley Castle into a magical Alice In Wonderland-inspired adventure.
Now in its 11th year, the illuminated trail comes complete with dazzling displays, immersive storytelling and a host of new installations designed to bring Lewis Carroll's much-loved story to life. Visitors will follow the White Rabbit through the gardens, along the way encountering familiar characters including the Mad Hatter, Cheshire Cat, Tweedledum & Tweedledee, and the Queen of Hearts.
Spectacular projections onto the castle façade, a giant chessboard and the mysterious Smoking Keyhole also feature, with festive food & drink available throughout the experience.





Telford Festive Gardens

Chelsea & Maxell Gardens, Telford Town Park, Shropshire,
Fri 11 - Sun 13 and Thurs 17 - Mon 21 December

Step into a winter wonderland as the Chelsea and Maxell Gardens are once again transformed by a dazzling Christmas light trail.
Visitors can follow the illuminated route through a series of festive scenes, with music, storytelling and plenty of Christmas cheer adding to the experience. Along the way, keep an eye out for mischievous elves, frosty characters and even Santa himself.
The family fun continues beyond the trail, courtesy of seasonal entertainment, a selection of food and the chance to enjoy a warming mug of hot chocolate.

The Christmas Light Show

Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, Tues 15 - Mon 21 December

Lichfield Cathedral's much-loved Christmas Light Show returns this December with an all-new theme inspired by the Nativity story.
Created by renowned animation team Illuminos, Follow The Star will feature stunning displays on the Bishop's Palace and the Cathedral's famous West Front, as well as, for the first time, projections inside the cathedral itself.
Alongside the illuminations, guests can check out the Christmas Tree Festival and crib, enjoy performances by local choirs, browse the gift shop and keep themselves warm with seasonal refreshments in the recently opened SALT café. Proceeds from ticket sales will support the ongoing work of Lichfield Cathedral.



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thelist

Your week-by-week listings guide
November 2026



Jersey Boys at The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 2 - Sat 21 November

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

What's On

Sun 1 - Sun 8 November



Anson Tang Piano Recital at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Tues 3 November

Mon 9 - Sun 15 November



Propel Dance: Momentum at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

Wed 11 November

Mon 16 - Sun 22 November



An Evening With Vidya Patel at The Rep, Birmingham

Sat 21 November

Mon 23 - Mon 30 November



Phoebe Bridgers at bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

Sat 28 November

EXHIBITIONS ACROSS THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

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

EVERY THING MUST GO BY JOE LYCETT First major solo art exhibition by Birmingham comedian Joe Lycett, exploring the theme of 'things that are no longer with us' and inspired by objects from the city of Birmingham's collection, until Sun 21 Feb

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

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 1 Nov

NANCY CADOGAN: THE LOST TREES Series of poetic and precise, serene yet deeply stirring landscape paintings, exploring the emotional and environmental significance of trees, until Sun 22 Nov

THE PATTERN OF LIFE: ENID MARX AND MODERN BRITISH DESIGN Step into a world of pattern, creativity and modern British design, in the first exhibition to explore the influential patterns of Enid Marx and her community, until Sun 3 Jan

Coventry Music Museum

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

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

EXHIBITION: UNLOCKING THE VAULTS Set within the former safe deposit facility beneath The Exchange, this free exhibition explores how the Birmingham Municipal Bank shaped everyday life in the city, until Sat 7 Nov

Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

COVENTRY BIENNIAL PRESENTS: A DISPLAY OF JOHN RIDDY'S MODERNIST SPACES Exhibition featuring a range of photographs taken in locations around the world between 1998 and 2006, until Sun 10 Jan

PRASHANT KANSARA: IN THE SIGHT OF GOD Exhibition of over 100 drawings by the artist, challenging collective political and societal acceptance of the horrors that war and genocide inflict upon children, until Sun 8 Nov

SIKH STORIES IN COLOURS Family-friendly exhibition, bringing together children's books, original illustrations, music, animation and film to explore creativity, identity and representation, until Thurs 5 Nov

BRITISH ART SHOW 10: A CHORUS OF STRANGERS Featuring the work of more than 30 contemporary artists - displayed in spaces around Coventry - the landmark 10th edition of British Art Show explores human connection and the figure of 'the other' during divided times, until Sun 10 Jan

CURIOUS CREATURES, STONES AND BONES Explore incredible specimens from the natural sciences collection and discover fascinating facts about them - from tiny insects to mighty mammals, sea creatures to rocks from outer space, until July 2028

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

LOCATIONS: NO11 ARTS Collection of works by participants in the ongoing No11 Arts research & learning programme, which explores how older people connect with the places where they live, until Wed 4 Nov

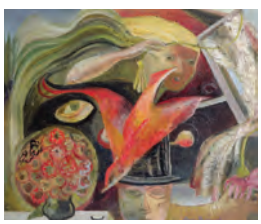
BALRAJ KHANNA: LINES OF FLIGHT Major survey exhibition bringing together more than 40 paintings made across six decades and celebrating the artist's connection to Birmingham, until Wed 2 Feb

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston

SURREAL SOLIHULL Exhibition honouring the legacy of Emmy Bridgwater, whose bold, uncanny visions shaped British surrealism, until Sun 22 Nov

RESISTANCE, RE-IMAGINE An international dialogue and exchange on the themes of resistance and reimaging, and an exploration of the climate emergency. Featuring works by Mushfiq Mahbub Turjo and Zillah Bowes, until Sun 29 Nov

EMMY BRIDGWATER AND BIRMINGHAM SURREALISTS Celebrating Birmingham-born surrealist Emmy Bridgwater (1906 - 1999), this major exhibition brings together paintings, drawings, collages and poetry spanning over six decades of her life, until Sun 10 Jan



Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BRITISH ART SHOW 10: A CHORUS OF STRANGERS Featuring the work of more than 30 contemporary artists - displayed in spaces around Coventry - the landmark 10th edition of British Art Show explores human connection and the figure of 'the other' during divided times, until Sun 10 Jan

New Art Gallery, Walsall

TEREZA BUŠKOVÁ: MOTHERS WITHOUT HANDS An international project developed by the Birmingham-based artist, using collaborative making, participatory traditions and folklore as means to protest violence against women and girls, until Sun 15 Nov

LAURA ONIONS Informed by feminist ways of learning and archival material, Laura uses printmaking as a tool for participation, dialogue and community-building, until Sun 6 Dec

FACE VALUE Inspired by the strong focus on portraits in the Garman Ryan Collection, this temporary exhibition brings together a selection of artworks from the Gallery's Permanent Collection, until Sun 23 May

VIBRATION CALIBRATION: BLACK COUNTRY TYPE & CLAIRE BUCKERFIELD Taking its name from a mechanical process that measures the accuracy of vibration sensors, the exhibition offers a recalibration of perceptions of the Black Country through the artists' portrayal of the area, until Sun 28 Feb

CHARMAINE WATKISS: THE THINGS WE HOLD SACRED New solo exhibition featuring major loans and newly commissioned sculptures. The show is the artist's most significant sculptural installation to date, until Sun 11 April

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM ART CIRCLE ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2026: STORIES Birmingham Arts Circle exhibition showcasing artworks by established artists working in a wide range of media, Tues 3 - Sat 14 Nov

RBSA ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2026 The Membership, including 14 newly elected Associates, display their work, Thurs 19 Nov - Sat 2 Jan

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

MARIE CRAIG: BEFORE IT WAS NOW Installation featuring photographic negatives capturing a room-sized camera obscura at Wolverhampton School of Art, presented alongside a live feed from a cardboard-box camera obscura capturing the same view, until Sun 17 Jan

RACHEL MAGDEBURG: PALINGENESIS Solo exhibition by the Wolverhampton-based artist, exploring the unexpected connections between non-human life, everyday objects and the materials of painting itself, until Sun 21 Feb

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

WORCESTER SOCIETY OF ARTISTS ANNUAL EXHIBITION Exhibition celebrating the Society's shared passion for art and creativity - and their support for fellow artists, Sat 7 Nov - Sun 3 Jan

Elsewhere:

THE BODY AS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE: ABRAHAM BABAJIDE COLE New exhibition bringing together drawing, painting, sculpture and installation to explore what happens when a body becomes a vessel for memories, places and experiences, until Wed 4 Nov, The Hive Gallery, Jewellery Quarter, B'ham

EXHIBITION BLUE Featuring works by John Hunt, Francis Marvell-Car and Carey Moon, until Sat 7 Nov, The Birmingham & Midland Institute

ORCS UPRIS: IYP X FREE HOUSE Ikon Youth Programme collaborate with artist-curator Dinosaur Kilby and artist Emily Scarrott, drawing on conversations around social justice, solidarity and collective action, Fri 6 Nov, free house, Digbeth

QUEER FUTURES Group exhibition of film, photography, sculpture and print by seven LGBTQI+ artists from Central and Eastern Europe, all of whom are now living in the UK, until Sat 12 Dec, Centrala, Digbeth

GROUNDINGS: SHENECE ORETHA Supported by an intergenerational network of gardeners, the exhibition seeks 'to repair our severed relationship with the land by melding ancestral, embodied and collective methods of stewardship', Sat 7 Nov - Sat 6 March, Grand Union, Birmingham

Gigs

FLAT MOON Sun 1 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LUKE JACKSON Sun 1 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

GREAT STONE REVIVAL Sun 1 Nov, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

STATIC DRESS + SOUL BLIND + HOLDER + LOVER RARELY Sun 1 Nov, O2 Academy

THE GARRY ALLCOCK TRIO Sun 1 Nov, Tower of Song, Pershore Rd

UGLY Sun 1 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

BRAT + CAGE FIGHT Sun 1 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

NISH Sun 1 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CODY JOHNSON + PARKER MCCOLLUM + EMILY ANN ROBERTS Sun 1 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

REIGEN LEVI + JEMMA + OHMELMY + ANTHONY MCKAY Sun 1 Nov, The Rainbow, Digbeth

FREYA SKYE Sun 1 - Mon 2 Nov, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

DEBORAH ROSE Mon 2 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

LOUIS O'HARA AND HIS BURLEY CHASSIS + SERAFIMA & THE SHAKEDOWNS + GEM STARK Mon 2 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

REBECKA EDLUND TRIO FT LAURA JURD & RUTH GOLLER Mon 2 Nov, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

ROB HERON & CONRAD BIRD Tues 3 Nov, The Night Owl, Digbeth

AGAINST THE CURRENT Tues 3 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SKYE NEWMAN Tues 3 - Wed 4 Nov, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

TOOTH + UNCLE JUNIOR Wed 4 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BLIND YEO Wed 4 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DOM GLYNN & HIS SUNDAY BEST Wed 4 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

NIGHT SWIMMING Wed 4 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

DESPISED ICON + CARNIFEX + SUFFOCATION + GATES TO HELL Wed 4 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE STREETS Wed 4 Nov, O2 Academy

A GUY CALLED GERALD + RAWTRACHS + TEYUNA Wed 4 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

SAVAK + SINEWS + EXOTIC PETS Wed 4 Nov, Centrala, Digbeth

CIGARETTES FOR BREAKFAST Wed 4 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

THE LOST NOTES Wed 4 Nov, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

GIPSY KINGS BY ANDRÉ REYES Wed 4 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

PASSENGER Wed 4 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth

BILLY JOEL TRIBUTE UK Wed 4 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

JUBILEE JAZZ BAND Wed 4 Nov, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

MILLICENT CHAPANDA Wed 4 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

LOTUS JUICE + SHAO DOW Thurs 5 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

GENTLY TENDER Thurs 5 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE POOZIES Thurs 5 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

CUSP Thurs 5 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

THE GUEST LIST Thurs 5 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

HORSE JUMPER OF LOVE Thurs 5 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

HEAVENPHETAMINE + FLAMEHEAD Thurs 5 Nov, The Victoria, John Bright Street

THE MOKSHA TRIO Thurs 5 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PAPA ROACH + LANDMVRKS + SLEEP THEORY Thurs 5 Nov, Utilita Arena B'ham

CHOP SUEY + SLIP-NOT Thurs 5 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth

THE CAROLE KING AND JAMES TAYLOR SONGBOOK Thurs 5 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE BUDAPEST CAFÉ ORCHESTRA Thurs 5 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

SIOBHAN MILLER Fri 6 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

NICK HAKIM Fri 6 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ED COSENS Fri 6 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

HEADWIRED Fri 6 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

THE HOME TEAM + ARROWS IN ACTION + TRUE NORTH Fri 6 Nov, O2 Academy

NONTAINES D.C. Fri 6 Nov, O2 Academy

MAZ MITRENKO BAND Fri 6 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

HANS KOLLER Fri 6 Nov, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter

O.S.T.R Fri 6 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

SEETHING AKIRA Fri 6 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

AZIZ IBRAHIM Fri 6 Nov, The Asylum, Hampton Street

JANCROW MASH Fri 6 Nov, The Flapper, Digbeth

THE AMY WINEHOUSE BAND Fri 6 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

COLTRANE 100: BOTH DIRECTIONS AT ONCE Fri 6 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

THE SCRIPT + JAMES MORRISON Fri 6 Nov, Utilita Arena B'ham

OLE 60 Fri 6 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth

BLACKMORE'S BLOOD Fri 6 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove



The Proclaimers - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CARPENTER BRUT + HEALTH Fri 6 Nov, The Wulfrum at The Halls Wolverhampton

INSIDER TRADING Sat 7 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

UNDER THE COVERS Sat 7 Nov, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

MADNEZZ OF AMY Sat 7 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

BLACKGOLD + DEADWAX + INDIGO BLAZE Sat 7 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

OVERPASS Sat 7 Nov, O2 Academy

MORGAN WALLEN TRIBUTE UK Sat 7 Nov, O2 Academy

THE FLEETWOOD MACK EXPERIENCE Sat 7 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

THE GREAT STONE REVIVAL Sat 7 Nov, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

A FRANK SINATRA & LOUIS ARMSTRONG TRIBUTE Sat 7 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

GICHARD + THE COURTESY GROUP + MOTHS OF THE MOON Sat 7 Nov, Centrala, Digbeth

DEAD MOB Sat 7 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

THEBOYSHADOW Sat 7 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

THE MUSIC OF STRANGER THINGS: PERFORMED BY KYLE DIXON & MICHAEL STEIN Sat 7 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

THE PROCLAIMERS Sat 7 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

MANIC STREET PREACHERS + SUEDE Sat 7 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

CODA - A TRIBUTE TO LED ZEPPELIN Sat 7 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

FRANCIS ROSSI Sat 7 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ROVING CROWS Sat 7 Nov, Lichfield Guildhall

THE TOM MORGAN TRIO Sat 7 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

R.I.P.D Sat 7 Nov, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

WAVES CRASHING + HEALEES + FALLING & LAUGHING Sun 8 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SUSY WALL, ROBIN TUDOR & MATT SAYERS Sun 8 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

EVERYTHING RECENTLY + DOGVIOLET + BLEACH FIELDS Sun 8 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbroook Queensway

WASIA PROJECT + LUMI Sun 8 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

LOZ RABONE Sun 8 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

SHABAKA Sun 8 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

ROCKETSUIT ROGUE Sun 8 Nov, Subside Bar, High Street

MNEK Sun 8 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth



Manic Street Preachers - Utilita Arena Birmingham

Classical Music

RBC: JOSEPH JACOB & GEORGE MOLONEY ORGAN RECITAL Mon 2 Nov, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ANSON TANG PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Glass, Scriabin, Satie & more..., Tues 3 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



RBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRE-CBSO SHOWCASE: FIREBIRD SUITE Featuring Michael Seal (conductor), Tues 3 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: BRUCKNER'S 7TH SYMPHONY Featuring Ilan Volkov (conductor) & Ilya Gringolts (violin). Programme also includes Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.1, Tues 3 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

OLE KRISTIAN DAHL BASSOON RECITAL Thurs 5 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: SHOSTAKOVICH'S PIANO QUINTET Featuring Lowri Porter (violin), Bethan Allmand (violin), Chris Yates (viola), Kate Setterfield (cello) & Robert Markham (piano). Programme also includes Suk's Elegy, Thurs 5 Nov, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

FLANDERS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: FROM ENGLAND TO BOHEMIA Featuring Duncan Ward (conductor) & Alexandra Soumm (violin). Programme includes works by Butterworth, Mozart, Vaughan Williams & Dvořák, Thurs 5 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by JS Bach & Marcel Dupré, Thurs 5 Nov, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

A FORETASTE OF CHRISTMAS Featuring David Hardie (conductor), Conor McGlone (organ) & Birmingham Cathedral Choir. Programme includes works by Handel, E Poston, Rutter, Willcocks & more..., Fri 6 Nov, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

SAMRAT MAJUMDER CLASSICAL GUITAR RECITAL Programme includes works by Dowland, JS Bach & Keegan, Fri 6 Nov, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

ECHO RISING STARS 2026/27: PETAR PEJČIĆ (CELLO) Featuring Nour Ayadi (piano). Programme includes works by Boulanger, Piazzolla, Živković & more..., Sun 8 Nov, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

DANIEL KITSON Sun 1 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

AURIE STYLA Sun 1 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FINLAY CHRISTIE Sun 1 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PREET SINGH Sun 1 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NURSE GEORGIE CARROLL Sun 1 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JONNY COLE Tues 3 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

JAMIE HUTCHINSON & SIMON WOZNIAK Wed 4 Nov, The Glee Club, B'ham

DAN TIERNAN Wed 4 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

EMMANUEL SONUBI & COMICS TBC Wed 4 Nov, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

MAISIE ADAM Thurs 5 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, STEVE WILLIAMS & LOUISE YOUNG Thurs 5 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PROJECT MAYHEM COMEDY Thurs 5 Nov, Scruffy Murphy's, Birmingham

DARREN HARRIOTT & COMICS TBC Thurs 5 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

BIRMINGHAM IMPROV FESTIVAL Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

JONATHAN ELSTON, STEVE WILLIAMS, LOUISE YOUNG, ROMAN HARRIS & COMIC TBC Fri 6 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MUHSIN YESILADA Fri 6 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONATHAN ELSTON, STEVE WILLIAMS, LOUISE YOUNG & COMIC TBC Sat 7 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JORDAN BROOKES Sat 7 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SL Sun 8 Nov, The Glee Club, B'ham

Theatre

AS YOU LIKE IT Jonathan Groff makes his RSC debut as Rosalind in an all-male version of Shakespeare's popular comedy, until Sat 7 Nov, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

BEING FRANK Brand-new comedy-horror farce concerning a down-on-his-luck research assistant and a boss who's demanding results, until Sat 7 Nov, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

CATS New production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's award-winning musical, based on TS Eliot's Old Possum's Book Of Practical Cats, until Sat 7 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome



MAMMA MIA! Smash-hit musical telling a story of love, friendship and identity, played out against a backdrop of ABBA hits, until Sat 7 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MIDDLEMARCH PART 2 New stage adaptation of George Eliot's 'study of provincial life' in a fictional 19th-century Midlands town on the verge of change. The play is presented in two parts, until Sat 16 Jan, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

A CHRISTMAS CAROL - REVISION ON TOUR Presented by Dickens Theatre Company, Mon 2 - Tues 3 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

JERSEY BOYS Smash-hit musical that charts the rise to fame of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, Mon 2 - Sat 21 Nov, The Alexandra, Birmingham

ONCE UPON A TIME IN SOKOTO Inua Ellams' epic story of an unlikely friendship forged between an enslaved woman and her former master, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE Warwick University Drama Society present a tale of family, obsession and betrayal, Thurs 5 - 7 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BEDLAM: CAN WE TALK Rochi Rampal's new play, exploring the growing relationship between young people, artificial intelligence and mental health, Fri 6 & Sat 7 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE PHANTOM RASPBERRY BLOWER OF OLD LONDON TOWN Jack the Ripper parody packed with surreal absurdism, clever puns and wordplay from Spike Milligan and Ronnie Barker, Sat 7 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE ELEPHANT MAN Amateur version of Bernard Pomerance's heart-rending true story, Sat 7 - Sat 14 Nov, Oldbury Rep

Kids Theatre

TOTO THE NINJA CAT AND THE GREAT SNAKE ESCAPE Family show based on Dermot O'Leary's bestselling children's book. Expect original music, puppetry and plenty of laugh-out-loud fun, Sat 31 Oct - Sun 1 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE SNOWMAN World premiere of a brand-new stage version of Raymond Briggs' much-loved children's story, until Sun 1 Nov, The Rep, B'ham

DISNEY ON ICE PRESENTS DISCOVER THE MAGIC Fast-paced and family-friendly production that follows the search for Tinker Bell through various Disney worlds, until Sun 1 Nov & Fri 6 - Sun 8 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

FUNGI FRIDA AND THE MYCO HEROES Family show about fungi and how they can help save the environment. Interactive outdoor performance full of songs, games, clowning and puppetry, Sun 1 Nov, Oak House Museum, West Bromwich

DISNEY ON ICE PRESENTS DISCOVER THE MAGIC Fast-paced and family-friendly production that follows the search for Tinker Bell through various Disney worlds, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

A BIG EGG The People's Theatre Company present a show for younger audiences, featuring puppetry, songs, gentle humour and live interaction, Sat 7 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE DINOSAUR THAT POOPED A ROCK SHOW Children's stage show adapted from Tom Fletcher and Dougie Poynter's bestselling children's books, Sun 8 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

NICK COPE'S FAMILY SHOW Brand-new show featuring favourite hits and more, Sun 8 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Dance

SWAN LAKE Presented by Imperial Classical Ballet, Mon 2 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THE NUTCRACKER Imperial Classical Ballet's staging of a festive favourite, Tues 3 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

GISELLE Imperial Classical Ballet present a romantic ballet in which love triumphs over betrayal, Wed 4 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

JO BANNON - THE DIRTY WORK New solo performance which takes a peek into a world where truth and illusion, performance and reality converge, Sat 7 Nov, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

K-POP LIVE Tribute to the global K-Pop phenomenon, Sun 1 Nov, Lichfield Garrick

A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS - A

CANDLELIGHT CONCERT A journey through some of the West End and Broadway's finest musical theatre scores, Sun 1 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: THE CANDLELIGHT CONCERT Wed 4 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral

MICHAEL SPICER: HOPE ALL'S WELL Satirical stage show packed with sketches, short films and stories..., Fri 6 Nov, The Old Rep, Birmingham

D-DAY DARLINGS Nostalgic show taking audiences on a musical journey back to the heart of wartime Britain, Fri 6 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

QUEENZ: BATTLE OF THE DIVAS! Drag spectacular in which the Queenz go head-to-head in 'the ultimate fight for pop supremacy', Fri 6 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SHAUN RYDER Spoken-word tour in support of Shaun's new book, Happy Mondays - And Fridays And Saturdays And Sundays, Fri 6 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

CHRISTMAS IN IRELAND Feelgood show capturing the true magic of an Irish Christmas, Fri 6 & Sat 7 Nov, Lichfield Garrick

BIRMINGHAM DRAG & BURLESQUE FESTIVAL: THE FOLLIES GRANDÉ Step into a glamorous world in which 'sizzling striptease, daring drag and vivacious variety whip you into a luxurious, comedic cocktail of the downright outrageous', Sat 7 Nov, The Old Rep, Birmingham

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Sun 8 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

A SHAMELESS NIGHT An evening with the cast of iconic TV series Shameless. Lewis Nicholls hosts, Sun 8 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

Talks & Spoken Word

ANNE HATHAWAY: A MONOLOGUE BY LESLEY SMITH A thoughtful and engaging portrayal of the woman behind one of history's greatest literary figures, Sun 1 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral

MARY BEARD: MORE SECRET HISTORIES OF ANCIENT ROME Join historian Mary as she explores 'a civilisation whose stories still shape the way we see ourselves today', Thurs 5 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

POETRY AFTER CHAI Evening of poetry, conversation and storytelling celebrating the richness of Bangla culture through the power of spoken word, Sun 8 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Events

THE MAGICAL OWL Interactive storytelling show, until Sun 1 Nov, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

OCTOBER HALF TERM: GHOSTS, PUMPKINS & TUDOR TALES Follow a trail of pumpkins through the grounds and historic rooms of Sudeley Castle, and uncover the castle's spooky secrets, until Sun 1 Nov, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

OCTOBER HALF TERM: JET AND SPACE WEEK A week of aviation and space-themed family activities, until Sun 1 Nov, RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford

OCTOBER HALF TERM FUN - MYTHS AND SUPERSTITIONS Ghostly apparitions, curious cures and mysterious goings-on await at the museum, until Sun 1 Nov, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE BABY AND TODDLER SHOW Discover everything you need for the journey ahead, until Sun 1 Nov, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

PANIC SCREAM PARK Dare to spend a night in the woods? New Halloween event featuring three terrifying scare attractions, roaming entertainment, bonus scare zone and food & drink offer, until Sun 1 Nov, Delta Force Paintballing, Chalcot Wood, Hockley Heath

LEGO CODING & AI WORKSHOP Discover the magic of coding with Lego Education's brand-new computer science and AI kits, until Sun 1 Nov, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

AUTUMN HALF TERM Climb aboard a heritage diesel or steam-hauled train and see what you can spot as you travel along the line, until Sun 1 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

HYROX BIRMINGHAM Six days of elite fitness racing, until Sun 1 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

PEPPA PIG SPACE ADVENTURE Blast off with Peppa Pig and her friends for an 'out of this world' adventure, until Sun 8 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW Bringing together hundreds of exhibitors, demonstrations, workshops, and hands-on creative experiences across a wide range of crafts, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS Discover beautiful handmade gifts, Christmas decorations, seasonal crafts and unique treats from talented designers and makers, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET Attraction offering a large range of traditional goods and gifts and a selection of food & drink, Thurs 5 Nov - Thurs 24 Dec, Victoria Square, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS IN CATHEDRAL SQUARE CRAFT MARKET Featuring a variety of crafts, gifts and food & drink stalls, Thurs 5 Nov - Thurs 24 Dec, St Philip's Cathedral, Cathedral Square, Colmore Row

CAKE INTERNATIONAL AND BAKE INTERNATIONAL The biggest cake-decorating and baking event in the world, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Nov, NEC, B'ham

THE TEXTILE FAIR Discover the work of independent textile artists, find unique handmade pieces and take inspiration for your own creativity, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Nov, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

MOVING MINDS: JOURNALING AND COLLAGE WORKSHOP Through guided prompts and DIY collage techniques, participants will be invited to engage with and reimagine their personal queer archives, Sat 7 Nov, Unit 4 Minerva Works, Birmingham

BROOCH COLLAGE WORKSHOP WITH ROCIO AGUILAR Hands-on session inviting participants to transform a collection of images, textures and materials into a unique brooch design, Sat 7 Nov, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

PLANETARIUM SOUNDBATH: NEW MOON Unique beneath-the-stars reset ritual to help participants relax, unwind and feel deeply soothed, Sat 7 Nov, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT The museum comes alive with the vibrant sights, sounds and spirit of Diwali, Sat 7 Nov, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

YOGA AT THE MUSEUM WITH THE MANOJ COLLECTIVE Enjoy an exclusive yoga session in the Pre-Raphaelite Galleries, Sun 8 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

PIECE(S) OF WORK - WRITERS GROUP Share what you've been working on and receive instant feedback from a roomful of fellow writers, Sun 8 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

COLOUR BOX: THE BRAVE LITTLE TOASTER Drop-in workshop followed by a film screening, Sun 8 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

BONFIRE & FIREWORKS NIGHT Featuring two firework displays across the evening, one giant roaring bonfire and a traditional funfair, Sun 8 Nov, Weston Park, Shropshire / Staffordshire border




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Hothouse Flowers - O2 Institute

Gigs

ASHLEY SINGH Mon 9 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

HOTHOUSE FLOWERS Mon 9 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE SHIRES Mon 9 Nov, Symphony Hall

LORNE LOFSKY/NIGEL PRICE QUARTET Mon 9 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

JUNIOR BROTHER + JIM GHEDI Tues 10 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LUCY FARRELL & SHANE PENDERGAST Tues 10 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

CRISTINA HEART Tues 10 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 10 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

IGORRR + SHINING + OTTO VON SCHIRACH Tues 10 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BREED 77 Tues 10 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

MOON WALKER Tues 10 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD Tues 10 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

THE WRAN Wed 11 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

RUTH TRIMBLE Wed 11 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

BLUE AMBER + NOT SOUP + ZIMMERMAN Wed 11 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

REVEREND AND THE MAKERS Wed 11 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

PARIS PALOMA Wed 11 Nov, O2 Academy

SOFTCULT Wed 11 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

FOOT FOOT Wed 11 Nov, The Victoria, John Bright Street

FLOOR SPOTS NIGHT Wed 11 Nov, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

LOUIS, LOUIS, LOUIS Wed 11 Nov, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

THE JACKSONS Wed 11 Nov, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

ELEANOR MCEVOY Wed 11 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

OMEGA NEBULA Thurs 12 Nov, Hare & Hounds, King Heath

KEG + SUNSET CINEMA CLUB Thurs 12 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ELEANOR MCEVOY Thurs 12 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

LUKE WHITE Thurs 12 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

CHLOE SLATER Thurs 12 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

CHASING ABBEY Thurs 12 Nov, O2 Academy

PICTURE THIS Thurs 12 Nov, O2 Academy

B.D LENZ Thurs 12 Nov, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

WOJTEK MAZOLEWSKI Thurs 12 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

BBY Thurs 12 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

EDDIE & THE HOT RODS Thurs 12 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

BAY CITY ROLLERS Thurs 12 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

BOYZLIFE Thurs 12 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

MYLES SMITH + CHANCE PENA Thurs 12 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

LOVE AT THE FIVE AND DIME - REMEMBERING NANCI GRIFFITHS Thurs 12 Nov, Catshill Club, Bromsgrove

MIK ARTISTIK'S EGO TRIP Fri 13 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE MOONLANDINGZ + Y Fri 13 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MAKE FRIENDS Fri 13 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

HIATUS Fri 13 Nov, The Dark Horse, Moseley

JOSHUA IDEHEN Fri 13 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BONNIE PRINCE BILLY Fri 13 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

JUST RADIOHEAD Fri 13 Nov, O2 Academy

JAMES ALLSOPP Fri 13 Nov, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter

MANTRA + [REANIMATION] Fri 13 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

FANGSLINGER Fri 13 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

ATIF ASLAM Fri 13 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

PAUL HEATON + THE LIGHTNING SEEDS + RIANNE DOWNEY Fri 13 Nov, Utilita Arena B'ham

DAISY DEVELL Fri 13 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN Fri 13 Nov, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

DAVE MCCABE + JAMES JAY LEWIS Sat 14 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

SON OF BOAR + TUMAANDUMBAN + MASSASAUGA Sat 14 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LUNA WAVES Sat 14 Nov, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

ASH XO + SUPA D + COLDSTEPS + TERMINAL 4 Sat 14 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

NIEVE ELLA Sat 14 Nov, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE GERRY CINNA-MAN EXPERIENCE + SAM OFFENDER Sat 14 Nov, O2 Academy

SHED SEVEN Sat 14 Nov, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KILLERSTREAM Sat 14 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

WILD COUNTRY Sat 14 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

LOFT Sat 14 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

BLEAK SQUAD Sun 15 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ABIGAIL LAPELL Sun 15 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE MIKE DAVIDS BAND Sun 15 Nov, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT Sun 15 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

RADIO FREE ALICE Sun 15 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

MEEK + HEADWIRED Sun 15 Nov, O2 Academy

THE COMMONERS Sun 15 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

ROMES Sun 15 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

SOUMIK DATTA Sun 15 Nov, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall

RYAN YOUNG Sun 15 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

CHILDREN OF ZEUS Sun 15 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

YARD ACT Sun 15 Nov, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

Classical Music

BEETHOVEN'S CELLISTS Featuring Robin Michael (cello), Daniel Tong (piano) & RBC Cellists. Programme includes works by Beethoven, Liszt, Duport & more..., Mon 9 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

DANIEL MOULT ORGAN RECITAL Mon 9 Nov, Organ Studio, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT: IN MEMORIAM Programme includes works by JS Bach, Guilmant, Walford Davies & more..., Mon 9 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

FANTASY OR SONATA? Featuring Daniel Tong (piano). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Tues 10 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ATÉA QUINTET Featuring Alena Walentin (flute), Anna Hashimoto (clarinet), Ashley Myall (bassoon), Chris Beagles (horn) & Philip Haworth (oboe). Programme includes works by Hoffmeister, Schulhoff & Beethoven, Wed 11 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



CONSONE QUARTET: BEETHOVEN MIXTAPE Featuring Agata Daraškaite & Magdalena Loth-Hill (violins), Elitsa Bogdanova (viola) & George Ross (cello). Programme includes works by Hummel, Cherubini, Haydn more..., Thurs 12 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO BRINGING THE LIGHT: A CONCERT OF HOPE Featuring Daphna Sadeh Neu (double bass), Dr. Ali Shair (bansuri) & Kohinoor Yasmin (poet), Sat 14 Nov, CBSO Centre, B'ham

EX CATHEDRA: WORDS APART - BACH & SANDSTRÖM MOTETS Featuring James Burton (conductor), Sat 14 Nov, St Francis Church, Birmingham

SOUTH BIRMINGHAM SINFONIA PLAY DAY: A LONDON SYMPHONY Featuring Sabrina Ko (conductor), Sat 14 Nov, The Hub Hazelwell, Birmingham

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CHORUS: ECHOES OF REMEMBERANCE Programme includes works by Mozart, Sat 14 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHOIR: DANCES OF TIME Programme includes works by Chilcott, Holst, Rutter & Haydn, Sun 15 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



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Comedy

PADDY YOUNG Mon 9 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Mon 9 Nov, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

RICKY GERVAIS Mon 9 - Tues 10 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

CHARLIE BAKER Tues 10 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MIKE WOZNIAK Wed 11 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

NIGEL PLANER Wed 11 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BILL BAILEY Wed 11 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

TEZ ILYAS Wed 11 Nov, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

JEFF INNOCENT Wed 11 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

JOSH THOMAS Thurs 12 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, CRAIG HILL & DANNY MCLOUGHLIN Thurs 12 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MIKE WOZNIAK Thurs 12 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SINDHU VEE Fri 13 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

WILL HANNIGAN, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN, CRAIG HILL, ADAM HOPKINS & WILL HITT Fri 13 Nov, The Glee Club, B'ham

STUART GOLDSMITH Fri 13 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

AURIE STYLA Fri 13 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THOMAS GREEN Sat 14 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

WILL HANNIGAN, DANNY MCLOUGHLIN, CRAIG HILL & COMIC TBC Sat 14 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PHIL ELLIS Sat 14 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

GINGER JOHNSON Sat 14 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

GARY MEIKLE Sun 15 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KILLIAN SUNDERMANN Sun 15 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF MUSICAL St Augustine's MTC present an amateur production featuring original songs, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

CHRISTMAS CAROL GOES WRONG Award-winning company Mischief present a festive slice of chaos and escapism, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DEEPEST FEARS GHOST STORIES Two classic tales of terror - The Room In The Tower and The Captain Of The Polestar - live on stage, Thurs 12 Nov, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

KATIE HOARE: POSITIVE RISK Play exploring the highs and lows of a young woman who finds herself stuck within the outdated British mental-health system, Fri 13 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

THE BORROWERS Theresa Heskins' acclaimed version of Mary Norton's magical adventure, complete with an original musical score, Fri 13 Nov - Sat 23 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Dance

PROPEL DANCE: MOMENTUM Showcase of work presented by the UK's first and only professional wheelchair dance company, Wed 11 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham



Light Entertainment

PERSONAL SPOT: MIDGITTE BARDOT Interdisciplinary performance programme featuring 'the UK's most exciting cabaret, theatre and nightlife performers', Thurs 12 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE MUSIC OF OASIS BY CANDLELIGHT Fri 13 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral

UNPLUGGED LIVE Intimate evening bringing together emerging and established musicians, singers and songwriters. Artists include Karima Jannat, Saazib and Ayon Paul, Sat 14 Nov, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE Join chairman Jack Dee, a panel of top comedians and pianist Colin Sell for an evening of inspired nonsense, Sat 14 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

GINGER JOHNSON: SHOW PONY The 'nation's silliest sausage' is back on the road with a brand-new show that promises to be outrageous, untamed and completely off the reins, Sat 14 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE SOUND OF EPIC ANIME Experience a full symphony orchestra perform legendary scores from Naruto, One Piece, Demon Slayer and Attack On Titan, presented alongside timeless soundtracks from Studio Ghibli and Makoto Shinkai, Sun 15 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

PROFESSOR ALICE ROBERTS: FROM CELL TO CIVILISATION - LIVE ON STAGE Exploring four billion years of human evolution, Sun 15 - Mon 16 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

Events

PIECE OF WORK OPEN MIC 'Event dedicated to passing the mic to anyone who wants to jump on', Thurs 12 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

LANCASTER INSURANCE CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW The UK's biggest indoor car show, featuring 3,000 classic cars, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

MIND BODY SPIRIT FESTIVAL Event focusing on wellness, spirituality and self-care, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

PRIDE IN STEM DAY Full day of activities celebrating International Day of LGBTQIA+ People in STEM, Sat 14 Nov, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

EMBROIDERY WORKSHOP WITH EVE GIL Delve into Polish folk embroidery, exploring themes of migration, nationality and identity, particularly LGBT+ identity, Sat 14 Nov, Unit 4 Minerva Works, Birmingham

CREATING CALM - DOT PAINTING WORKSHOP Learn the meditative craft of 'pointillism' on hand-cast plaster stones, Sat 14 Nov, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Sat 14 Nov, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE SUPER WEEKENDER DANCE CONVENTION The 'ultimate celebration of dance', attracting over 15,000 dancers, spectators and industry professionals, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SURREAL SANTA: CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATIONS Make a surreal festive decoration to take home or hang on MAC's tree, Sat 14 - Sun 22 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

NETBALL AID 2026 Celebrities, influencers and reality TV stars go head-to-head on court in a high-energy showdown, Sun 15 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham





Ellie Gowers - Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

Gigs

JAIMEE HARRIS Mon 16 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

HYENA Mon 16 Nov, The Dark Horse, Moseley

JACK SAVORETTI Mon 16 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

LOTS OF HANDS + SUNDOTS Tues 17 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BARBICAN ESTATE Tues 17 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE SOUNDS OF SIMON Tues 17 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 17 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

DRAKE MILLIGAN + JOSH WEATHERS Tues 17 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

AARON ROWE + SCARLET LORAN Tues 17 Nov, O2 Academy

MICHAEL MCGOVERN Wed 18 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ELLIE GOWERS Wed 18 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

HEIDI TALBOT & BOO HEWERDINE Wed 18 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

CHARLIE NOORDEWIER Wed 18 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

THE BIG MOON Wed 18 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

ALEX HART Wed 18 Nov, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

MCKAY Wed 18 Nov, The Rainbow, Digbeth

PAULS JACKMAN'S JAZZ MASTERS Wed 18 Nov, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

THE BEST OF BUBLÉ Wed 18 Nov, The Core Theatre, Solihull

HORSE Thurs 19 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

HARRY HUDSON TAYLOR Thurs 19 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

EAGLES OF DEATH METAL + YACHTLEY CREW Thurs 19 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE ROSADOCS Thurs 19 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET + SAM RUSSO Thurs 19 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

PILORI Thurs 19 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

TONY HADLEY Thurs 19 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

GEORGE COLLIGAN Thurs 19 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

DON TOLIVER Thurs 19 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

DUTTY MOONSHINE BIG BAND Thurs 19 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth

PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER TRIO Thurs 19 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE ALLERGIES Fri 20 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ABIGAIL LAPELL Fri 20 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

RUTH THEODORE Fri 20 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LEN Fri 20 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SEB LOWE Fri 20 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SONGER Fri 20 Nov, O2 Academy

ALCHEMY RELIVED Fri 20 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

BASIL HODGE Fri 20 Nov, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter

ERASURED Fri 20 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

UNIT 17 Fri 20 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

URNE + THE GREY AND MOON REAPER Fri 20 Nov, The Asylum, Digbeth

TOOL SHED Fri 20 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

BLOC PARTY + INTERPOL Fri 20 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SNEAKBO Fri 20 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Fri 20 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE BEARDS Fri 20 Nov, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

JOOLS HOLLAND AND HIS RHYTHM AND BLUES ORCHESTRA Fri 20 - Sat 21 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

LAND OF THE GIANTS Sat 21 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BOOTLEG BLONDIE Sat 21 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CHARLOTTE YOUNG Sat 21 Nov, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

THE RIFLES + JOE CARNALL JNR + NICO CANN Sat 21 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

JENNA RAINE Sat 21 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

EMBRACE Sat 21 Nov, O2 Academy

CHANTEL MCGREGOR Sat 21 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

BRITALLICA Sat 21 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

THE YACHT ROCK EXPERIENCE Sat 21 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

THE SUN'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE NIGHT Sat 21 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

ELVANA Sat 21 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth

THE FAIRWAY + THE STRAITS + SOMETHING LIKE SLEEP + SAY LESS Sat 21 Nov, The Rainbow, Digbeth

JACK & JACK Sat 21 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

COURTEENERS Sat 21 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ELO AGAIN Sat 21 Nov, The Halls Wolverhampton

RÍOGHNACH CONNOLLY & HONEYFEET Sun 22 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

NIRVANHER + HELL IN CHAINS + SPINORS Sun 22 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

PARVIZ + WIFFENEY Sun 22 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

JULIA WOLF Sun 22 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SINNER'S SERMON Sun 22 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

MARTIN HARLEY Sun 22 Nov, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall

GORDON GILTRAP AND FRIENDS Sun 22 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire



Bloc Party - Utilita Arena Birmingham

Classical Music

RBC WIND ORCHESTRA Featuring Douglas Mitchell (conductor). Programme includes works by Strauss, Dvořák, Ligeti & Arnold, Tues 17 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RBC OPERA SCENES Featuring Valeria Racco (musical director) & Mark Burns (director). A varied evening featuring a wide range of operas, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 Nov, The Lab, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RBC BAROQUE ORCHESTRA Featuring Kate Fawcett & Nicholas Stringfellow (directors). Programme includes works by Handel, Muffat, Scarlatti & Vivaldi, Fri 20 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: ECHOES OF VIENNA Featuring David Wynne (conductor), Kevin Gill & Stephen Hargreaves (piano), Beth Taylor (soprano), Laura Toomey (contralto), Justin Jacobs (tenor) & Matthew Pandya (bass). Programme includes works by Beethoven & Mozart, Sat 21 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: A VERY ENGLISH CONCERT Featuring Paul Spicer (conductor), Martyn Rawles (organ), Barbara Hathaway & Corinna Gregory (soprano), Jonathan Spencer (alto), Alex Lindsay (tenor) & Philip Bellshaw (bass). Programme includes works by Holst, Parry & Vaughan Williams, Sat 21 Nov, St Francis Church, Bournville

POÈMES, MELODIES, ET DANSES Featuring James Lisney (piano). Programme includes works by Liszt, Schubert, Chopin & Rachmaninoff, Sun 22 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

MARIN ALSOP CONDUCTS THE PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA Featuring Esther Yoo (violin). Programme includes works by Bernstein & Mahler, Sun 22 Nov, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: CROSSING FORWARD Featuring Júlia Cruz (conductor). Programme includes works by Jasper de Bock, Tansy Davies, Louis Andriessen & Alex Paxton, Sun 22 Nov, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

Comedy

RED RICHARDSON Mon 16 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DYLAN MORAN Tues 17 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

JACOB HAWLEY & JAKE FARRELL Wed 18 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

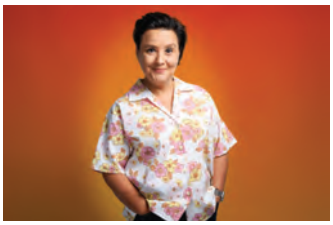
FATIHA EL-GHORRI Thurs 19 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MARK MAIER & INGRID DAHLE

Thurs 19 Nov, The Glee Club, B'ham

ROSIE HOLT Thurs 19 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

SUSAN CALMAN Fri 20 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall



FLO & JOAN Fri 20 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

MICHAEL ODEWALE, MARK MAIER, IGRID DAHLE & JOE DAYMOND Fri 20 - Sat 21 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM RICHES Sat 21 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SMASHBENGALI Sat 21 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

HARRIET KEMSLEY Sat 21 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

NISH KUMAR Sat 21 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

LUNCHTIME FAMILY COMEDY SHOW Sun 22 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAN NIGHTINGALE, PHIL NICHOL & ESHAAN AKBAR Sun 22 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KIM BLYTHE Sun 22 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TEZ ILYAS Sun 22 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Theatre

BONES IN THE DESERT New play from British-Armenian playwright Joe Nerssessian about where we come from, who we carry with us, and what it means to belong, Wed 18 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Family pantomime written by and starring Coventry's favourite dame, Iain Lauchlan. Expect breathtaking sets, crazy costumes and seasonal silliness, Wed 18 Nov - Sat 2 Jan, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

PETER PAN Joe Murphy directs a faithful retelling of JM Barrie's much-loved children's story, Wed 18 Nov - Sun 17 Jan, The Rep, Birmingham

SNOW WHITE Show 'packed with laughter, music and magic', Fri 20 Nov - Sun 6 Dec, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

ROBIN HOOD Brand-new in-house pantomime promising 'laugh-out-loud comedy, show-stopping songs and heaps of audience participation'. Ben Thornton, Ben Stock, Joe Feeney and Anna Soden star, Fri 20 Nov - Sun 10 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Polka Dot Pantomimes present a new version of the classic fairytale, Sat 21 Nov - Thurs 31 Dec, The Old Rep, B'ham

Dance

THE WORLD AS WE SEE IT... Ace Dance & Music double-bill, featuring two powerful and contrasting visions of the modern world, Tues 17 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

AMINA KHAYYAM DANCE: BIRD A story of domestic-violence survivors, presented via a performance of high-energy Kathak dance..., Thurs 19 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

SILVIA GRIBAUDI - GRACES Three male figures take to the stage in a space and time suspended between the human and the abstract, Fri 20 Nov, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

BRB: THE NUTCRACKER Sir Peter Wright's acclaimed festive production, set to Tchaikovsky's famous score, Fri 20 Nov - Sat 12 Dec, Birmingham Hippodrome



AN EVENING WITH VIDYA PATEL Show featuring classical Indian dance and music, Sat 21 Nov, The Rep, B'ham

Light Entertainment

G4 CHRISTMAS Fri 20 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral



BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR Experience an evening of adventure on the big screen, Sat 21 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JUST RUN WITH IT! Join James and Lewis for 'a very silly night of very silly improvisation', Sat 21 Nov, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

PAUL MERTON & SUKI WEBSTER'S IMPROV SHOW Featuring fast and funny games, scenes, stories and 'laugh-out-loud' surrealism. Improv virtuoso Mike McShane and a host of 'very special guests' also feature, Sun 22 Nov, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton



The Polar Express Train Ride - Moor Street Station

Talks & SpokenWord

AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL PORTILLO The former Secretary of State, traveller and presenter shares his life story and tales from his adventures whilst travelling, Wed 18 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOHN SIMPSON: THE LEADERS & LUNATICS TOUR Join the journalist & broadcaster as he explores the personalities that have shaped history and how sane societies slip into despotism, Sun 22 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

Events

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP Create your own bespoke Christmas wreath using the finest seasonal materials, Thurs 19 Nov, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

PIECE OF WORK - NATIONAL POETRY DAY SPECIAL Event including open-mic sessions, Thurs 19 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

CLASSIC ANTIQUE FAIRS Featuring a wide range of specialist dealers offering a variety of high-quality pieces, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SPECTACLE OF LIGHT 2026 Event taking the theme Alice's Amazing Adventures In Wonderland, Fri 20 Nov - Wed 30 Dec, Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham

SEE WIGHTWICK MANOR DECORATED FOR A TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS Enjoy the real decorated trees and arrangements, lit by candlelight throughout the ground floor of the manor, Fri 20 Nov - Sun 3 Jan, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

FESTIVE WREATH MAKING AT BLAKESLEY HALL Workshop inspired by the venue's beautiful gardens and historic surroundings, Sat 21 Nov, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

SOUNDBATHS IN EVERY THING MUST GO WITH THE MANOJ COLLECTIVE Featuring a range of instruments, including crystal bowls, gongs and chimes, Sat 21 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

ENGLISH WHISKY FESTIVAL Featuring unlimited samples across more than 30 distilleries and brands, Sat 21 Nov, The Bond Company, Digbeth, B'ham

THE TRUE CRIME SESSIONS Featuring leading experts in criminology, forensic psychology, crime journalism and law enforcement, Sat 21 Nov, Millennium Point, Birmingham

THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RAILWAY MODELLING Event attracting thousands of enthusiasts, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

MCL The UK's largest motorcycle show, featuring 50-plus manufacturers, Sat 21 - Sun 29 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

THE POLAR EXPRESS TRAIN RIDE Recreate the adventure and excitement of the popular Christmas movie, Sun 22 Nov, Moor Street Station, Birmingham



An Evening With Vidya Patel - The Rep

HIGH LINE
BAR & LOUNGE

PRESENTS

Bottomless BRUNCH

STARTING FROM £45 PER PERSON*

Live DJ, delicious food, flowing drinks and non-stop feel-good anthems!

90 minutes
Special themed dates



SCAN FOR MORE INFO & TO BOOK

*Bottomless Brunch is 90 minutes from arrival. Guests may order one dish from the Bottomless Brunch menu and choose from the limited drinks list. 18+ only. No under-18s are permitted. Responsible drinking applies. Guests must not be intoxicated on the casino gaming floor. Management reserves the right to refuse alcohol service where appropriate. Please visit resortsworldbirmingham.co.uk for full T&Cs, menu and more info.

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Fontaines D.C - Utilita Arena Birmingham

Gigs

WILT + UGLY OZO Mon 23 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

PRESIDENT + VIANOVA + DREAMWAKE Mon 23 Nov, O2 Academy

THE STYLISTICS Mon 23 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

GLENN JONES Tues 24 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CATTY Tues 24 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DEL AMITRI Tues 24 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SVAVAR KNÚTUR Tues 24 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE NORTH Tues 24 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

JULIA WOLF Tues 24 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BEN FOLDS Tues 24 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

CHEEKFACE + EMPEROR X + PLAYBOY MANBABY Wed 25 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DAVID FORD Wed 25 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE RABBITTS Wed 25 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

HELD Wed 25 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

WILL FINN AND ROSIE CALVERT Wed 25 Nov, Red Lion Folk Club, Kings Heath

BELLOWHEAD Wed 25 Nov, Symphony Hall, Centenary Square

FURTHER ON UP THE ROAD Wed 25 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

FONTAINES D.C. Wed 25 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SHEILA FAWKES CAFÉ ORCHESTRA Wed 25 Nov, Boldmere Sports and Social Club, Sutton Coldfield

OUTPOST DRIVE Thurs 26 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

BLUE ROSE CODE Thurs 26 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

FRIGHT YEARS + CHLOE WILSON Thurs 26 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

ZIMMER90 Thurs 26 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

FAT DOG Thurs 26 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

KATE GEE Thurs 26 Nov, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

GABRIELLA CILMI Thurs 26 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

EVERGREY + IGNEA + STELLAR CIRCUS Thurs 26 Nov, The Asylum, Digbeth

GRIEF RITUAL Thurs 26 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

BOB DYLAN Thurs 26 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, B'ham

DAVE GIBB Thurs 26 Nov, Catshill Club, Bromsgrove

BIG BAND OF BOOM Fri 27 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MOBIUS LOOP Fri 27 Nov, The Dark Horse, Moseley

TAKURA Fri 27 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

GARETH Fri 27 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE SMYTHS Fri 27 Nov, O2 Academy

VINCENT FLATTS FINAL **DRIVE** Fri 27 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

THE BLACK FRIDAYS + HECTOR'S HOUSE Fri 27 Nov, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

SMIODAIR Fri 27 Nov, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter

SISTERS OF MURPHY Fri 27 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

THE KAVES Fri 27 Nov, Dead Wax, Digbeth

SCOTT MATTHEWS Fri 27 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

MARIAH CAREY Fri 27 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

DUTCH + GRAFT Fri 27 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

GENESIS CONNECTED Fri 27 Nov, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE PRETTY RECKLESS Fri 27 Nov, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

INTO THE SHADOWS Fri 27 - Sat 28 Nov, Lichfield Garrick

SLAM Sat 28 Nov, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LITTLE JUKE + POSTMAN + LIGHT HOUSE Sat 28 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BALAAM AND THE ANGEL + EVIL BLIZZARD Sat 28 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BLEACHERS Sat 28 Nov, O2 Academy

VALENCIA GRACE Sat 28 Nov, O2 Academy

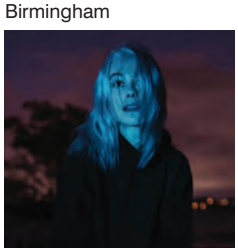
REMI HARRIS HOT CLUB TRIO Sat 28 Nov, Jo Jo Jims, Cofton Hackett

SPLIT SECOND Sat 28 Nov, Tower of Song, Pershore Road

ADAM F Sat 28 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

WHEN RIVERS MEET Sat 28 Nov, The Asylum, Digbeth

PHOEBE BRIDGERS Sat 28 Nov, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham



CATFISHING THE BOTTLEMEN Sat 28 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

SQUEEZE Sat 28 Nov, Utilita Arena Birmingham

GREEN182 Sat 28 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

CHARLIE DORE Sat 28 Nov, The Glee Club, The Arcadian

RAZORLIGHT Sat 28 Nov, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE CLAUSE Sat 28 Nov, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

MR APOLLO + WHICH WAY UP + PAUL & ROSIE Sat 28 Nov, Thimblemill Library, Sandwell

NOT SO YOUNG Sun 29 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

JAYWALKERS Sun 29 Nov, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

TAXI FOR JESUS Sun 29 Nov, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

SUBHUMANS Sun 29 Nov, The Dark Horse, Moseley

GENESIS OWUSU Sun 29 Nov, O2 Institute, Digbeth

L1NKN P4RK + SIX YEAR SILENCE Sun 29 Nov, The Asylum, Digbeth

STAMPIN GROUND Sun 29 Nov, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

THE MAGIC NUMBERS Sun 29 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

WESTSIDE COWBOY Sun 29 Nov, XOYO, Digbeth

THE NICK DEWHURST BAND Sun 29 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

UNDERSCORE + GINGERELLA Mon 30 Nov, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LEAP Mon 30 Nov, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

MENTAL CRUELTY + OV SULFUR + EXTERMINATION DISMEMBERMENT + SUN EATER Mon 30 Nov, The Asylum, Digbeth

MENTAL CRUELTY Mon 30 Nov, Subside Bar, Digbeth

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER - SING & SWING: OUR AMERICAN SONGBOOK Mon 30 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

BANDA BRASILEIRA Mon 30 Nov, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ANDREW CUSHIN Mon 30 Nov, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

Classical Music

RBC LUNCHTIME RECITAL Featuring Ben Baldwin (saxophone), Charles Matthews & Lucy Horne (piano). Programme includes works by Bozza, Muczynski, Bridge & more..., Mon 23 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Rossini, Daquin, Dupré & more..., Mon 23 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

LIVE AT THE CENTRE: JASDEEP SINGH DEGUN (SITAR) Featuring Harkiret Singh Bahra (tabla) & CBSO Strings, Thurs 26 Nov, CBSO Centre, B'ham

CHINEKE! ORCHESTRA Featuring Tatiana Pérez-Hernández (conductor) & Plinio Fernandes (guitar). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Rodrigo, Echverry & more..., Thurs 26 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: BEETHOVEN & BEAMISH QUARTETS Featuring Colette Overdijk & Georgia Hannant (violin), Amy Thomas (viola) & Arthur Boutillier (cello). Programme also includes works by Aulin, Fri 27 Nov, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

HELEN CHARLSTON (MEZZO-SOPRANO) & SHOLTO KYNOCH (PIANO) Programme includes Knight's Dream by Héloïse Werner & R Schumann's Dichterliebe, Op.48, Fri 27 Nov, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

BEETHOVEN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO Featuring Eugene Tzikindelean (violin), Sun 29 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND STRING ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina, Evie Ghauri & Dov Trowbridge (conductors). Programme includes works by Warlock, Rutter, Vaughan Williams & more..., Sun 29 Nov, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

RBC LUNCHTIME RECITAL Featuring Hannah Spry (french horn), Joanne Sealey & Fang-Yu Ni (piano). Programme includes works by JS Bach, Chopin, Liszt & more..., Mon 30 Nov, Recital Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy

PETER ANTONIOU Tues 24 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LARRY DEAN Wed 25 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KANE BROWN & COMICS TBC Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Nov, Herbert's Yard, B'ham

FIN TAYLOR Thurs 26 Nov, Birmingham Town Hall

ARMONICO CONSORT

'PURE PLEASURE' *THE GUARDIAN*
★★★★★ *THE INDEPENDENT*
★★★★★ *BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE*
★★★★★ *THE TELEGRAPH*
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J.S. Bach Christmas Oratorio Part 1, 3, 5 & 6

ARMONICO CONSORT & BAROQUE PLAYERS
DIRECTOR | CHRISTOPHER MONKS

I only discovered Bach's immense Christmas Oratorio in my 20's and was completely blown away by how it was impossible to listen to without a smile. As in his Great Mass in B Minor, the Christmas Oratorio follows Bach building a work made of his own greatest hits, incorporating many moments of his earlier genius, perfecting around new but related texts. For those who adore the grandeur of his great Sanctus and tender but exquisite solo movements of his Mass in B, this is an unmissable concert. For those who are just searching for an utterly uplifting start to the Christmas season – it is even more unmissable!
Christopher Monks

1st December 2026 7.30pm,
Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa
Box office: 01926 334418 www.armonico.org.uk



Carols by Candlelight

ARMONICO CONSORT & AC ACADEMY
DIRECTOR | CHRISTOPHER MONKS
ORGAN - GEORGE HERBERT 15 & 19 DEC |
CHRISTOPHER ALLSOP 21 & 22 DEC

15th & 19th December 2026 7.30pm,
Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick
Box office: 01926 334418 www.armonico.org.uk

21st December 2026 7.30pm,
Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon
Special guests: Stratford Girls' Chamber Choir
Box office: 0333 666 3366 www.armonico.org.uk

22nd December 2026 7.30pm,
Great Malvern Priory
Box Office: 01684 892277
www.malvern-theatres.co.uk



The Forgotten Scarlatti

ARMONICO CONSORT & BAROQUE PLAYERS
DIRECTOR | CHRISTOPHER MONKS

"The Greatest Classical Find of the Century"
LE FIGARO

27th January 2027 7.30pm,
Great Malvern Priory
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www.malvern-theatres.co.uk

28th January 2027 7.30pm,
Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick
Box office: 01926 334418 www.armonico.org.uk

THE HERBERT ART
GALLERY & MUSEUM
COVENTRY UNIVERSITY
MEAD GALLERY

02.10.26–10.01.27

A CHORUS OF STRANGERS

BRITISH ART SHOW 10

A SOUTHBANK CENTRE HAYWARD GALLERY
TOURING EXHIBITION

SOUTHBANK CENTRE 75 HAYWARD GALLERY
TOURING

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND · Art Fund_ · Herbert Art Gallery & Museum · The Lift · Coventry University · Warwick Arts Centre



Image: Nengi Omuku, *Pillars By Night*, 2026

SARA PASCOE, KAZEEM JAMAL, JAMIE DSOUZA & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 26 Nov, Rosies, Birmingham

MARK SIMMONS & DANNY WARD Thurs 26 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, ELEANOR TIERNAN & COMIC TBC Thurs 26 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PROJECT MAYHEM COMEDY Thurs 26 Nov, The Wellington, Birmingham

MICHAEL AKADIRI Fri 27 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NABIL ABDULRASHID, DINESH NATHAN, JIMMY MCGHIE & ELEANOR TIERNAN Fri 27 - Sat 28 Nov, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LGBTQTEEHEE! COMEDY FESTIVAL Fri 27 - Sat 28 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

CHRIS RAMSEY Fri 27 Nov, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JONATHAN PIE Fri 27 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JOSH PUGH Sun 29 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ADAM ROWE Sun 29 Nov, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Theatre

CRITICAL CARE Production telling the untold stories of those working on the frontline during the Covid-19 pandemic, Wed 25 Nov, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

THE LITTLE MERMAID The Arcadians Musical Theatre Company present a stage version of Hans Christian Andersen's much-loved story, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Nov, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

AUSTENTATIOUS: AN IMPROVISED JANE AUSTEN NOVEL 'Razor-sharp' show inspired entirely by a title from the audience, Sat 28 Nov, The Alexandra, Birmingham

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Andrew Margerison performs a host of characters in a solo performance of Dickens' festive tale of redemption and compassion, Sat 28 Nov, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

TREASURE ISLAND Brand-new panto featuring comedian Richard Blackwood as Long John Silver and West End star Solomon Davy as Jim Hawkins. Tam Ryan, Ian Adams, Alexia McIntosh (SIX The Musical) and Leonie Wall also star, Sat 28 Nov - Sun 3 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE THREE MUSKETEERS Visual comedy based on Alexandre Dumas' classic novel. Co-produced by the RSC and Told By An Idiot, Sat 28 Nov - Sat 9 Jan, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Dickens' festive favourite gets the BOA treatment in a show promising sparkling songs, spectacular dance numbers and heartwarming moments for the whole family to enjoy, Mon 30 Nov - Tues 15 Dec, Birmingham Ormiston Academy

Kids Theatre

THE TOYMAKER Family-focused show featuring traditional stories from around the world, Sat 28 Nov, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD Tall Stories present an enchanting version of Julia Donaldson's much-loved picture book, Sat 28 Nov - Sun 27 Dec, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Dance

BRB: THE NUTCRACKER Sir Peter Wright's acclaimed festive production, set to Tchaikovsky's famous score, until Sat 12 Dec, Birmingham Hippodrome

VIVIENNE FRANZMANN & FRAUKE REQUARDT: ANATOMY OF SURVIVAL Offbeat collaboration bringing together eyewitness accounts of an everyday altercation 'to show how our nervous systems are stuck in the Stone Age', Thurs 26 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

CHRISTMAS IN IRELAND Feelgood show capturing the true magic of an Irish Christmas, Mon 23 Nov, The Alexandra, Birmingham

BEN FOLDS' PAPER AIRPLANE REQUEST TOUR A unique concert format during which the audience is invited to write their favourite Ben Folds song requests on paper, fold them into airplanes, and launch them toward the stage, Tues 24 Nov, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE ARCHERS: LIVE AT 75 Unique show celebrating 75 years of BBC Radio Four soap opera The Archers. Hosted by superfan and comedian, Angela Barnes, Wed 25 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



THE ARCHERS: LIVE AT 75 Unique show celebrating 75 years of BBC Radio Four soap opera The Archers. Hosted by superfan and comedian, Angela Barnes, Thurs 26 Nov, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

FATT BUTCHER: CONGREGATIONAL Newly composed 'choral service for the nightclub', described as being part concert, part communion and part resurrection, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BOLLYFLEX AT BANGLA MONTH 2026: THE CLOSING NIGHT High-energy evening bringing together 'the spirit of Bangla culture with the exuberance of Bollywood flair', Sat 28 Nov, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

LONDON SYMPHONIC ROCK ORCHESTRA A collective of 12 classically trained artists perform iconic rock hits, Sat 28 Nov, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

SEASONAL SWING WITH THE NICK DEWHURST BAND Sun 29 Nov, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

Talks & Spoken Word

THE FALCON & THE ROSE Historians Alison Weir and Siobhan Clarke discuss how a child of tragedy became England's greatest Tudor queen, Thurs 26 Nov, Lichfield Cathedral

SURREALISM: A DAY OF TALKS Day of conversations exploring the legacy of Emmy Bridgwater and her influence on other artistic practices, Sun 29 Nov, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Events

FESTIVE GOOD FOOD SHOW Featuring over 350 handpicked and independent food & drink producers, Thurs 26 - Sun 29 Nov, NEC, B'ham

MOLLY CLEAVER DRAWING WORKSHOP AT CRAFT & CULTURE Colourful, free-flowing drawing activity with artist Molly Cleaver, whose work features in Joe Lycett's exhibition, Everything Must Go, Fri 27 Nov, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

PLANETARIUM LATES: DUNE (1984) A screening of the cult film, inside the cinema dome, Fri 27 Nov, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOP Create your own Nordic-inspired Hygge Christmas wreath using all natural materials, Sat 28 Nov, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

SANTA'S STEAM SPECIALS Step aboard a 'magical' steam train from Kidderminster Station and journey into a world of 'festive wonder', Sat 28 - Sun 29 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THE ELF EXPRESS Join in with the elves' Christmas capers and discover plenty of surprises along the way, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Nov, Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

CHRISTMAS UNDERGROUND: A FESTIVE LIGHT TRAIL Follow an illuminated trail through the underground cavern network, complete with twinkling lights, festive displays and Christmas music, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Nov, Dudley Canal & Caverns

THE POLAR EXPRESS TRAIN RIDE Recreate the adventure and excitement of the popular Christmas movie, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Nov, Moor Street Station, Birmingham

CHRISTMAS ARTS MARKET Featuring a selection of work by talented designer-makers, Sat 28 Nov - Sun 6 Dec, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

SANTA'S GROTTO Visit Santa in his grotto, set within the walls of the 11th-century castle, Sat 28 Nov - Thurs 24 Dec, Dudley Zoo & Castle

LUMINATE LIGHT TRAIL 2026 The gardens are transformed for the festive season by 'mesmerising installations, projections, music and glowing tunnels of light', Sat 28 Nov - Sat 2 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

CHRISTMAS AT PACKWOOD HOUSE Join Baron Ash on his grand adventure, visiting beautifully decorated rooms reflecting the memories of his travels and the countries he visited, Sat 28 Nov - Sun 3 Jan, Packwood House, Warwickshire

ONCE UPON A TIME… CROOME'S FAIRYTALE CHRISTMAS Tiptoe past Sleeping Beauty in the Temple Greenhouse, journey into the Little Mermaid's underwater world in the basement, and marvel at Hansel & Gretel's delicious gingerbread cottage in the Tapestry Room, Sat 28 Nov - Sun 3 Jan, Croome, Worcs

PILATES IN EVERY THING MUST GO WITH GRAFT PILATES Expert-tutored session offering exclusive early-morning access to the museum, Sun 29 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

LIVE PRINTING DEMONSTRATIONS WITH STIRCHLEY PRINTWORKS Joe Lycett-inspired printmaking in action, Sun 29 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

THE CHRISTMAS GROTTO See Santa in his cosy cabin, Sat 29 Nov - Wed 24 Dec, Webbs, West Hagley, Stourbridge

PAINT-A-LONG WITH JOE LYCETT IN EVERY THING MUST GO Led by Joe himself, this relaxed and creative workshop offers a unique opportunity to explore the comedian's distinctive artistic approach, Mon 30 Nov, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

WIN! with What's On...

Enter now at whatsonlive.co.uk to be in with a chance of bagging one of these fabulous prizes!



Win! A family ticket to The Winter Light Experience!

Step into a world of festive magic at The Winter Light Experience, available to enjoy at The Belfry Hotel & Resort in Sutton Coldfield. The mile-long illuminated trail features more than 30 dazzling installations, interactive games and live characters, with visitors following a magical Christmas story...

What's On is giving you the chance to win a family ticket to enjoy this enchanting experience during the festive season.

Competition closes Monday 16 November



Win! Four tickets to see Peter Pan at Birmingham Repertory Theatre!

Fly away to Neverland with Peter Pan at Birmingham Rep!

Join Peter, Wendy and the Lost Boys on a magical adventure as they encounter mischievous fairies, mermaids and the dastardly Captain Hook. Packed with excitement, imagination and festive fun, this enchanting family production brings JM Barrie's much-loved tale to life... We have four tickets to give away to the show this December.

Competition closes Monday 30 November



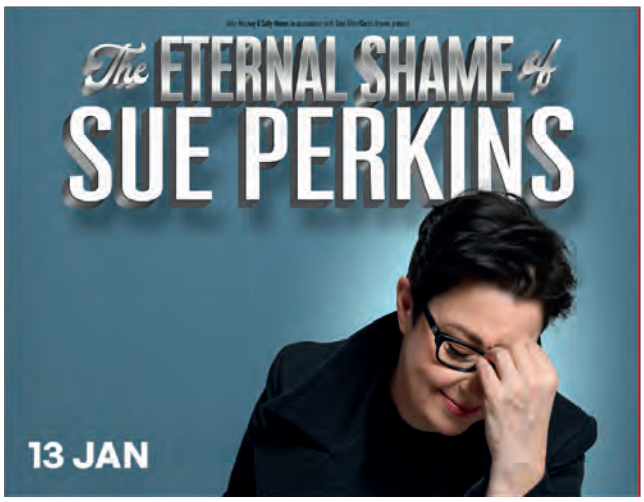


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A MAGICAL NEW STAGE PRODUCTION FOR CHRISTMAS



A BIRMINGHAM REP PRODUCTION

PETER PAN

WRITTEN BY
J. M. BARRIE

ADAPTED BY
PHIL PORTER

MUSIC BY
RUTH CHAN

DIRECTED BY
JOE MURPHY

DESIGNED BY
HAYLEY GRINDLE

WED 18 NOV – SUN 17 JAN

birmingham-rep.co.uk

"Peter Pan" is presented by arrangement with Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity and Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

the Rep