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ISSUE 446 MARCH 2024

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inside:

BONNIE & CLYDE

award-winning musical stops off in the Midlands



TIRED AND TESTED

Sophie McCartney visits The Potteries with her latest show



SPACE, RACE AND FLY

family-friendly fun at RAF Museum Midlands this Easter



gatehouse theatre

William Shakespeare's

TWELFTH NIGHT

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Molly Windsor

BAFTA winner
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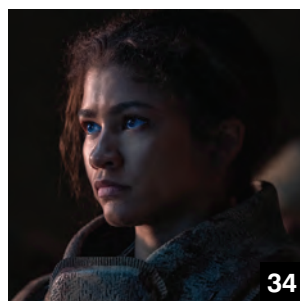
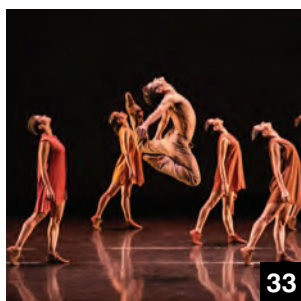
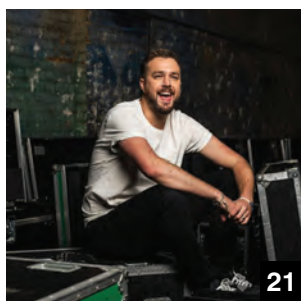
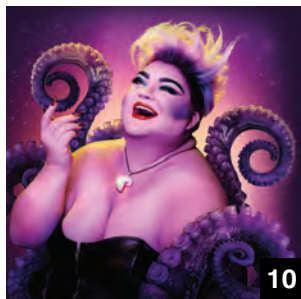


Natalie Anderson

N SERIES
FOOL ME ONCE

gatehousetheatre.co.uk 01785 619080 Stafford ST16 2LT





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What's On

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Casting announced for Twelfth Night in Stafford

Former Emmerdale and Happy Valley actress Natalie Anderson (pictured left) will take the role of Olivia in this year's 1950s-set Stafford Shakespeare production of Twelfth Night. Natalie, who recently met an untimely end in the hit Netflix drama Fool Me Once, will be joined in the show by Molly Windsor. Running at the town's Gatehouse Theatre from Friday 21 June to Sunday 7 July, Twelfth Night is the 32nd Stafford Shakespeare show. Last year's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream achieved a record audience for a drama at the Gatehouse, with more than 5,000 people attending... To book tickets for Twelfth Night, visit gatehousetheatre.co.uk



Season of one-nighters at the New Vic Theatre

Staffordshire theatre the New Vic will play host to a season of one-night events between April and June, with music, comedy, spoken word and tap dancing shows all featuring on the menu.

Highlights include a seven-piece band paying tribute to Joni Mitchell, and Lemn Sissay sharing poems from his collection, Let The Light Pour In. To check out the whole season and book tickets, visit newvictheatre.org.uk



Brum Rocks! Want to appear in a rock concert?

Amateur musicians and singers are being given the chance to participate in free workshops and events across Birmingham and the



Black Country ahead of performing in a ticketed rock concert in the summer. The opportunity comes courtesy of Misfits Music Foundation's Brum Rocks project, which will culminate in a concert at Birmingham's Forum venue on Sunday 14 July. To find out more about the initiative and how to enter, visit brumrocks.com

Funding secures future of region's historic buildings

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), working in partnership with the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF), has provided vital funding to help protect the long-term futures of four of the region's most historic buildings: 16th-century pub The Golden Lion in Birmingham's Cannon Hill Park; Matthew Boulton & James Watts' Soho Foundry in Smethwick; Walsall Imperial theatre & cinema; and Balsall Heath's Old Print Works. As well as financially supporting plans to restore the historic buildings and bring them back into use, the WMCA has set up a Heritage Taskforce as the first regional body to advise on how they can be protected and re-used for generations to come.

Birmingham Royal Ballet announces 2024/5 season

Birmingham Royal Ballet's (BRB) programme of shows for its 2024/25 season will include an autumn presentation of Sir Frederick Ashton's *La Fille mal gardée*. Other shows featuring in BRB's later-year line-up include Sir Peter Wright's much-loved version of *The Nutcracker* and the world premiere of *Luna*. A two-act ballet in six movements, *Luna* is the final production in the company's Birmingham Trilogy (the previous two being *City Of A Thousand Trades* and *Black Sabbath The Ballet*). Early 2025 will see BRB once again presenting one of its most popular works: Sir David Bintley's *Cinderella*. To check out the whole programme and book tickets, visit brb.org.uk



Rick and Paloma to play Camp Bestival Shropshire

Rick Astley, Paloma Faith and Faithless have been announced as headline acts for this year's Camp Bestival Shropshire event. Taking place at Weston Park on the Shropshire-Staffordshire border from Thursday 15 to Sunday 18 August, the 2024 edition of the show also includes performances by, among others, McFly, Jake Shears, The Darkness, Sara Cox, Level 42, Orbital and The Magic Numbers. To find out more about the festival and book tickets, visit campbestival.net

New Steps musical to debut at The Alexandra

A brand-new show featuring the music of pop band Steps is coming to the Midlands in the autumn.

Titled *Here & Now*, the production will stop off at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Saturday 9 to Sunday 24 November. Commenting on the news, Steps said: "We've searched for the perfect story for our music, and we've found it in the aisle of a seaside superstore, where four friends set out on their own Summer of Love."

For more information and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com/birmingham



The Big Feast is back in Stoke!

Stoke-on-Trent's family-friendly festival The Big Feast will make a welcome return in late summer.

Taking place on the August bank holiday weekend, on Friday the 23rd & Saturday the 24th, the event is promising 'two days of world-class entertainment and creative inspiration in the city centre'. To find out more, visit the website appetite.org.uk

Tinchy and JLS in Shrewsbury

X Factor boyband JLS and Ghanaian-British rapper Tinchy Stryder will this summer celebrate the 15th anniversaries of their first UK number-one hits by joining forces in Shrewsbury's Quarry Park. Their outdoor show will take place on Sunday 14 July. Tickets can be purchased at myticket.co.uk/artists/JLS



Celebrating the arts in Codsall

The Codsall Festival returns this month with its usual wide-ranging selection of events (Monday 11 - Saturday 23 March).

Launching back in 1978 and taking place once every two years, the community arts event celebrates theatre, music, dance, literature and crafts across a fortnight of performances, talks, demonstrations and workshops. To check out the complete programme for 2024, visit codsallartsfestival.org.uk



Circus spectacular as Cirque return after six long years

Cirque du Soleil are returning to the UK for the first time in six years, with their latest tour, which is starting mid-March, coming to an end at Utilita Arena Birmingham next month (Thursday 25 - Sunday 28 April). The world-

renowned company will be performing the critically acclaimed OVO, which they describe as 'a colourful intrusion into a new day in the life of insects'. For further information and book tickets, visit utilitaarenabham.co.uk

Jarman show at The Hive venue

A play about legendary gay filmmaker Derek Jarman is one of the highlights of this month's Shrewsbury LGBT+ History Festival ((Friday 15 - Sunday 17 March).

Showing at town venue The Hive on Saturday the 16th, Jarman is a one-man play performed by actor & writer Mark Farrelly, whose other productions include Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope and Howerd's End.

To find out more about the show and book tickets, visit hiveonline.org.uk



Aston's hitting the yellow brick road!

JLS star Aston Merrygold will play the Tin Man in The Wizard Of Oz when a critically acclaimed stage version of the classic MGM musical visits Birmingham Hippodrome this summer (Tuesday 11 - Sunday 16 June).

Aston will be joined in the show by Strictly Come Dancing's Craig Revel Horwood, who will take the role of the Wicked Witch of the West. For more information and to book tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

New family festival 'on the Rise' in Staffordshire

A brand-new family festival, combining live music and entertainment with outdoor activities, is set to take place in Staffordshire this summer.

Titled The Rising, the event will be held at Kibblestone Scout Camp, near Stone, from Thursday 4 to Saturday 6 July.

Attractions will include a line-up of bands and solo performers and a selection of children's activities, including circus skills, storytelling and arts & crafts pastimes. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit risingfestival.co.uk

Pentabus celebrates 50 years with a new home

A Shropshire theatre company is celebrating its 50th anniversary by taking up residence in the recently refurbished Ludlow Assembly Rooms.

Pentabus has produced more than 300 new plays since forming in 1974, in the process supporting 220 playwrights and reaching over half a million audience members. The company has moved to the Assembly Rooms from the farm estate at the Old School in Bromfield, which had been its base for 40 years.

Travel to Andalusia with flamenco star Daniel!

The award-winning Daniel Martinez Flamenco Company is bringing a brand-new show to Birmingham Town Hall this month (Friday 15 March).

Titled Andalusia, the production will see flamenco guitarist Daniel joined by musicians, singers and a chamber-orchestra ensemble for an evening which is being promoted as 'a stunning and unmissable flamenco experience'.

Tickets for the concert are available at bmusic.co.uk



06 whatsonlive.co.uk



New Steve Steinman musical coming to Shropshire

A second sequel to hit musical Vampires Rock will make a stop-off at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn next spring as part of its first-ever tour.

Produced by and starring Steve Steinman - who will reprise the role of 'nefarious vampire' Baron von Rockular in the show - Eternal Love: The Musical will play the venue from Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 March 2025. Commenting on the production, Steve said:

"Theatregoers across the UK will be the first to experience the rarity of a brand-new and original pop-rock musical. Featuring West End production values, Eternal Love will equally delight both true fans of musical theatre and music lovers who may not ever have considered attending a musical before." For further information and to book tickets, visit theatresevern.co.uk

Tony hits the road with Sounds Of The 60s show

Veteran DJ Tony Blackburn is visiting Birmingham Town Hall this month (Thursday 7 March) with a live version of his BBC Radio Two show, Sounds Of The 60s. He will then make another Midlands stop-off, at Malvern's Forum Theatre, later in the tour (Thursday 18 July). For further information and to book tickets, visit ticketmaster.co.uk

Wellington cinema set to become a cultural hub

A project to increase footfall in Wellington has seen the Shropshire town's Orbit cinema & café purchased by Telford & Wrekin Council in partnership with non-profit organisation Clifton Community Arts Centre Limited.

Following the purchase - which was made in response to 'the community's desire for a vibrant evening economy and an enriched leisure and cultural offering in the area' - the venue will be transformed to create a cultural hub for Wellington.

Journalist Nick tours new Post Office-scandal show

Journalist & broadcaster Nick Wallis is visiting two Midlands theatres with a new show about the Post Office scandal. Nick, who was series consultant on recent ITV drama Mr Bates vs The Post Office, has spent 14 years covering the story and is uniquely positioned to explain how the shocking miscarriage of justice came about. The Post Office Scandal: The Inside Story shows at Lichfield Garrick on Sunday 24 March and Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Sunday 14 April.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the relevant theatre's website.

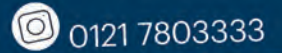
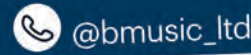
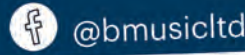
Jazz at The Gateway

Shrewsbury-born saxophonist Trish Clowes and pianist Ross Stanley will be teaming up at the town's Gateway Education & Arts Centre this month.

The dynamic duo, who appear at the venue on Thursday 21 March, will be playing music from their new album, Journey To Where. Tickets are available at eventbrite.co.uk

B:Music

Town Hall & Symphony Hall



Ben Portsmouth: This Is Elvis

09 Mar | Town Hall



Women In (E)Motion: Black Voices, Agaama & Emily Saunders

09 Mar | Symphony Hall



The Musical Box 2024

09 Mar | Symphony Hall



Sasha Velour: The Big Reveal

12 Mar | Symphony Hall



Dirty Dancing Live In Concert

16 Mar | Symphony Hall



Just My Imagination: The Music Of The Temptations

17 Mar | Symphony Hall



The Circus of Horrors: Dr Hazes Cabaret of Curiosities

19 Mar | Symphony Hall



Tchaikovsky Classics with Birmingham Royal Ballet

28 Mar | Symphony Hall



Good Friday St John Passion with Ex Cathedra

29 Mar | Symphony Hall



Karl Jenkins' 80th Birthday Concert

30 Mar | Symphony Hall



bmusic.co.uk

There's something for everyone this March!

Carnival and pig walk parade in The Potteries

Longton Community Carnival is back for a second year next month, complete with a funfair, food stalls, entertainment on two stages and the return of the pig walk carnival parade.

Commenting on the event, which takes place on Sunday 21 April, Laurel Gallagher, co-director of the carnival's organiser, Urban Wilderness, said: "The carnival is part of a wider project to support the cultural and social regeneration of Longton town centre, and aims to provide opportunities for people to connect, celebrate their town, and support local businesses and communities."

Torvill & Dean to get their skates on one last time

Jayne Torvill & Christopher Dean will head out on tour next spring - before hanging up their skates for good.

The Midlands-born legends - who famously won a Gold medal for their performance to Ravel's Bolero at the 1984 Winter Olympics - will be stopping off at Birmingham's Resorts World Arena from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 April 2025 as part of their Torvill & Dean: Our Last Dance tour.

Commenting on the news, Jayne and Christopher said: "Whilst we will continue to work together off the ice, this will be the final time we will skate together following our 50-year partnership. But not without celebrating one final time with all of our incredible fans across the UK, who have supported us constantly over many years. We promise to put on an amazing live show - and we really hope to see you there!" For further information and to book tickets, visit resortsworldarena.co.uk



Candlelit Fleetwood Mac at Lichfield Cathedral

Lichfield Cathedral is hosting a candlelit tribute to Fleetwood Mac next month. Taking place at the venue from Wednesday 24 to Saturday 27 April, the concert event features a cast of West End singers and a live band performing a selection of the group's best-loved songs. More information can be found at lichfield-cathedral.org, where fans can also purchase tickets for the show.



Comedian Viggo Venn joins Penkridge festival line-up

Comedian Viggo Venn will top-bill the final night of this year's Penkridge Open Air Summer Festival, with boyband Five headlining the Saturday evening. Other attractions at this year's event - which is being held at Penkridge Sports & Recreation Centre from Friday 5 to Sunday 7

July - include an arts & crafts market, family-friendly activities, games and entertainment, and live performances by a host of artists, bands and local talent across multiple stages.

To check out the festival's full line-up, visit the website: penkridgeopenair.co.uk

Dino fun at Wolves Grand

Dinosaur-loving youngsters are being invited to go on a jurassic adventure late this month - in Wolverhampton!

Family-friendly theatre production Jurassic Earth, which stops off at the city's Grand Theatre on Sunday 24 March, comes complete with 'the world's largest walking T-Rex, a big-hearted Brontosaurus, tricky Triceratops, uncontrollable Carnotaurus, vicious Velociraptors and sneaky Spinosaurus'. To find out more about this monster of a show, visit grandtheatre.co.uk

Woodshrop Festival to return to Shrewsbury

Some of the UK's top tribute acts and bands will be heading to Shropshire this summer to take part in the 2024 edition of Woodshrop (Shrewsbury's West Mid Showground, Friday 19 - Sunday 21 July). The popular festival will feature tributes to, among others, Abba, Elvis, The Rolling Stones, Fleetwood Mac, The Beatles and Oasis.

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

From Strictly to Scarlett for former Corrie star

Reigning Strictly Come Dancing champion Ellie Leach will visit Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn next month.

The former Coronation Street star stops off at the venue with touring show Cluedo 2, in which she's making her stage acting debut, playing the character of Miss Scarlett.

The tour coincides with the 75th anniversary of the world-famous boardgame on which the brand-new play is based. Cluedo 2 shows in Shrewsbury from Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 April. To find out more and book tickets, visit theatresevern.co.uk



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TOM DAVIS: UNDERDOG
SAT 2 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

QUEENZ: THE SHOW WITH BALLS!
FRI 8 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

CIRCUS OF HORRORS
SAT 9 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

BUFFY REVAMPED
SUN 10 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

SOPHIE MCCARTNEY: TIRED AND TESTED
FRI 15 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

NORTHERN LIVE: DO I LOVE YOU
SAT 16 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

ANDY & THE ODD SOCKS
SAT 30 MAR | VICTORIA HALL

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A DREAM COME TRUE

Shawna Hamic talks about playing fun and sassy
Ursula the Sea Witch in hit touring musical Unfortunate...



Musical parody Unfortunate tells the previously untold story of Ursula the Sea Witch - the underwater baddie in hit Disney movie The Little Mermaid. Described as a tell-all tale of sex, sorcery and suckers, the show is rated 16-plus and is currently touring the UK - stopping off at two Midlands theatres along the way. Shawna Hamic - best known from award-winning Netflix series Orange Is The New Black - plays Ursula. She recently spoke to What's On about starring as her favourite Disney villain...

Unfortunate is a theatre success story. First staged at Edinburgh Festival in 2019, the quirky musical has gone from strength to strength. When it toured five years ago, it played small-scale venues - including Birmingham Hippodrome's Patrick Studio - but now the production has been expanded and re-imagined as a full-scale musical.

Inspired by Disney's The Little Mermaid, Unfortunate: The Untold Story Of Ursula The Sea Witch puts Ursula in the driving seat, telling her saga - and it's a very different fairytale from the one people are used to!

The show stars actress Shawna Hamic as Ursula, performing alongside River Medway as Ariel. Probably best known to readers as prison guard 'Ginger' Copeland in the hit Netflix series Orange Is The New Black, Shawna couldn't resist the opportunity to play the sea witch.

"When I was first approached about it, I was really excited because Ursula has always been my favourite Disney villain," she says. "She's the bad guy, and who doesn't love the bad guy? But also, I loved the fact that she represented something that I was in real life - a big girl who was powerful and yet fun and sassy. While we think of villains as bad people, it didn't seem like she was *that* bad. Just to get a chance to portray my favourite villain is a dream come true."

By putting Ursula in the centre of the narrative, Unfortunate allows audiences to understand her past and her motivation.

"The story is told through her point of view - she's the narrator as well as the lead character. She speaks to the audience and wants to really show her side of the situation made famous by the Disney movie. She wants it to be what really happened from her perspective, not just seen through the eyes of the heroine that you know.

"So it's the things that happened to her and caused her to be the way she is, and why she reacted the way she did. What caused her to really step into herself as a magical being. It's a love story - she gets the tragedy that happens to lots of people in life, and it makes her more recognisable in everyday life. We

are shaped by the situations that we live through - and that can be true for our favourite 'octowoman' as well.

"We like to cast people as the villain, to see them only one way, and now we get to see Ursula as fully formed. We see her as a kid, we see her as a teenager, we see her on the cusp of greatness, then we see her as everyone recognises her. It's very much like Wicked - that same exploration of why she is the way she is. When we know that, we can accept that she's not just the villain."

In encouraging audiences to see beyond their preconceptions of Ursula, Shawna hopes the show will also inspire them to think a bit more about other people - and themselves.

"As a person who is large, as a fat woman, I want to be seen as more than just the funny woman or the sidekick that's sassy. I feel the same about Ursula being a villain - she's the one-dimensional bad guy who everyone has to hate. I don't think anyone is fully good or fully bad; I feel like, in life, we each have different levels and extremes within us.

Exploring Ursula's story specifically allows us to explore the stories of the people around us. It may give us an opportunity to see someone in a different light who we have cast as one-dimensional in our mind. While that seems deep for a panto-comedy-musical, I feel it's part of what we try and explore.

"I think Unfortunate is a show that also allows you to look at yourself and rejoice in who you are completely. We want you to leave celebrating who you are, knowing that you are perfect the way you are, even if society doesn't want you to believe that. The way you look, who you love, how you see the world - you are unique, and unique is important and should be celebrated."

Written by Robyn Grant and Daniel Foxx with music by Tim Gilvin, Unfortunate may be inspired by The Little Mermaid but it's no children's cartoon. The production carries an age recommendation of 16-plus - and there's an important reason for that, says Shawna.

"Ours is an adult show - there are adult themes and adult language. And it seems that however much we warn people, there

are still people who bring their children to the show. So we have five and six-year-olds and seven-year-olds and 12-year-olds in the audience! I come out and use some pretty blue language right off, and then there are adult visuals and themes. So you might have to have some awkward conversations with your children that you didn't want to have yet, if you bring them to this show."

Shawna is no stranger to the stage, having been in US productions of Les Misérables, 1776, Kinky Boots and The Last Ship, but this is her first UK theatre tour.

"I've been to London many times because I would come with my best friend and see theatre in the West End. We would spend a week or two weeks, so I've explored all of the touristy things of London, but I've never had the chance to be in London for a length of time, let alone explore the rest of the UK. So it's a really exciting adventure that I'm on, and what a great way to do it - working here, rather than exploring it by myself!

"I'm excited about getting to see and meet the people in all of the different tour locations. I want to see what resonates with everyone in their own towns and what makes them proud to live where they live. I want to see places that I've read about for my whole life or seen on TV and film but never visited."

With a seven-month tour in the UK, there are a couple of home comforts Shawna admits to missing.

"This is going to seem so silly, but any time someone comes over, I ask them to bring some gum and also to buy a Sprite or a 7up from the airport. You guys have a sugar tax, so you use artificial sweeteners in your drinks, and I can't have them - they make me ill - so the weirdest thing is that I ask people to bring me soda from the US!"

.....
Unfortunate shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Thursday 11 to Saturday 13 April and at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Thursday 11 to Sunday 14 July

GLASS ACT

**A new production of Tennessee Williams' semi-autobiographical
The Glass Menagerie is this month visiting the Coventry Belgrade**



Director Atri Banerjee's highly acclaimed production of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* visits the Coventry Belgrade this month. Actress Geraldine Somerville talks to What's On about returning to a play in which she first appeared some 35 years ago...

Actress Geraldine Somerville - best known from the Harry Potter movies, the film *Gosford Park* and as Robbie Coltrane's long-suffering sidekick DS Jane Penhaligon in hit television series *Cracker* - is delighted when I tell her she's made my job easier.

"Oh good! I'm glad I've helped somebody already today," she laughs, before I explain that her latest role gives me an instant angle for our chat. She's playing matriarch Amanda Wingfield in Tennessee Williams' classic domestic drama, *The Glass Menagerie* - the semi-autobiographical tale of a family on the verge of meltdown that kickstarted his playwrighting career. It's also the play that launched Geraldine's acting career, as she played the role of the daughter Laura in her first professional gig after leaving acting school in 1989.

To top it off, the latest version of the play, directed by Atri Banerjee, premiered at the Royal Exchange in Manchester, the same theatre where Geraldine made that debut 35 years ago. She giggles again when I suggest that her life has come full circle so she can now retire.

"I did think that, funnily enough!" she laughs. "It did cross my mind that maybe this is the end!"

If this was her final curtain call - and it's evidently not - then there'd be few better ways to bow out than returning to the incredible world that Tennessee Williams created, she admits.

"When I got that job back in 1989, I was cock-a-hoop because it was my first job after leaving drama school - wonderful theatre, wonderful part, wonderful play. But I probably didn't appreciate quite how wonderful the play is and what an amazing writer Tennessee Williams is. So I came back to it going 'Wow, oh my gawd!'"

The deep-south accent she adopts for those last words could almost be Amanda, the overbearing Southern Belle she plays in the show but who Geraldine admits she understands and appreciates so much more now that she herself is a mother (and not just to a certain kid magician!).

"My original take on Amanda was that she was stuck in the past, but then you see she's a woman who has survived on her own in America during the Depression, bringing up two children in a huge city where she's unable to work - because women couldn't - and with a daughter with a disability and no support. So she can't have been just a flighty

little Southern Belle - she must have had some grit to survive that and to have got to where she is.

"I think the challenges with Amanda are that she's the mother of all mothers - in every respect - but because she's so vocal, and around a lot in the play, you don't want to be annoying and irritating; you've got to find a way into the character so that she's appealing in some way. That's the eternal challenge of playing this part. And you can play her in many different ways."

And as Geraldine points out, Amanda has rather a lot to say for herself...

"Yes, yes, yes! Laura's a joy to play because she does so much observation; she's just quietly there, soaking it all in. Amanda is the engine in a way; she drives the energy and the pace of the play, and that's quite a responsibility. And oh my God, all those flipping lines!"

Like Shakespeare, Tennessee Williams' beautifully written work isn't the sort of script you can adlib your way through when the brain freezes, Geraldine admits.

"He was a poet and his dialogue is so poetic. There's so much of a rhythm and a rhyme to it, so you really do need to get it right. You can't just generalise your way through or give an appropriation - not that I would, being the very professional actress that I am! That said, I *have* been known to come out with some gobbledygook now and again, which is funny because it throws the rhythm out of balance."

Despite the challenge of such a wordy script, Geraldine had no hesitation in saying yes when offered the chance to reprise the role that she first played when the new production debuted in 2022.

"There aren't many acting roles in my age group, particularly in great classic plays like this, so it's a great opportunity. I couldn't say no!"

Better yet, Atri Banerjee's production (and Geraldine's performance) earned rave reviews, not least for offering an innovative new take on the original text - something the actress herself says was apparent from the off.

"I think what was - and is - really joyous about the production, and the design and the way Atri directs, is that it has a very dreamlike quality, because it's a play of memory, and you can interpret that in so many different ways."

The staging is "quite stark and pared back,

almost ethereal" according to Geraldine, who admits the lack of props meant the actors - as well as their characters - were effectively "floating around in the ether of [narrator] Tom's memory".

"That was really interesting and different and fresh and new, but it had its challenges, I have to be honest.

"When I did the production back in 1989, we had props and it looked quite authentically 1937 - which is when it's set - but we don't have any of that, so it's challenging. As an actor you have to really use the text to tell the story - I mean really, really use it - because it isn't visually going to be delivered to the audience. You're trying to contextualise time and place, because they are very important in order to have an understanding of the characters."

The challenge is clearly something she's relishing though - not least because the new production is much more physical, leaning heavily on movement and symbolism to tell the story.

"It was a new territory for me as an actor. I haven't done plays for a long time because I've been busy with my children, so yes, it was really interesting, and I'm very interested in that kind of work - I like physical stuff.

"It's a more abstract - or expressionistic, maybe that's the word - version of the play, which I hope connects with the audience."

One thing that definitely has connected with an audience - or at least the BAFTA-voting one - is *Gorka*, a short movie Geraldine recently made alongside David Baddiel. The film was nominated for Best British Short Film at the 2024 BAFTA Film Awards, which were due to take place a few days after we spoke. Had she got her gladrags ready?

"Don't even get me started! I've just rustled up something of my own. The whole thing is crazy."

'Rustled up'? What, so you made it?

"No, no, no! Just something I had at home - shall we call it 'vintage'? I do many other things, but sewing definitely isn't one of them!"

.....

The Glass Menagerie shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Saturday 16 to Saturday 23 March and Malvern Theatres, Worcestershire, from Tues 26 - Sat 30 March

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Classical music from across the region...



Ex Cathedra: Good Friday St John Passion

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 29 March

A favourite at Eastertime, Bach's St John Passion - a retelling of Christ's betrayal and death - continues to be one of classical music's most profound experiences. Performed by Ex Cathedra under the direction of founder & conductor Jeffrey

Skidmore, the work is 300 years old in 2024. To mark the occasion, the performance will incorporate chorale preludes, motets, congregational hymns and readings, the intention being to offer 'a richer experience of the Good Friday service as Bach knew it'.

Ensemble Hesperii

St Alkmunds Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 15 March

Talented musicmakers Ensemble Hesperii here bring a celebration of 18th-century London to 21st-century Shrewsbury! Performing a mixed programme of Baroque music, the quartet present a concert which captures the spirit of a very special time in the capital's classical music history; a time when London was the musical hub of Europe, attracting not only a multitude of French and Italian musicians but also the great George Frideric Handel himself, who directed the first performances of his operas and oratorios in London theatres.



China Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 11 March

Acclaimed British violinist Tamsin Waley-Cohen here joins forces with an orchestra that came into being in the early 1980s, as the fishing village in which it originated, Shenzhen, continued its transformation into China's third most populous city and a global technology hub. The concert features music by Saint-Saëns, Chausson and Respighi, as well as excerpts from the score of Ang Lee's Oscar-winning martial-arts film, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Daye Lin (pictured) conducts.

Halle Orchestra: Finnish Skies

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 22 March

The Manchester-based Halle are admired around the world for their extensive orchestral repertoire.

This latest Victoria Hall appearance sees Kristiina Poska picking up the baton to conduct a concert featuring compositions by Mendelssohn, Harle and Sibelius. The soloist for the evening is acclaimed Cumbrian saxophonist Jess Gillam (pictured).



Wombourne & District Choral Society

Church of St John's in the Square, Wolverhampton, Sat 23 March

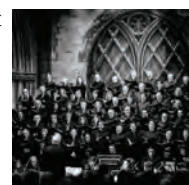
Presenting a varied repertoire of full-scale classical works, madrigals and part-songs, the well-established Wombourne & District Choral Society this month turn their attention to Bach's Mass in B Minor, a monumental work widely considered to be one of the greatest achievements in the history of music.

The concert's conductor is Edward Caine.

Birmingham Bach Choir

Lichfield Cathedral, Sat 9 March

One of the city's oldest and most distinguished musical groups, Birmingham Bach Choir here gets its collective teeth into St Matthew Passion.



"To my mind, it is the greatest work created by the human mind - no more, no less," says choir conductor Paul Spicer, in talking about Bach's much-loved masterpiece. "To be able to perform it in the stunning surroundings of Lichfield Cathedral, and with a superb choir, world-class soloists and orchestra, is one of the greatest privileges imaginable. Come and share this experience with us!"



LABOUR OF LOVE

The Old Joint Stock's theatre manager, James Edge, talks about bringing exciting new productions to the Birmingham pub venue...

Birmingham’s Old Joint Stock Theatre will bring a tale of family, friendship and the desire for freedom to the stage this spring in a brand-new production of *The Mad Ones*.

The musical, which opened off-Broadway in 2017 under the former title of *The Unauthorized Autobiography Of Samantha Brown*, centres on the character of 18-year-old Sam as she reaches a crossroads in her young life.

Sitting in her car, keys in hand, she is trying to decide whether to take the safe route and stay home, or start the engine, take off and reach for the unknown. She hears the voice of her best friend, Kelly, urging her to go, while her mother and boyfriend press her to stay... The story then moves forward from that scenario.

“There are a lot of flashbacks, and Kelly is there talking to Sam throughout the show,” explains producer and Old Joint Stock Theatre manager James Edge (pictured). “The basis of the story is Sam making a decision about whether she wants to stay with this overbearing mother and do what her mother wants her to do, or take a risk for the first time in her life, see what the future holds and drive off. It’s a really beautiful piece.”

James is always keen to bring new work to Birmingham audiences and feels *The Mad Ones* is an ideal production for his venue.

“A big thing when producing shows for the Old Joint Stock is that you’ve got a 70 to 80 capacity, so there are limitations. You can’t get massive bands in there; you can’t get huge casts. *The Mad Ones* is a cast of four, with two or three band members, and I thought it would be the perfect show for our space.

“You can relate to every character in the show: the person who wants to stay; the one who wants to take the risk; even the mother, because she was a young, free spirit once, but the way her life turned out wasn’t the way she wanted it to.

“There’s definitely something for everyone. If you’re a lover of musical theatre, if you’re a lover of intimate storytelling, this is the show to come and see. It’s simple and stripped-back, but it hits you in the heart. It’s an absolutely gorgeous piece - a really pure, beautiful story with great songs.”

James took over as theatre manager at the Old Joint Stock in February last year. A former actor, he also runs the theatre website *West End Best Friend*. And his experience on stage has helped him hunt out lesser-known productions to showcase.

“Before running theatres, I was an actor for eight years, mainly doing musical theatre. When training at drama school, you spend a lot of time looking for songs for your rep, so you get to know a lot of the less-well-known writers. You start following their journey and seeing the shows they make. I also hear about new shows because of *West End Best Friend*, and I always try to listen to new cast recordings when they come out.

“The Old Joint Stock has really forged a name for itself with high-quality fringe theatre, especially musical theatre. When I took over, we did a musical called *I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change*, and that went down really well, so I’ve been looking for the next right thing. I love the thought of producing shows that people haven’t really heard of yet, but which will become their next favourite show.”

James ran *The Town & Gown Theatre* in Cambridge before taking over the helm at the Old Joint Stock, back in his home city.

“When I was an actor, I performed in about four or five shows at the Old Joint Stock, and some of my favourite experiences were at this theatre. I think it’s a hidden gem. We’d just had Covid, it was slowly trying to build its audiences back up, and they were looking for a manager. I heard about that and thought, that’s the role for me.

“The Old Joint Stock has so much potential, and it’s such a gorgeous building. I have visions for its future. You look at the London pub theatres and what they can achieve, and we can do that here in Birmingham. We are a receiving house, but also we’ve just produced four in-house productions between August and December of last year. I’d love to get to the point where most of the year we are staging our own in-house productions of new work and unknown work.”

James has two colleagues on the team at the Old Joint Stock: theatre supervisors Liam Alexandru and Emily Lloyd.

“We are working rigorously to get the theatre on the map, get audiences through the door, and do bigger and bigger projects each time. We’re doing the musical *First Date* in August - it’s on Broadway, and I don’t think it’s had a live production here in the UK yet. We’re doing that for three weeks. And going forward, I’d love us to be doing productions for four weeks, then five weeks, and running for a few months at a time and maybe even in rep.

“We’ll also start looking for sister venues where we can take Old Joint Stock Theatre



productions around the UK - I’d love to take *The Mad Ones* out on the road.”

Producing in-house shows is a lot of work for three people, but James believes the benefits pay off.

“With your big, standard theatres, you have a big team to do all the different tasks, but with fringe theatre you just don’t have that budget. You’re selling to small audiences due to capacity limitations, so you do it all.

“So when you take on producing a show, you do absolutely everything. You find the show, you sort out the licensing, you do the casting yourself, you get the director on board, you do marketing - you organise everything. Every single bit of prop, costume and set, you make, source, beg, steal or borrow yourself. It’s a real labour of love compared with a visiting show, but there is something very special about an in-house production.

“Fringe theatre is unique. When people come to fringe theatre and watch the show, there’s something about that smaller space. The audience energy dictates the production, and that’s the magic of fringe theatre. You find that as soon as people have been once or twice, they just keep coming back.”

The Mad Ones plays at the Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, from Wednesday 10 to Saturday 20 April. For information about all upcoming productions at the venue, visit oldjointstock.co.uk

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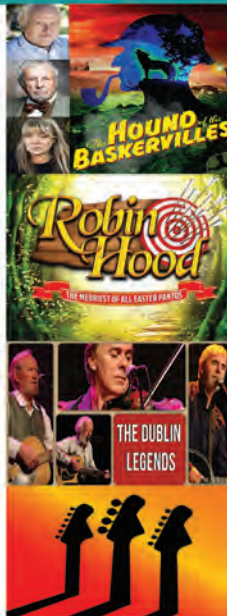
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Live music from across the region...

AADAL

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton,
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Typical Scandinavian melancholy and Americana-inspired soundscapes are magically merged in the music of Norwegian four-piece AADAL, who take their inspiration from artists including Brian Blade, Bill Frisell, Daniel Lanois, The War On Drugs and Bon Iver. The band visit Wolverhampton on the back of third album *Voyager*, released to great critical acclaim last spring.



Richard Shindell

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 24 March

From living in a Zen Buddhist monastery, to busking on the streets of Paris (not to mention opening for the legendary Joan Baez), native New Yorker Richard Shindell has routinely embraced fascinating and extraordinary life experiences - a good many of which, it's fair to assume, have positively impacted his remarkably insightful songwriting.

Lighthearted ballads, adulterous love songs, and dirges and diatribes that skillfully skewer politics, prejudice, war and religion are all present and correct in his output, as are songs telling stories from a first-person perspective. Indeed, he's even written one from the point of view of a cow stuck in a barbed-wire fence!



The Hives

The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton,
Sat 30 March

Iconic Swedish garage rockers The Hives visit Wolverhampton this month in support of *The Death Of Randy Fitzsimmons*, their first album in more than 11 years (although they *have* released some singles during the last decade).

For those not in the know, the 'Randy' of the title is a fictional and limelight-shunning sixth member of the band (in reality, it's a registered pseudonym for guitarist Niklas Almqvist). The story goes that Randy

doubled as The Hives' manager and sole songwriter, and that it was his 'mysterious disappearance' which caused the fellas to be absent from the studio for so long.

It's all in good fun, of course - a fact which comes as no surprise when you're talking about The Hives; the band are well known and much loved for their lighthearted and goofy approach to their music.

"We give so much energy, and then it kind of bounces right back," lead singer Howlin' Pelle Almqvist told *Clash*. "So on one hand your body gets tired, but your soul feels better and better. So it's not just tiring... it also gives you a lot of energy."

The Lottery Winners

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 29 March

Indie pop quartet The Lottery Winners provide a melodramatic blend of momentous melodies and insightful lyrics. Citing inspiration from 'all the painfully miserable' groups - think The Smiths, The Cure and Joy Division - the band have released five albums to date, the latest being last year's chart-topping *Anxiety Replacement Therapy*.

Martha Tilston

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 15 March

Although she's the daughter of Steve Tilston and has been compared vocally to an early Kate Bush - which is never a bad thing when you're trying to establish yourself as a sound to be listened to - there's no question that Martha Tilston's ongoing success has been based entirely on her own merits as a performer and musician.

The Cornwall-based singer-songwriter's concerts regularly sell out, and of late she's ventured into the world of movie-making, releasing first feature film *The Tape* back in

2021 (along with an accompanying soundtrack album)... She appears in Shrewsbury with long-time collaborators Matt Tweed and Matt Kelly.

The Coral

Lichfield Garrick, Staffs, Fri 29 March

Influential five-piece The Coral exploded onto the music scene in the early noughties with a self-titled debut album that brilliantly combined psychedelia with dub, disco groove with pop and ragtime with Egyptian reggae. Now, almost 22 years later, two of the band, singer James Skelly and keyboardist Nick Power, are touring *The Making Of The Debut Album* - a special show in celebration of that first storming release.

An intimate evening of award-winning music and cosy conversation awaits...



BEAUTIFUL BALLET

English Youth Ballet principal dancer Lindsey Fraser talks about the company and its production of *The Sleeping Beauty*...



Founded by Janet Lewis in 1998, English Youth Ballet offers young people who are interested in dance the opportunity to perform classical ballet alongside professional dancers and tutors. Ahead of the company's performances of The Sleeping Beauty at Stoke's Regent Theatre next month, What's On spoke to Lindsey Fraser, who will be taking to the stage in the title role...

Many a young person would love to be a ballet dancer, performing centre stage in extravagant costumes. For such children, the opportunities presented by English Youth Ballet are surely a dream come true.

EYB has recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. The organisation provides young dancers with the chance to perform classical ballet on stage at major regional theatres in the UK, and to be taught and mentored by professional dancers.

Lindsey Fraser, who performs as a principal dancer with the company, began her journey as a child with a passion for dance.

"I first started going to ballet when I was two-and-a-half years old," she recalls. "My mum started taking me to baby ballet, because I had too much energy at home - I was zooming around a lot! I've been in ballet ever since. I started doing professional training when I was 11 years old, at Tring Park School of Performing Arts. It was quite full-on but very good. We would start at half eight and finish at half six."

Lindsey will be appearing on stage in the lead role of Aurora - the Sleeping Beauty - at the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent next month.

"It's based on the fairytale, and the production that we do is very classical. All the children have their own parts. Aurora is a great role - it's quite challenging!

"The production sticks to the original tale pretty much. Aurora pricks her finger on the spindle and goes to sleep for 100 years; the prince comes along and wakes her up... It's a great one for the families to come and see."

Lindsey started dancing professionally when she was 19. Ballet has always been a big part of her life, and the art of dance has always fascinated and inspired her.

"I was two, so I don't really remember, but my mum says that Cats, the musical, was on TV. I pointed at it and said: 'I'd like to do that.' As I was growing up, I was inspired by one of the dancers at the Royal Ballet in London: Marianela Núñez. She's my biggest inspiration."

Although she's been a dancer for as long as she can remember, Lindsey has been able to pursue other interests - one of which provides quite a contrast to her day job.

'Alongside ballet, I've also done a Maths & Physics Bachelors degree with the Open University. I've loved maths since school, so eventually, when I hang up my pointe shoes, I'm looking to have a career in accountancy. We'll see what the future brings. It will be difficult to think of a career that doesn't involve ballet, but that's definitely another interest of mine.'

After performing The Sleeping Beauty in Stoke, the company moves to Nottingham, where it will present a production of Giselle with a different group of young dancers.

"It's the first time I'm going to be performing Giselle with English Youth Ballet, so that's exciting. We also have Swan Lake - I think I'll probably be Black Swan again, which is quite challenging but a fabulous role. Each role is demanding in its own way. It's really great to have that variety; it keeps things exciting."

Anyone from age eight to 18 can apply to join the EYB company, as long as they have a little bit of ballet experience - applicants who have at least Grade 1 are encouraged. There's an audition day, which is an experience in itself, with auditions split into Juniors (ages eight to 11) and Seniors (ages 12 to 18).

According to Lindsey, Janet Lewis - the company's founder & director - maintains that the overall experience of performing is the most important thing.

"She is really strong on performance - that's the aim of the production. We do look at technique and offer help with that, but the main part of it is the performance. She wants children to enjoy it!"

Not only will the young dancers become part of a high-quality production, they will also be given the space to make friends and enhance their love of the art form.

"We adapt the choreography to them and their standard. We want them to learn something from the experience as well, but they're on stage doing the choreography, so

we want them to look great."

Rehearsals take place during the month before each performance and are scheduled so that they don't interfere with school hours.

"We rehearse with the children for around 10 days, at weekends - unless it's during the summer holidays, when we might spend five days with them."

Each production's final performance takes place in a regional theatre which is large enough to accommodate the number of people on stage and the scale of the show. The chosen dancers will come from an 80 to 100-mile radius around the theatre.

"We have a lot of rehearsals and then one weekend of shows in each place. The principal dancers rehearse during the week, and then, at the weekend, we travel to wherever we're performing, to rehearse and teach the children. We get to know them and see how they improve and grow. In the end, we're on the stage dancing with them, which is really lovely - it all comes together."


Auditions for the performances in Stoke-on-Trent took place in January, but there are plenty more opportunities for young dancers to audition this year. Children based in the Midlands can apply to perform in Giselle at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, with auditions taking place on Monday 17 June.

In the meantime, why not get along to EYB's performances of The Sleeping Beauty at the Regent Theatre next month... It's the perfect opportunity to see what's in store for any aspiring ballet dancers - and to enjoy the company's performance of a classic tale.

.....

The Sleeping Beauty shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, on Friday 12 & Saturday 13 April. Giselle shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, on Friday 6 & Saturday 7 September. For more information about performances and auditions, visit englishyouthballet.co.uk

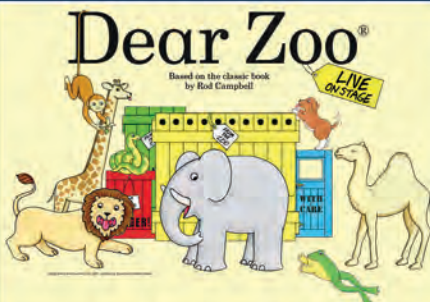
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Comedy previews from across the region...

Sophie McCartney

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 15 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 18 April

Award-winning comedian Sophie McCartney has entered the perilous world of parenting and thinks it's high time she told her audience all about it. "Why did no one tell me what to really expect



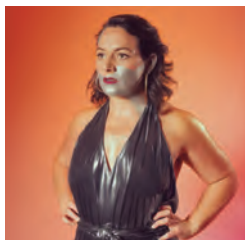
after I was expecting?" she questions. "Will my belly button ever go back to 'normal'? Why do you need a degree in collapsing travel cots? And do I have what it takes to stop my current cereal eaters from becoming future serial killers?"

These and many more questions will hopefully be answered in latest show Tired & Tested, during which Sophie makes her way through subjects including mating, birthing, body changes, school WhatsApp groups, overbearing nutjob love, and still not being able to handle her booze on a night out...

Jessica Fostekew

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Tues 19 March; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 16 May

"I exist in real life but am also a comedian, actor and writer," says Jessica Fostekew. "Since 2008 I've been throwing this job around like you would a walnut in a sock."



Realising herself to be a feminist "the very first time somebody said: You're really funny for a woman", Jessica gets her comedy inspiration from her life, her family and, er, witchcraft - although reassuringly reveals that the latter source provides only around one per cent of her material!

"I'm not a comedian in order to abuse people or to get laid," Jessica wrote in the Huffington Post. "I want to make people laugh. I'm there to be judged on my jokes. I've had everything shouted at me, from "My tits are better than yours" to "When's the raffle?" but it's never been meant to hurt me."



Matt Chorley

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Wed 13 March

There can surely be no better time than a probable general election year for Times Radio presenter and Have I Got News For You regular Matt Chorley to hit the road with a brand-new touring show. This latest offering sees Matt draw on two decades of reporting from Westminster - and two centuries of

history - to deliver 'a hilarious guide to winning and losing at the polls'. In the process, he'll be focus-grouping the audience and compiling his own manifesto - one that he firmly believes is guaranteed to get him the keys to No 10!

Tom Houghton

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 14 March

In an age where tradition and progress are wrestling against each other, what are the parts of ourselves that need shedding, and what is it worth holding on to?



That's the question which will be posed by Tom Houghton when he visits Coventry mid-month. Tom's star is very much in the ascendant right now, thanks to a break-out year that saw him become a social-media hit courtesy of multiple viral videos. He's also appeared in Netflix's The Circle, hosted Very British Problems: Live and the Bad Manors podcast, and pretty much looks set for a fantastic future on the UK comedy circuit.

Adam Kay

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 25 March; Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 3 October

After watching an Adam Kay performance, Stephen Fry declared, "This made me very, very happy." Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is this month visiting the Midlands with brand-new offering Undoctored, a follow-on from previous smash-hit stage show This Is Going To Hurt.



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Comedy previews from across the region...

Leigh Francis

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 1 March;
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 31 March

Funnyman Leigh Francis - best known as comedy creation Keith Lemon - is bringing to life his various characters in a 'live' environment for the very first time. Leigh is promising an evening awash with hilarious sketches and bucketloads of audience interaction - not to mention, of course, close encounters with not only Keith Lemon but Bear & Avid Merrion, 'David Dickinson', 'Ant & Dec' and Myrtle.



Jo Caulfield

Number 8 Pershore, Fri 8 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 9 March;
Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 19 April; Lichfield Garrick, Fri 17 May

"I always question where my comedy's coming from," says Jo Caulfield, who's appeared on much-loved TV shows *Mock The Week* and *Have I Got News For You*. "Is it coming from a good place and is it a worthwhile target? I'm rude, I swear and can be very harsh, but I'm not that crude. I tend not to do graphic sex stuff, because it doesn't make me laugh. I always say I don't do fluids, because I don't find that funny. I also think it's quite childish. I don't think people are shocked by that kind of humour anymore. When comics think that they're being shocking, I just want to say, 'We're not shocked; we're just bored and find it distasteful.'"



Ania Magliano

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Fri 15 March

Describing herself as a triple threat (bisexual, Gen Z, bad at cooking), Ania Magliano is currently going down a storm on the UK comedy circuit. And not just with appreciative audiences either; critics have also been waxing lyrical about her, describing the Cambridge University graduate as everything from artfully accomplished to profound, modern, incisive and deadpan hilarious.

Her latest offering, *I Can't Believe You've Done This* - nominated for an award at the Edinburgh Fringe and featuring an imaginative blend of the frivolous and the serious - covers everything from bad haircuts and dating experiences, to breast-reduction surgery and trauma.



Iain Stirling

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 23 March;
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 24 March

"To help convince my father that comedy is a real job," says Iain Stirling, "I've dressed up smart and gone along to numerous posh parties where I didn't win the following things: Bafta Best Children's Presenter 2011, Chortle Best Newcomer 2011, Loaded Lafta Rising Star 2011, and a good few more!" Iain's self-deprecating style of humour has proved hugely popular since he burst onto the scene in 2009, when he finished runner-up to Joe Lycett as Chortle Student Comedian Of The Year at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The ensuing years have seen him enjoy considerable success as a children's television presenter and, most famously, as the narrator on the hit TV series *Love Island*. Jokes include: "When Jesus went to heaven, was that not essentially 'moving back in with your parents?'"

Alasdair Beckett-King

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 27 March;
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 25 April

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

Alasdair - who also describes himself as England's most Scottish-looking man - visits the Midlands this month and next with latest touring show *Nevermore* - an offering in which he's promising to unravel some of life's shallowest mysteries...



WICKED WITCHES

Hit musical Wicked reimagines the story of The Wizard Of Oz from the perspective of Elphaba (who becomes known as the Wicked Witch of the West) and Glinda, the Good Witch. Twenty years on from its first-ever staging, the show is once again touring the UK. What's On caught up with Laura Pick (Elphaba) and Sarah O'Connor (Glinda) to find out why the musical remains so Popular...



Wicked has become a huge hit around the world. What makes the story so special?

Laura: It means so much to so many people. I think no matter who you are, where you're from, or what your life experience is, there's something in this show for everyone. It's about this beautiful, strong friendship between two women - I think we as women can relate to it.

Sarah: Whoever goes to see it will find something different from their perspective. There's not just one 'lesson' or one storyline; you can pull from it what you want and what connects and resonates with you most, be it a love story, finding who you are, wanting to better yourself in a community, or becoming a better person. It's a well-rounded musical - it's great!

Have either of you played these characters before?

L: I have. I was stand-by Elphaba at the Apollo Victoria Theatre in London for two years, and then I took over the role for about six months in total. I said during our rehearsal process that I've been on a completely different journey with the story this time. It feels brand new again.

S: It's my first time! I'm loving it. It's quite a beast, but it's been very exciting with Laura having done it before. She knows it, and feels like a really strong anchor for me to play against, but she's also been really open to finding a new journey for Elphaba and Glinda together.

Have you enjoyed working together to build the characters' relationship?

L: The funny thing is, during the show, other than moments on stage, we don't see each other. We have to make the effort to pop into each other's rooms, or go for a coffee. The special thing about Elphaba and Glinda is that you can find ways to communicate just with a look. Sarah had cut her arm one day on a very sharp sequin - I noticed it. Within five seconds, we'd communicated just with our eyes: 'Are you okay?' 'Yeah, I'm okay, I know about it!'

S: ...While we were singing a duet! We've had many conversations with our eyes - it's hilarious. Laura will be in my life forever. It's an absolutely amazing connection that we've got, and we feel very lucky to be working with each other. We're having the best time, and we know we have each other.

L: It's been lovely seeing feedback from fans or reviews, where people are saying that the chemistry between us is so strong.

S: You can tell we're friends off stage as well.

L: That's what she thinks!

Getting hurt by a sequin might be the most showbiz injury of all time!

S: You're telling me! That was my wand... it's really dangerous stuff, you know!

For a lot of musical theatre performers, these roles are on their 'bucket list'. Was that the case for you?

S: Yes, and I think that comes with the weight of the role. It's so important to get it right and deliver it as best we can. We know how lucky we are - we work hard. You have to have talent, and you have to have a really good work ethic and audition... but there is an element of luck. I auditioned for Elphaba for years! It just wasn't sitting right. Then I found my inner comedy, and I thought 'Maybe I'm a Glinda,' and it made way more sense. When I met Laura, I thought 'You're the kind of person who needs to play Elphaba.' Her vocals are ridiculous!

L: I wouldn't even dream about playing Glinda! It's a completely different beast. We both understand how challenging each other's roles are. Sarah makes it sound so easy.

The show is full of amazing songs, but Defying Gravity (sung by Elphaba) and Popular (by Glinda) are huge. When preparing to sing, did you look back at iconic performances, or did you try to distance yourself?

L: I still do! I still spend time on YouTube...

S: I've watched a lot of both Elphaba and Glinda - every country, every language, every version - but you cannot use those for your own version. It wouldn't be your natural progression in the role. I've watched them all, but I didn't go anywhere near them when I was choosing what I wanted to do with Glinda.

L: There's a lot of previous Elphabas all over the world that add riffs, but if it doesn't benefit the storytelling, why would we be doing this beautiful riff on the word 'and'? You listen and think 'I like the way that they've phrased that, I like the way they've put that sentence together.' And don't get me wrong, I'm sure we've been listening to the

soundtrack on repeat from age 13.

S: Yeah... I could sing all the parts.

L: I wonder whether we could put on a two-woman show?

S: I reckon we could.

Laura, can you tell us what it's like when you're actually defying gravity on stage?

L: Flying is great. I love it! It was definitely nerve-wracking the first few times, but now it's just part of my day. You mentioned Popular and Defying Gravity being two of the most iconic songs, and we're actually both on stage for the whole time during those, so we get to share that moment.

S: Well, while you're singing those notes, I don't think you're worrying about how high you are!

Sarah, do you see any of yourself in Glinda, or are you very different people?

S: There are little elements... I'm definitely a lot more like 'Act Two Glinda' than 'Act One Glinda'. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, I don't just say things that I'm thinking, and I'm not going to climb up the ladder any way I can... I think I'm answering my own question here - no, we're not similar! I can be on the spot and witty sometimes, but generally no. In Act Two, she's a lot more grounded and grown-up, so I can connect with her there. She's probably the furthest I've ever been from a character - but that's why I love her. When I come out of the stage door, people don't even know it's me.

Are you excited about the new Wicked film, which is coming out in November?

L: We'd better be invited!

S: If we don't get a private screening, I'll be livid.

L: I want to be invited to the real deal - the premiere in London.

S: I would love if the whole touring production could rent a cinema for the day, and go together, and enjoy it as a team. That would be cool - and we can all dress up!

L: We could just go after work in our costumes! The film is going to be so different from the musical - I'm excited.

.....
Wicked shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 5 March to Sunday 7 April



Wicked Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 5 March - Sunday 7 April

Offering evidence that you simply can't please all of the people all of the time, Wizard Of Oz spin-off Wicked had to dodge its fair share of slings and arrows when it opened in London in 2006 (three years after debuting in the US).

The proof of the pudding, however, is most definitely in the eating, and 18 years after its West End premiere, Wicked is still going strong. Based on novelist Gregory Maguire's revisionist exploration of Frank L Baum's famous tale, the show basically tells the story of The Wizard

Of Oz from the perspective of two sorcery students, one of whom will become Glinda The Good, the other the Wicked Witch of the West. If you've seen the show before, chances are you'll be eager to catch it again when it visits the Midlands this month. If, on the other hand, Oz is a land to which you've yet to travel, then follow the yellow brick road to the Birmingham Hippodrome box office just as fast as your ruby slippers will carry you...



Madagascar The Musical

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 30 May - Sun 2 June

The smell of the greasepaint and roar of the crowd has tempted the furry cast of Madagascar the movie to forsake New York's Central Park Zoo in favour of treading the boards on a UK theatre tour.

The blockbuster DreamWorks film comes to life at venues across the region over the next few months, with Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Melman the Giraffe and Gloria the

Hippo all present and correct in a show that producers promise will send your kids home positively wild (which may or may not be a good thing!). CBBC and Strictly Come Dancing favourite Karim Zeroual stars.

Peak Stuff

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 21 & Fri 22 March

Award-winning theatre company ThickSkin here collaborate with up-and-coming playwright Billie Collins to contemplate the question: in an age of retail therapy, climate crisis and click & collect, how does our 'stuff' define us?

Presenting three fast-paced stories about consumer culture, Peak Stuff is one of the works chosen to be part of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain's New Play Commission Scheme. The initiative was created in response to the decline in new-play commissioning following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ben And Imo

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 6 April

Legendary composer Benjamin Britten's struggle to write an opera in time for the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II provides the subject matter for Ben And Imo.

Receiving its premiere in Stratford, the play focuses on the timely arrival in Britten's life of the inspirational Imogen Holst, the daughter of composer Gustav and an accomplished musician in her own right... Originally written by Mark Ravenhill for radio, the new production is directed by Erica Whyman.



WICKED

Tue 5 Mar - Sun 7 Apr

CAP

UniSlam 2024

Fri 15 - Sun 17 Mar

REWRITES

NEL'S PLACE

BY SHEEP SOUP

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Fri 10 May

WNO Welsh National Opera

Death in Venice

Britten

Sat 11 May



Bonnie & Clyde

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 5 - Sat 9 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 3 - Sat 7 September

This award-winning musical tells the Great Depression-era story of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, two small-town nobodies destined to become one of America's most notorious couples.

The production stars Catherine Tyldesley - best known from her time in Coronation Street and on Strictly Come Dancing - as Clyde's sister-in-law, Blanche.

"If you want to go on a real emotional adrenaline high, this is the show for you," says Catherine. "I think you would come out having been on a real journey with the highs and lows of the characters. And you'll learn a lot; and you'll surprise yourself in terms of judgement of the characters as well."

The Haunting Of Blaine Manor

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Fri 29 & Sat 30 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 18 & Fri 19 July

When Doctor Roy Earle, a renowned American parapsychologist famous for discrediting hauntings and exposing fake mediums, accepts an invitation to attend a seance at 'the most haunted building in England' - the Blaine Manor of the title - he finds himself, along with his companions for the evening, temporarily cut off from the outside world by a raging storm.

And as every lover of the ghost/horror genre very well knows, where there's a raging storm *and* a haunted house, there are also, inevitably, things that go bump in the night... An award-winning love letter to both the Golden Age of Hollywood and the era of Hammer Horror movies here in the UK, *The Haunting Of Blaine Manor* is described by its publicity as the new *Woman In Black* - only scarier. That's quite a claim to make, but then there are also plenty of theatre critics and audience members who would be in absolute agreement about its quality.

Minority Report

The Rep, Birmingham, Fri 22 March - Sat 6 April

Widely known thanks to the 2002 Tom Cruise film version, Philip K Dick's 1956 novella is here adapted for the stage.

Set in a near future, the story focuses on the character of Dame Julia Anderton, a neuroscientist who has created a programme which monitors people's thoughts and

detains them before they commit a crime. But when Julia herself is accused of 'pre-murder', she becomes convinced that not everything is quite as it seems...

"We commissioned this project several years ago," says the show's producer, Simon Friend, "but with its prescient central theme of personal technological surveillance, it has only become more alarmingly relevant to the world in which we live, despite the original story having been written in 1956."

My Life With Oscar

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 20 & Thurs 21 March

Described as a tragicomic, true-life *Sunset Boulevard* - and critically acclaimed at last summer's Edinburgh Festival - *My Life With Oscar* finds actor & filmmaker Nick Cohen re-living and attempting to exorcise his desperate Hollywood years.

Starting life in a dysfunctional wannabe family in Croydon, Nick chases his dream of winning an Oscar all the way to Tinseltown, where a film-producer family friend promises to teach him the secrets of bagging an Academy Award. Needless to say, not everything goes entirely according to Nick's plan...

Boy Out The City

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 25 - Thurs 28 March

Moving to the countryside during lockdown came at a price for Declan Bennett. When his boyfriend left on a six-month work placement abroad, Declan found himself with plenty of time on his hands; time in which to ruminate

on his previous life experiences. And not everything that he recalled made for a comfortable memory...

Taking audiences on an often-turbulent journey through his earlier years - and in the process bringing them face-to-face with challenging issues such as toxic masculinity, homophobia and men's mental health - *Boy Out The City* is Coventry-reared Declan's debut play.

And Then There Were None

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 5 - Sat 9 March

Lucy Bailey directs this new version of Agatha Christie's 1943 adaptation of her own novel - a book which the legendary author admitted had been her most difficult to write. The storyline follows the fortunes of a group of strangers who, having been lured to a solitary mansion off the coast of Devon, find that their eccentric millionaire host has mysteriously disappeared.

The plot then thickens in a truly shocking way when one of the 10 guests meets with an untimely demise...



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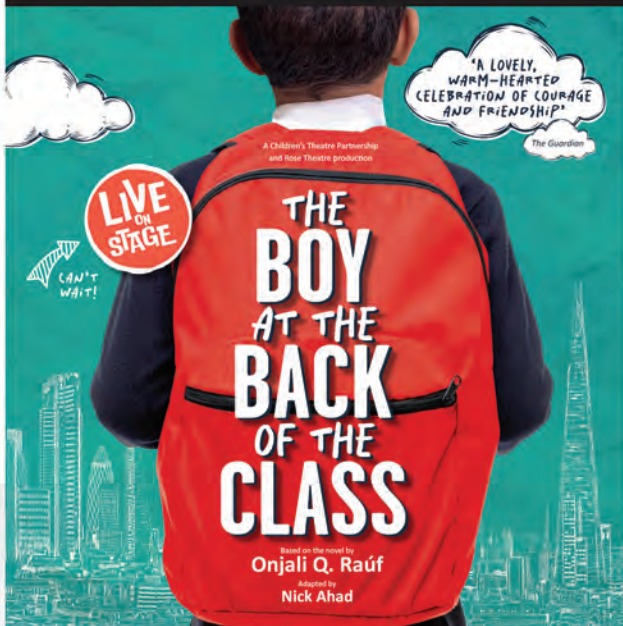
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Theatre previews from around the region



The Mousetrap

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Mon 25 - Sat 30 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 3 - Sat 8 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 25 - Sat 29 June

Not only has everybody heard of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, everybody's seen the show as well - haven't they?... Okay, maybe not, but as the production recently celebrated its 70th consecutive year in the West End, it's fair to say its capacity to put bums on seats is absolutely beyond question. Not surprisingly the world's longest-running show, its touring version here makes a welcome return to the Midlands, with *EastEnders'* Todd Carty and *Only Fools And Horses'* Gwyneth Strong top-billing.

Farm Boy

Lichfield Garrick, until Sun 10 March; Tittensor Village Hall, Thurs 14 March; Armitage with Handsacre Village Hall, Fri 15 March; Abbots Bromley Village Hall, Sat 16 March; Barton-under-Needwood Village Hall, Sun 17 March; New Oscott Village, Tues 19 March; Marchington Woodlands Village Hall, Wed 20 March; Alstonefield Village Hall, Thurs 21 March; Burntwood Memorial Hall, Fri 22 March; Denstone Village Hall, Sat 23 March; Weston Village Hall, Sun 24 March

For anybody who loved *War Horse* - whether as a book, a film, a stage production or all three - this new adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's compelling follow-up novel is surely a must-see work of theatre. Presented by Lichfield Garrick, the family-friendly production revisits *War Horse's* main characters of Albert and Joey the horse via the story of a teenager who regularly visits his grandfather on his farm in rural Devon... A moving account of the changing face of the English countryside, *Farm Boy* was written by Morpurgo as a response to the many post-*War Horse* enquiries he received from readers wanting to know what happened to Joey. Morpurgo has also stated that of all the books he's written, *Farm Boy* is his favourite... If ever there was a good reason to check out the stage version...

Waiting Room

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 6 March; Old Joint Stock Theatre, Fri 22 & Sat 23 March

Laughter may well be the best medicine, but it's definitely been in short supply for anybody needing to use a hospital accident & emergency department in recent times. Acutely aware of this, Thomas Levi, Rebecca Morris and Chris Stevenson - aka Elemental Theatre Company - have here set out to

provide their audience with a serious dose of the chuckles, transporting them to the medical mayhem of an A&E waiting room that's positively awash with eccentric staff and peculiar patients.

Sections of the show have been developed verbatim through interviews and discussions with junior doctors and paramedic staff, a strategy which has allowed Thomas, Rebecca and Chris to deep-dive into the day-to-day lives not only of NHS key workers but also the often-difficult patients they encounter.

Wanted

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 14 & Fri 15 March; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 27 March

Powerful drama presented with a smattering of humour and plenty of heart is the tried-and-tested formula in which Gazebo

Theatre place their trust when producing new work for the stage. This currently touring production from the highly rated company explores the stories of some truly extraordinary women: Irena Sendler, who rescued more than 2,500 children from the Warsaw ghetto during the Nazi occupation; Olive Morris, a British Black Panther and avid activist for women and squatters' rights; Phoolan Devi, India's fearsome Bandit Queen and politician; and Dr James Barry, a woman very much ahead of her time. The play is directed by Tonia Daley-Campbell and features Alexia McIntosh, who was nominated for an Olivier Award for *Six The Musical*.



Ladies Down Under

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Fri 8 - Sat 30 March

Amanda Whittington enjoyed such a big hit with her play *Ladies Day* that she decided to write a sequel - and this is it. When Hull-based fish-factory colleagues Pearl, Jan, Shelley and Linda hit the jackpot at Royal Ascot, they decide to head off for the adventure of a lifetime *Down Under*. But once they're there, it becomes blindingly obvious that each of them is on a very different journey...

The Hound Of The Baskervilles

Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock, Sun 24 March

Sherlock Holmes is one of literature's most enduring characters, *The Hound Of The Baskervilles* his most famous adventure. Yet no matter how many actors don the deerstalker and solve the mystery of the moors-roaming mutt, audiences never seem to tire of the story, and it remains a hugely popular choice for both stage and screen adaptation... Former *Dr Who* star Colin Baker here takes on the role of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary sleuth.

Self-Raising

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 12 & Wed 13 March

After a life spent championing stories by Deaf and disabled artists, Jenny Sealey - the award-winning artistic director of Graeae theatre company - takes to the stage to tell her own story, a 'blisteringly honest' account of growing up deaf in a family with secrets.

INTO THE FUTURE



David Haig's new play, *Minority Report* - adapted from Phillip K Dick's 1956 sci-fi thriller - promises audiences 'an electrifying ride into the future' when it opens at Birmingham Rep late this month. What's On recently caught up with the Yes, Prime Minister, Killing Eve and Thin Blue Line actor to find out more...

When actor & writer David Haig agreed to adapt Philip K Dick's classic 1956 sci-fi novella, *The Minority Report*, for the theatre, he knew it would be a challenge - but it was the demands of staging a futuristic story which made the project so compelling.

"Simon Friend, the producer, rang me up," recalls David. "He was a fan of *Pressure*, my last play, and said: 'How would it interest you writing a sci-fi thriller based on *Minority Report*?'"

"Immediately my response internally was, 'What? How can I do this, and is it me? Me, whose plays have been about the First World War and Second World War, and with conventional structures?'"

"Then I thought that was the very reason to do it. How incredibly exciting to go off-piste and just write exactly what came into my head on the basis of this short story written in the 1950s."

And he was given carte-blanc to go as off-piste as he chose.

"The Philip K Dick Estate have been incredibly generous and said that, as long as you use the title and the basic premise of *PreCrime* - ie, that you can anticipate murder and get criminals off the streets before they've even committed the crime - you have complete freedom to write exactly what you want. And I've taken them at their word!"

David is not the first person to adapt the novella - Steven Spielberg turned it into a 2002 blockbuster movie starring Tom Cruise. But the playwright has taken a very different approach and made a fundamental change: his lead character is female.

"I thought it would be really exciting to get as far away from the original story in that sense, but also from the film, which in fact I hadn't seen when I wrote the first draft of the adaptation. So it felt right to write an exciting part for a middle-aged woman in a sci-fi thriller. It's unlikely, it's unexpected, and that's what's interesting about it."

"The principle of the play is that the head of *PreCrime*, Julia Anderton, sees her own name on the list as the next pre-murderer - ie, it has been predicted that she will murder - and it's the last thing in the world that she, as head of the whole organisation, expects.

"Then the play is 80 minutes of real time

from that moment. It's always through her point of view, and it's her run from potential incarceration and criminalisation. Will she kill? Won't she? Will she be proved innocent? Won't she?"

"Not only is it a sci-fi thriller, the play is an interesting portrait of a woman who has to change her mind on a very important premise. Yes, it's a sci-fi thriller, but also it's a conventional play with a story and a journey."

David's previous dramas include *My Boy Jack*, *The Good Samaritan* and the aforementioned *Pressure* - but adapting a futuristic tale set in 2050 is a very different prospect.

"The challenges of writing sci-fi for the stage are writing stage directions like 'the van chases the car at 40 miles an hour, the two collide, there is an explosion of metal and the car bursts into flames....'"

"That was the freedom that I adopted when I was writing it. You just write anything that comes into your head, and then the director, Max Webster, and the incredible design team that we've got say, 'That's possible, that's not possible, that's possible, that's not possible.' And so we work towards a solution in that way."

David has also found the notion of writing about a future world fascinating.

"When *Blade Runner* was filmed, which is also based on a Philip K Dick story, he turned down literally ten to 15 applications for screenplays before he agreed to one. And the one he agreed to was because they created the tone of his world right, and the tone of his world was some bits very dilapidated and old-fashioned, and some bits very modern and futuristic."

"You have to get a mixture, so that people feel comfortable in the world they're in but at the same time think: 'Wow, that's new, and that might already have happened. and that could be about to happen...'"

And the unnerving part of writing about a possible future is that some of it has already come true.

"The whole premise of predicting crime is very close to us. What has struck me is that each time I've done a new draft of this play, it's been because the whole obsession with,

the fear of, the respect for artificial intelligence (AI) has raced forward as I've been writing it.

"I'd already written a draft before Covid, and by the time the lockdowns had finished, AI was rattling forward and I was already out of date, so I've had to keep up with those developments. This prediction of how the brain behaves and in what ways it pre-emptively stuffs and predicts stuff is already there. It doesn't actually feel so outlandish."

David is also well known as an actor, playing Inspector Grim in television's *The Thin Blue Line* and appearing in series as diverse as *Downton Abbey*, *Killing Eve* and the 2013 re-make of *Yes, Prime Minister*. He's no stranger to acting in films either, having appeared in hit movies *Four Weddings And A Funeral* and *Two Weeks Notice*. He grew up in Rugby and knows Birmingham well, having worked at The Rep more than 40 years ago.

"My wife Julia was born in Coventry, and we met in Birmingham. She was working, at the time, for a very good community theatre company called *Second City*, and then we went on to work together at Birmingham Rep. "This was in the era of Clive Perry, back in the late 1970s and early 80s, and I loved my time there."

"I've been back very regularly over the years and have a loyalty to the city. I'm very excited that the show is coming to The Rep, and I'm looking forward to seeing how it fits into that environment."

And David encourages everyone, not just sci-fi fans, to see *Minority Report*.

"People who have an open mind to the whole concept of how much our society is watched and monitored - and how much our thoughts are probed, and how much science is racing ahead of any safety - as well as people who just want a straight adventure story, will be excited by it."

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Co-produced by Birmingham Rep, Nottingham Playhouse and Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in association with Simon Friend, *Minority Report* shows at The Rep, Birmingham, from Friday 22 March to Saturday 6 April

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SHOWS



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Zog And The Flying Doctors

Worcester Swan Theatre, Tues 19 - Thurs 21 March; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 26 - Thurs 28 March; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 14 - Sun 16 June

Freckle Productions' adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved book finds everybody's favourite dragon (that's Zog!) providing an air-ambulance service with the assistance of his 'flying doctor' crew, Princess Pearl and Sir Gadabout. But Pearl's uncle, the king, doesn't believe that princesses should be doctors, and before too long Pearl finds herself locked up in the castle and forced to wear a crown and a 'silly frilly dress'. Needless to say, help is soon at hand...

Claytime

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 16 & Sun 17 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 28 & Fri 29 March

"Come to a place where the earth's natural material meets with children's imaginations," say Indefinite Articles theatre company, in talking about currently touring production Claytime. "It's a world of fabulous forms, amazing animals and morphing monsters!"

Interactive play with clay is a guarantee in this lively show for children aged three to six, with the award-winning ensemble further advising "It's messy fun, so don't wear your party clothes!"

Jurassic Live

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 24 - Tues 26 March; The Halls, Wolverhampton, Fri 24 & Sun 26 May

Jurassic Live's promoters are hailing this prehistoric extravaganza 'a roarsome adventure' not to be missed. Featuring professional puppeteers and impressively realistic dinosaurs, the production follows a team of dino rangers as they search for a missing baby dinosaur... Highlights of the show include the UK's only flying Pterodactyl and the country's biggest Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Awful Auntie

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 28 - Sun 31 March; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 October

Frights, fights and friendships are the order of the day in this lively adaptation of David Walliams' much-loved story. At the centre of the tale is a young girl named Stella. The sole heir to Saxby Hall, she finds herself in danger of losing both her inheritance and her life

when she comes up against her thoroughly unpleasant Aunt Alberta...

Along Came A Magpie

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Wed 27 March

Puppetry, plants, and pots aplenty feature in this intimate work of theatre for youngsters aged two to six. Telling the tale of a gardener who finds her potting shed turned upside-down by a visiting magpie, the show takes audiences on a playful and heart-warming journey as the pair set about navigating the intricacies of friendship...

Dear Zoo

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 2 & Sun 3 March; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 14 & Fri 15 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 29 & Sat 30 March; Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 11 - Tues 16 April; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 20 & Sun 21 April

First published in 1982, Rod Campbell's lift-the-flap book, Dear Zoo, has delighted generations of children and accumulated millions of sales worldwide.

This hugely popular stage version of the story features music, child-friendly puppets and lots of audience participation.



Dogs Don't Do Ballet

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Sat 23 - Mon 25 March

Little Angel

Theatre make a welcome return with a show about a dog named Biff who thinks he's a



ballerina. The production is based on the same-named book by Anna Kemp and brings together 'beautiful puppets, well-loved ballet music and dazzling comedy'.

Peppa Pig's Fun Day Out!

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 20 & Thurs 21 March; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sat 25 & Sun 26 May; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Wed 31 July & Thurs 1 August; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 28 & Thurs 29 August; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 18 & Thurs 19 September; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 25 & Thurs 26 September; Malvern Forum Theatre, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 October

If you've taken your little ones to any of the previous Peppa Pig stage shows - and enjoyed the experience of watching them having a fantastic time - you'll be in no doubt that this latest production is well worth catching.

The show sees Peppa, along with her family and friends, enjoying a fun-packed day at the zoo and the beach.

Parents are advised to prepare their children for all manner of cracking capers, including singing and dancing with colourful scarecrows, feeding penguins, building big sandcastles, and swimming in the sea! Looks like an oinktastic time is going to be had by all!



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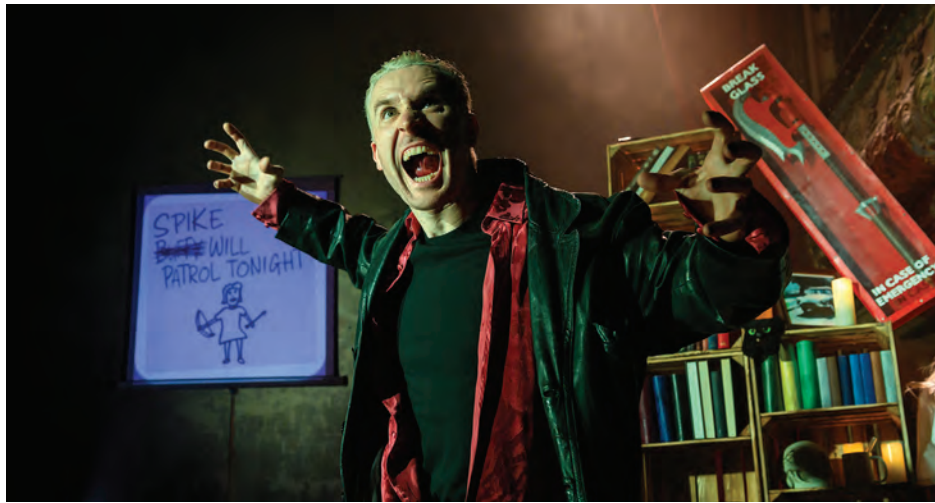
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Light entertainment from around the region



Buffy Revamped

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 10 March;
The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 26 March

Calling to mind the work of ensembles such as the Reduced Shakespeare Company, *Buffy Revamped* is a fast-paced new production that wings its way through all 144 episodes of hit 1990s television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. Not only that, but it does so in an admirably concise 70 minutes.

The one-man production is presented by Brendan Murphy, whose central character of Spike is a fella who, as you might imagine, knows a thing or several about the now-cult US TV show... *Buffy Revamped* scored a big hit in Edinburgh, so if you're a fan of the series yourself, a fun evening out is pretty much guaranteed.

I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 26 March

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 52 years and 70-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 pianist Colin Sell and a 'star-studded' cast of as-yet-unannounced (at the time of writing) comedians.



The Great Baldini

Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Wed 6
March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 9
March

Those unfamiliar with *The Great Baldini* are advised to imagine an amalgamation of arch Bond villain Ernst Blofeld and legendary

magician/comedian Tommy Cooper. The self-proclaimed - presumably with his tongue firmly in his cheek - 'emperor of illusion, prince of prestidigitation and maharajah of mystery' is stopping off in the region this month to present 'a cabaret of magical illusions'.

Bristol-based Baldini comes complete with a host of five-star reviews and is a firm family favourite, so be sure to check him out before he vanishes in a puff of smoke...



Jerry Sadowitz

Dudley Town Hall, Thurs 28 March;
Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 6 April

American-born Scottish comedian & magician Jerry Sadowitz comes with a big fat health warning; he is most definitely not for the fainthearted!

A man who's not averse to hurling his underwear at female members of the audience, Sadowitz is about as far away from political correctness as it's possible to get. On-stage antics have included stamping on a blow-up doll of Linda McCartney not long after she'd died, spitting in the face of a drunken heckler, and pouring scorn on Jimmy Savile just days after the DJ had passed away (although history does of course show that Jerry was singing from the correct hymn sheet regarding the Jim'll Fix It star).

The Bugle Live

Old Rep, Birmingham, Sun 10 March;
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 16 March

Fans of long-running podcast *The Bugle* - it was launched in 2007 and has run for 600-plus episodes - here get the chance to sample its magic live on stage.

Presented by Andy Zaltzman - perhaps best known to BBC Radio Four listeners as the host of *The News Quiz* - the show sees co-hosts and guests delivering 'freshly hewn topical satire, as well as probable and certifiable lies and other assorted high-grade nonsense'.

Sasha Velour: The Big Reveal Live Show

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 12 March

The gender-fluid Sasha Velour - the season-nine winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race* back in 2017 - stops off in Birmingham in support of recently published book *The Big Reveal: An Illustrated Manifesto Of Drag*. Offering an immersive evening of storytelling and live art, the show features 'iconic new performances' by Sasha and an appearance by a special guest star.



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NEW ACTS MONTHLY

Dance previews from across the region



Sao Paulo Dance Company

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 15 & Sat 16 March

It's 'Brazilian sunshine time' in Wolverhampton mid-month, courtesy of a triple bill from first-time visitors São Paulo Dance Company. The talented ensemble have produced more than 100 classical and contemporary works since forming 16 years ago, in the process touring to nearly 20 countries and performing in front of 900,000-plus people.

"São Paulo is a dance company with a very special Brazilian accent," explains Artistic Director Inês Bogéa. "We have the passion for dance,

we have the energy of Brazil, and we love to share that with audiences around the world.

"In the programme that we're presenting here, the choreographers are trying to reflect on stage what we are all feeling in this moment of our lives. They create a unique world through the movements, the connections with the music, and the images that they evoke..."

"We are open to sharing ideas and sensations, and we aim to meet people and understand different ways of looking at our world and our time. So we are looking forward to showing audiences a little bit of our culture, and through the dance we will all feel the energy of Brazil."

Diversity

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 20 & Thurs 21 March; The Halls Wolverhampton, Sat 6 April

With numerous sell-out tours under their belt, it's fair to say Diversity have made the most of their Susan Boyle-beating success on Britain's Got Talent 15 years ago.

The London-based street-dance crew are this month and next visiting the Midlands region with latest offering Supernova. Extremely well received on its mammoth 66-date tour across 40 towns and cities, the production differs somewhat from previous Diversity shows in the sense that it follows a storyline.

The group is using the tour to support anti-poverty charity the Trussell Trust, with audience members being invited to bring along food donations to the shows.



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 21 March

Having earned an enviable reputation for presenting innovative and magical productions, it's reasonable to assume that Ballet Theatre UK will once again be striking all the right notes with this currently touring dance version of the classic Shakespeare comedy... Expect impressive choreography - set to the iconic Mendelssohn score - and a wardrobe's worth of beautiful costumes.

40/40 By Katherina Radeva

The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome, Fri 8 & Sat 9 March

Award-winning performance maker and visual artist Katherina Radeva describes her critically acclaimed 40/40 show as an inspiring, insightful and moving celebration of her 40 years as a woman, a migrant and an artist... The production takes its audience on a journey through Kat's life, from long-ago days spent dancing at her parents' student parties, through her experience of being body-shamed as a teenage rhythm gymnast, to the present day, when she defines herself as a creative who refuses to be categorised.



THE HUMAN HEART

A brand-new choreographed production gives voice to an unspoken and overlooked love story



Two internationally renowned kathak choreographers and dancers will come together at Birmingham Hippodrome next month to present a brand-new work.

Birmingham-born Aakash Odedra and New Delhi-based Aditi Mangaldas have joined forces to create and perform *Mehek*, a work which explores the power of love, memory, desire, attraction and resilience.

The show focuses on the often taboo subject of love between an older woman and a younger man. In doing so - explains the project's dramaturg, Karthika Nair - it takes a look at society's expectations in terms of an 'acceptable' relationship, and also celebrates the courage of those who defy societal norms: "The story explores both the immense strength that one can derive from love and also the challenges that are faced by people who are willing and brave enough to not abide by certain societal preconceptions about who can love and who can be loved.

"We are so used to older men courting, marrying and raising families with younger women, including some very famous men. I think history is ripe with examples. Aditi has been exploring these questions about the double standards we often find in society's expectations of men as opposed to those that it has for women.

"She mentions that women get slotted very easily into roles. So first, you're the daughter, then you're the suitable lover, then you become the wife, and then you become the mother. The idea that a woman could be multiple things is something that we grapple about.

"Love is not an exception in terms of how it's viewed in society. It's maybe heightened because it comes with an added explosive element, which is feminine desire, which is what all societies try to police. And the idea that an independent woman who is older, and therefore has seen the world and is not necessarily cowed by any kind of influence, should express desire is probably a very frightening thing for many people."

The title *Mehek* is derived from the Hindi word for fragrance. The team have been researching ideas of memory and love through Western and South Asian literature and also through the importance of our senses.

"Some of my other early tasks as a dramaturg were to dissect the notion of love and see

what the intersections of memory were," says Karthika. "So, for instance, in the first workshops in Delhi, we worked round the idea of objects or sounds associated with love. What would be the fragrance that one associates with love or a loved one? What would be a memory that one associates with love? And what would be the places associated with love?

"These questions were to stimulate the senses and see what the responses would be in movement terms. For instance, how do you describe the fragrance of love in just movement terms?

"It's not a linear narrative necessarily, but there is a story. And with any dance piece, anyone should be able to access it without knowing the back story or having to read the programme notes. So I think my job has been to ensure that, even if it's abstract, the emotional connections are comprehensible to the audience. The narrative is always true to itself, and my role is just to make sure that all of the ingredients which go into making the piece are coherent."

As part of the research and development of the show, the team worked with Leicester-based creative dance company Moving Together in *Mehek Live*, a community-engagement project during which they listened to the experiences and views of older people. Workshops exploring dance, music, memory and story-sharing have so far involved more than 450 people in venues including care homes and community centres.

"It was humbling and moving, because we got to explore so many questions with them. One of the questions I asked was: 'When love ends, what remains? What do you give, and what do you take back?' And I remember one woman saying that even when love ends, it never ends.

"I think they felt heard, and that is wonderful because we often don't have time for older people, especially for their memories. These workshops gave a platform for memories. They could bring their memories and know they are treasured.

"Not every project comes with these echoes. For me, it was one of the big takeaways. It was wonderful that the company facilitated those weeks and continues to do so. They are on at it even now, so there are all these homes and community centres where *Mehek* is still alive."

Karthika believes the production and the themes it explores are accessible to people of all backgrounds.

"I don't think one needs cultural shorthands to unpack the story; it's really identifiable. There is a certain amount of kathak vocabulary, but much of it is also universal. When you hold a hand in front of your face, it symbolises a mirror, and that's very clearly so in kathak, but I think that becomes very clear to anyone who is watching. And Aakash and Aditi are extraordinary performers. They perform to people all over the world who have never even heard the word kathak or know anything about the code and language of South Asian dance."

Born in Kerala and now living in France, Karthika is a writer, academic and dance enabler who has worked with companies across the globe. Co-founder (with Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui) of Antwerp-based dance company Eastman, she has also worked with numerous internationally renowned dancers and choreographers, including Akram Khan, Carlos Pons Guerra and Shobana Jayasingh. *Mehek*, she says, is a rare chance for audiences to see two of the international stars of South Asian dance performing together.

"This is a duet by two extraordinary performers who are both very conversant in different techniques. Aditi has been dancing for close to 50 years - since she was a child - but in the last decade or so, her work has also encompassed the contemporary. Aakash has always inhabited these various spheres. So what audiences can expect is performers who are hypnotic, powerful dancers.

"I guess one thing we would like through this piece is to gently remind ourselves that we needn't be judgmental; that we can just let ourselves be happy that others are happy; that who you love is a personal thing. And also that we should be so lucky, whatever our age, to find someone to love us or to find someone to love. Life is short; it's horribly unpredictable. Love, for all the messiness that it brings, is also salvation."

.....

Aakash Odedra Company and Aditi Mangaldas Dance Company present *Mehek* at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 9 April

Film highlights in March...

Dune: Part II CERT tbc (166 mins)

Starring **Timothée Chalamet, Zendaya, Florence Pugh, Austin Butler, Rebecca Ferguson, Josh Brolin**
Directed by **Denis Villeneuve**

One of the most high-profile sci-fi movies of the mid-1980s - and directed by David Lynch - *Dune* actually began life as a novel, written by Frank Herbert back in the 1960s...

This latest cinematic incarnation - the second film of a two-part adaptation - explores the mythic journey of Paul Atreides, the heir to a noble house, as he follows a path of revenge against the conspirators who destroyed his family.

Facing a choice between the love of his life and the fate of the known universe, he endeavours to prevent a terrible future which only he can foresee...

Released Fri 1 March



Lisa Frankenstein

CERT 15 (101 mins)

Starring **Kathryn Newton, Liza Soberano, Jenna Davis, Trina LaFargue, Paola Adino, Joshua Montes** Directed by **Zelda Williams**

Described by its publicity as a coming-of-age love story, *Lisa Frankenstein* follows the adventures of a misunderstood teenager and her handsome high-school crush - who just happens to be a corpse.

After a set of playfully horrific circumstances

bring him back to life, the pair embark on a murderous journey to find love and happiness - and a few missing body parts along the way...

Robin Williams' daughter, *Zelda*, is the woman at the helm of a film that aims to pay homage to the hugely popular horror comedies of the 1980s. Sadly, its inability to merge the two genres with any real sense of focus or conviction has seen it dig its own grave with many critics.

Released Fri 1 March

Imaginary CERT tbc (104 mins)

Starring **DeWanda Wise, Tom Payne, Veronica Falcón, Betty Buckley, Alix Angelis, Dance DiLiegro** Directed by **Jeff Wadlow**

Are imaginary friends really just creations of a child's mind, or is something far more sinister at play?

That's the question being asked in this original horror from Blumhouse, the production company behind *Five Nights At Freddy's* and *M3GAN*.

When Jessica moves back into her childhood home with her family, her youngest stepdaughter, Alice, develops a disconcerting attachment to a stuffed toy bear named Chauncey which she finds in the basement. As Alice's behaviour becomes increasingly concerning, Jessica decides to intervene - only to realise that there's way more to Chauncey than meets the eye...

Released Fri 8 March





Kung Fu Panda 4 CERT PG (94 mins)

With the voices of **Jack Black, Awkwafina, Viola Davis, Dustin Hoffman, James Hone, Bryan Cranston**

Directed by **Mike Mitchell** and **Stephanie Stine**

Launched in 2008 with a film that went on to earn an Academy Award nomination, the Kung Fu Panda franchise is big, big business, having so far made more than \$1.8billion at the global box office.

Jack Black once again voices the character of Po Ping - the Kung Fu Panda of the title - for an adventure that sees powerful sorceress and tiny shapeshifting lizard The Chameleon doing her very best to re-summon all the master villains whom Po has previously vanquished to the spirit realm... Veteran British actors Ian McShane and Gary Oldman lend their voices to villainous snow leopard Tai Lung and power-hungry peacock Lord Shen respectively.

Released Fri 29 March

Drive-Away Dolls

CERT 15 (104 mins)

Starring **Margaret Qualley, Geraldine Viswanathan, Beanie Feldstein, Joey Slotnick, CJ Wilson, Colman Domingo**
Directed by **Ethan Coen**

With uninhibited free spirit Jamie bemoaning yet another breakup with a girlfriend, and demure pal Marian seriously needing to loosen up, what better way to make a fresh start than by heading out on an impromptu road trip? But when the pair cross paths with a group of inept criminals, things soon start to go horribly wrong... The first film Ethan Coen has directed without the collaboration of brother Joel (excluding a documentary about Jerry Lee Lewis), Drive-Away Dolls hits cinema screens 17 years after it was first announced as a 'lesbian road movie' entitled Drive-Away Dykes. Apparently, it's the first in a planned lesbian B-movie trilogy from Coen, with second film Honey Don't slated to go into production this very month.

Released Fri 15 March



Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire CERT tbc

Starring **Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Paul Rudd, Finn Wolfhard, McKenna Grace, Carrie Coon**
Directed by **Gil Kenan**



A bit like superhero movies, Ghostbusters films just keep on coming - although nowhere near as relentlessly. This latest addition to the franchise sees the Spengler family return to where it all started - the iconic New York City firehouse - to team up with the original Ghostbusters, who've developed a top-secret research lab to take the business of busting ghosts to the next level. But when the discovery of an ancient artefact unleashes an evil force, Ghostbusters both new and old must join forces to protect their home and save the world from a second Ice Age.

Released Fri 22 March

Immaculate CERT tbc (99 mins)

Starring **Sydney Sweeney, Simona Tabasco, Alvaro Morte, Benedetta Porcaroli, Giampiero Judica, Giorgio Colangeli**
Directed by **Michael Mohan**

Given that recent superhero release Madame Web - in which she co-starred with Fifty Shades Of Grey's Dakota Johnson - received a sound spanking from the critics, Sydney Sweeney will be hoping that this Black Narcissus-inspired psychological horror movie puts her otherwise-promising career firmly back on track.

The Euphoria and White Lotus star plays a woman of devout faith who, having taken up a new role in a prestigious convent in the picturesque Italian countryside, finds that the warmth with which she is greeted is soon replaced by a shocking nightmare of seriously epic proportions...

Released Fri 22 March





INTERNATIONAL WATERCOLOUR MASTERS

prestigious exhibition returns to the Midlands



The International Watercolour Masters, a 10-day festival featuring visiting artists from around the world, returns to Shropshire's Lilleshall Hall in May. The event has been organised and hosted since 2018 by local watercolour master David Poxon, who here explains what visitors to this year's show can expect to see...

David Poxon's work in watercolour has taken him around the world.

Since 2018, he has also been gathering expert painters to Shropshire, his home county, on a regular basis for the International Watercolour Masters (IWM) event, which he hosts.

The idea for the Lilleshall Hall-located get-together was born in a Shanghai hotel bar, following David's attendance at a prestigious art show.

"I was having a couple of drinks," he explains, "and one of the big watercolour stars from Argentina - his name is Alvaro Castagnet - asked me what my plans were for the following year." David was already planning to exhibit his own work at Weston Park, near Telford. "I told him all about it, and the venue, and he said 'That sounds great - but with me in it, it would be fantastic!' He's not shy!"

Before he had left the bar, David's initially modest exhibition had grown even further, as more watercolour masters showed an interest in joining him. "I left Shanghai thinking 'What have I done? I've invited all these people to be in a show - so I'd better organise it!'"

Fortunately, in a previous incarnation, David worked in the music industry, a fact which meant he had the necessary skills to plan a large-scale event. The show was an incredible success, with nearly 17,000 visitors in a single month. "It was a prototype. It became obvious to me that I had a great format, but I needed a much bigger venue, and I needed to expand it."

In his hunt for a more spacious location, David discovered Lilleshall Hall, again situated in the countryside around his home. "Lilleshall is the UK's national sports & conference centre, so Britain's elite athletes are always wandering around the place. I thought, now it can be the home of the world's elite watercolour painters as well!"

"When you walk in the hall, there's this beautiful atmosphere, with ambient light, a nice bit of jazzy music, and everybody starts floating around. There's nothing like it in the world - and it's coming here!"

Watercolour became known as 'the English style' of painting thanks to the 17th and 18th-century artists who developed it - including Midlanders David Cox and Walter Langley.

"They used to go on what is now known as The Grand Tour. They would get a sleeping

bag and a bag of equipment, and wander all over Europe - Italy, Switzerland - gathering information and subjects to bring back to their studios to paint. Just like when we go somewhere, we might take photographs, they would do quick sketches."

Watercolour has since become one of the most popular painting disciplines in the world. "It's the easiest to start, but the hardest to master. It's like dealing with a wild animal - you never can quite tame it."

The artists featured in the show have certainly mastered the craft, however. "The tonal depth, the definition, skill and detail, emotion, drama - there's everything in these paintings."

While painting might appear to be a solitary activity, IWM 2024 is very much a group effort. David compares it to playing in a football team: "No one in the team is more important than the team itself. That's the kind of philosophy that I try to have with this show."

The event has gained a reputation around the world for its organisation, venue, and top-class presentation, as well as the unique presence of the artists themselves. Multiple live demonstrations are scheduled each day, with attendees able to watch a master at work. "There'll be a sit-down audience, and each side of the stage will have giant monitor screens which capture what the artists are doing. The audience will be able to follow every brush stroke - and they will be amazed. Last time, you could hear a pin drop. People were sitting there with their mouths open in complete awe at what they were seeing."

There are also workshops with different artists: "So if anyone wants to spend some real quality time under a master's tuition, they can book in on the IWM website."

As well as the activities taking place on site, the event will find an audience much further afield - in a bid to reach fans of watercolour who can't attend the event in person, the 10-day festival is being filmed. "This is the equivalent of Glastonbury - but for watercolour!"

There will be interviews with artists, a tour of the exhibition, and plenty more besides. "I've made a little series called Watercolour Basics - five-minute modules, without any jargon, aimed at people who want to get started painting."

IWM tickets should be bought in advance - there's a limited capacity, in the interest of audience comfort - and all of the 150-plus

paintings are for sale.

In addition to IWM events, Lilleshall Hall's cafe, restaurant and Italian Gardens will be open as well. "It's not just for people who may be interested in painting - we want everybody to come along. This is something completely different, and the atmosphere is very therapeutic."

Alongside paintings from global masters, IWM also hosts a watercolour competition, which this year brought in nearly 3,000 entries from people all around the world.

"People say 'It's not the winning that's important, it's the taking part,' but actually, winning is nice! When you do win something, and you get the acceptance of your peers, it gives you a good boost, and it entuses you to do more."

Judging the competition was no mean feat. David collected 20 masters and four industry professionals to judge the entries remotely.

"The amazing thing was, when all the results were in, the same 10 people had got the most votes from all these judges. You could see the pattern. These are judges from China to North America, to Brazil, to Europe, and they were all voting independently."

In addition, the top 200 entries will be given their moment in the spotlight, broadcast on a giant screen in the main exhibition arena.

David has been blown away by the skill exhibited by his fellow masters. "The artists in the show have taken it to a new dimension. The watercolour paintings at IWM 2024 are all museum quality."

The International Watercolour Masters 2024 offers visitors the chance to enjoy fantastic artwork, insightful workshops and fascinating demonstrations in a beautiful setting. Whether you're an established or aspiring artist, a fan of watercolour, or just somebody who wants to see true artistic skill in practice, this is definitely an event not to be missed.

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International Watercolour Masters 2024 runs at Lilleshall Hall, Shropshire, TF10 9AT, from Wednesday 15 to Friday 24 May. The exhibition is open daily from 10am - 4pm and admission is by advanced ticket only. Prices cost £10 each and group discounts are available. For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit: IWM2024.com



Drawing Attention: Emerging Artists In Dialogue

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Mon 6 May

This thought-provoking British Museum touring exhibition features art produced by some of the most promising up-and-coming names in the field of contemporary drawing.

Their work is displayed alongside art by numerous celebrated creatives, including Mary Delany, Edouard Manet, Barbara Hepworth, Andy Warhol and Yinka Shonibare. The exhibition showcases a wide range of techniques and practices, with artists illustrating the ways in which drawing - often considered a quiet or private medium - can be used to challenge social norms, explore identity and protest injustice.




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Tatiana Wolska: Leisure As Resistance

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 9 March - Sun 2 June

Resourcefulness ingrained in her during a childhood spent in communist Poland - where recycling became a necessity due to the scarcity of goods - has had a significant impact on Tatiana Wolska's output as an artist. Tatiana describes herself as a 'junk collector', using her artistic talents to breathe new life into discarded plastic bottles, salvaged timber, rusty nails and foam from old mattresses.

This first solo exhibition in the UK showcases some of her signature recycled bottle sculptures and several new commissions, including scrap-wood sculptures, large-scale drawings, a makeshift hut and a mural. Members of the general public viewing her art will be invited to engage in community activities such as reading groups, knitting clubs, repair cafés and meditation-through-drawing sessions.

Landscape And Imagination: From Gardens To Land Art

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Thurs 21 March - Sun 16 June

Works by celebrated artists including JMW Turner, Nicolas Poussin and Anya Gallaccio feature in this brand-new exhibition at Compton Verney, a show which explores the question of how art might work together with nature to reverse the decline of the UK's green spaces. An accompanying selection of playful interactive activities in the exhibition galleries will provide families with the opportunity to imagine their own colourful and fantastical landscapes.

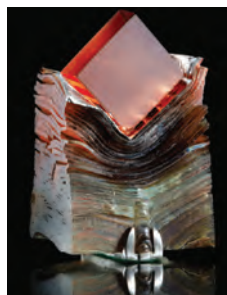


Image: JMW Turner, c1827-8, The Lake, Petworth, Sunset

Contemporary Pâte de Verre: The Material Of Time

Stourbridge Glass Museum, until Sun 23 June

This unique exhibition of internationally acclaimed Pâte de Verre glass artists is the result of a collaboration between Stourbridge Glass Museum and the Contemporary Pâte de Verre Association. The Association works to support new investigations into Pâte de Verre and what the 5,000-year-old glass technique can do 'in sculpture and new narratives for our rapidly changing world'. The show is based on the same-named 2022 book (The Material Of Time) by Dr Max Stewart and Tone Orvik.



After The End Of History: Contemporary Working-Class Photography 1989 - 2024

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, Fri 29 March - Sunday 16 June

The challenges, beauty and diversity of contemporary working-class life - as depicted by working-class artists using the medium of photography - are explored in this fascinating new exhibition, curated by acclaimed photographer, writer & broadcaster Johnny Pitts. A Hayward Gallery Touring show, the collection features work from 1989 onwards in order to mark the 35th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall (which happened on 9 November of that year) and the symbolic end of Communism.



Photo: Goldie taken by Eddie Orchere

Victorian Radicals

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Thurs 31 October

Birmingham's impressive collection of Pre-Raphaelite art is here being displayed in the city for the first time in more than five years. Taking the subtitle 'From The Pre-Raphaelites To The Arts & Crafts Movement', Victorian Radicals features vibrant paintings and exquisite drawings presented alongside jewellery, glass, textiles and metalwork. The show provides visitors with the chance to discover the story of the Pre-Raphaelites - Britain's first modern art movement - and learn about their influence on artists and makers well into the 20th century.



Image: The Last Of England, 1857 - 1858, Artist: Ford Madox Brown

BUGG'S LIFE



Singer-songwriter Jake Bugg is returning to the region to play headline and support-act shows ahead of the release of a much-anticipated sixth album. What's On caught up with him to find out about the new record, live gigs and supporting rock royalty...

If you want a reminder of how quick time flies, how about this: precocious singer-songwriter Jake Bugg, who performed at Glastonbury at the age of 17 and had a number one album the following year, has just turned 30. In the interim, he's released four more albums, toured the world, supported the Rolling Stones and even recorded the soundtrack to a documentary about football superstar Ronaldinho. It's been a whirlwind 13 years for the boy from a Nottingham council estate, a background that keeps him grounded as well as amiably matter-of-fact during our chat.

It's been a while since your last album, Saturday Night, Sunday Morning, and the Ronaldinho soundtrack. How are things coming with the next one?

I did the soundtrack, and I've been writing ever since then, really. I was in the studio all of last year and the record's pretty much there - we'll be playing a few new songs from it on the upcoming tour. I'm really happy to have a new record pretty much ready to go, although it's always a funny one - you're excited about it but you're worried at the same time.

Tell us a bit about how the album has come together.

I've been working with these guys at Metrophonic, and they've been great and done the whole record, really - it's been a great experience. It's just picking up a guitar and jamming around and seeing what comes out - it might be a riff, it might be a few chords or a melody - and just going from there.

I didn't do too much sitting at home on the acoustic with the laptop because I spent two years doing that for the soundtrack during Covid, so I wanted to get into the studio.

And play with other people?

Yeah, exactly. I love playing and writing on my own, but it's good to go and work with other people. You learn new things, and you come up with stuff you probably would never have done on your own.

What can fans expect from the new album? Saturday Night Sunday Morning took you in a poppier direction - does the new one continue in that vein?

I'd say this one has gone back the other way -

it's a lot more gritty, more energetic, more uptempo... definitely more on the rock side than pop side this time, which I think is a good place for me. Obviously there'll be some traditional kind of Jake Bugg things in there as well. I like to think the fans will be quite happy with this one; it seems a bit more like something I would do. I really like the songs, and I just hope other people can relate to them like I can - that's always the interesting part.

The Your Town shows are set to feature two sets - one solo acoustic and one with a full band. How do you choose which songs appear in which section? Is the new material best suited to a full band, to make it more palatable to audiences hearing it for the first time, or do you like the idea of leading people in with an acoustic rendition?

With these shows the acoustic section of it is more of a nod back to how I grew up playing. I used to play shows just me and my guitar, kinda half an hour every now and then, so we're playing some older songs from that period. I think when you're playing brand-new songs, you want them to have the biggest impact they can have, so I do them with a band. There's obviously a few songs on this new record that are slower - not every song's uptempo with a full band - so maybe there's an argument to sneak a new ballad one into the acoustic set. So that's an option, too.

So audiences will get a few brand-new songs and, by the sounds of it, a few very old ones?

Yeah, pretty much. We'll give people a flavour of everything, really. It's nice to mix it up and do stuff we haven't done for a while - and stuff that we've never played before as well.

And at venues you've not played before, since many aren't on the traditional touring map...

Yeah, it's something we realised last year when we were playing festivals and going to places we wouldn't usually go. The reception and appreciation from the audience was fantastic, so we thought why don't we go to some of these places on the tour, as we hadn't really done some of them before.

There's a gap in the middle of the tour when you'll be opening shows for Liam Gallagher and John Squire. Does that mean you knew about their unexpected partnership before everyone else?

Oddly enough, I didn't! It was by some miracle that the dates worked out in between mine. It's a pure coincidence but one I'm quite happy with. To go out on the road with those guys will just be a great experience. I love my guitar, so getting to see John play each night will be a great inspiration.

You weren't even born when the Stone Roses were in their pomp, but it sounds like you're a fan?

Absolutely. I actually supported the Roses when they did their comeback around the 2012 Olympics and played a small show in the Village Underground in East London. It was great to support them - but more than that, I got to watch them in a 500-capacity venue, which was amazing. They were really on it that night.

Playing on the same stage as such a legendary act and then having a number-one album all at the age of 18 was obviously an amazing experience, but you've said before that you suffered a lot from insecurity and imposter syndrome. Have you got a bit more relaxed about that as you've got older?

I'm a bit more relaxed in general, I think. It's always a funny one when you see your mates doing the graft and going to work while you're getting to travel to all these lovely places and just play shows every night...

...with Liam Gallagher...

Yeah, exactly! A lot of our mates grew up listening to Liam, so it does feel quite surreal. But yeah, it's fine - you've just got to get on with it. The music keeps me sane!

.....

Jake Bugg plays headline shows at Keele University, Staffordshire, on Friday 8 March and Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Sunday 28 April. He supports Liam Gallagher and John Squire at Civic Hall at the Halls, Wolverhampton, on Thursday 14 March.

BANGED UP!

There's plenty to see and do at Birmingham's West Midlands Police Museum



West Midlands Police Museum offers a unique day out in the heart of Birmingham. From visitors with an interest in local history, to budding detectives (of all ages) and fans of the macabre, the venue has something to suit all tastes. Intrigued to find out more, we took a visit to The Lock Up to check out 'life on both sides of the bars'...

Birmingham's West Midlands Police Museum is an unassuming red brick building, situated on the city's Steelhouse Lane and only five minutes walk from Snow Hill Station. The popular visitor attraction will soon celebrate its second birthday, after opening its doors in April 2022.

The building was a fully functional 'Lock Up' from 1891 until 2016 - a place to hold people after they had been arrested. In most cases, prisoners would spend less than 24 hours in the building before being sent to trial in the courts next door. Intriguingly, this journey was made through a tunnel between the two buildings, which can still be seen in the museum's basement.

Visitors spend a moment behind bars in the entrance 'lock up' and check in at the erstwhile charge desk - now a reception desk - before making their way to the main prison block. Unlike the blue Police Box on display from Coventry - which is a hit with visiting Doctor Who fans - the museum really does seem bigger on the inside.

Metal grille balconies give access to the cells on each floor. From any point in the main building, it's possible to see all the way down to the basement and up to the glass roof. This is actually a 130-year-old security feature, allowing police officers to see and hear trouble arising - even two floors away.

Unsurprisingly, the open feeling doesn't extend to the cells. Many lack windows, and in their original form were lit only by a candle in a recess high up the wall. On busy nights, multiple prisoners could occupy one cell - an unsettling thought for those free to wander in and out of cells as they please.

When safer prison conditions were implemented in the early 21st century, four cells were kept in their existing condition - honouring the building's Grade II listed status and providing a glimpse of its former life. Each cell now hosts an exhibit, covering anything from early police bicycles, to corporal punishment, and stories of people who were detained there.

The museum is run by a tight-knit team of staff and a large bank of volunteers, which includes serving and retired police officers. It's supported by both the Heritage Fund and

West Midlands Police and promises 'a unique perspective of life on both sides of the bars'.

Real care has been taken to maintain this balance, and the staff do everything they can to ensure that visitors have a grand day out.

Engagement Officer Archie creates bespoke programmes for visiting schools and the museum boasts a huge amount of educational material, designated space for sessions, and an enthusiastic team to deliver them. School visits can even include sleepovers, where pupils bunk down in cells.

There is a forensic trail in the basement, where visitors solve a crime by collecting clues, fingerprints and plaster casts of footprints. On occasion, crime scenes feature Camilla - a full-size mannequin donated (and named) by the hospital next door.

As well as catering for younger visitors, the museum also offers popular murder-mystery nights, giving would-be detectives the chance to catch a murderer by interviewing suspects dotted around the cells. There's also a host of after-hours talks, events and activities to suit visitors with darker tastes.

Fans of true crime can hear 'stories of murder and mayhem' and see some of the more ghoulish items in the museum's collection at a bespoke event called The Macabre Museum on Sunday 14 April. Not for the faint-hearted and limited to visitors over 18 years old, the event provides an opportunity to see the most notorious items in the venue's archives.

There are also regular after-dark ghost-hunting tours of the building, which feature spooky stories of strange sightings and mysteries from around the West Midlands and the Lock Up itself.

Talks by visiting West Midlands Police officers and experts in related history complete the programme. Previous talks have included deep dives into the history of the real Peaky Blinders - a moniker that was never used by the police. The talk was hosted by well-known local historian Professor Carl Chinn, who has a family connection to one of the gang members.

In addition to events and activities, the museum houses an impressive archive of records and artefacts, including some of the

country's first prisoner 'mug shots', dating back to the mid-19th century. Photography was a luxury commodity at the time, and the collection's photos are often the only remaining images of these people. Members of the public investigating their family history occasionally approach the museum to check these records, and the staff are happy to oblige - although searching through them is no mean feat.

Some of the archive's items, ledgers, photographs and historic uniforms are on permanent display. To see more of the collection, visitors can book a behind-the-scenes tour. These are generally scheduled during Birmingham Heritage Week in September.

Each month at the museum is themed to celebrate a different facet of the police force and its history. In March, the focus is on diversity within the police, while April marks the 50th anniversary of the West Midlands Police forming. The museum will be celebrating the occasion throughout the month, and the build-up to the anniversary is already in full swing - check out the website and social media for updates.

Although currently a gem hidden in plain sight, word is spreading about this fascinating building and the stories locked within. Tickets to visit cost £10 for adults and £6 for under-16s (with other concessions available).

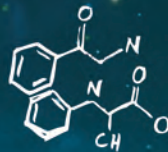
West Midlands Police Museum offers an interactive journey into local history while celebrating revolutionary officers of the last 130 years. It's also perfect for those with an interest in the techniques and technology the police have used to crack down on crime. And for anyone keen to see a life-size police horse, solve a murder, or dive into the past, the museum is a real treat.

.....

West Midlands Police Museum at The Lock Up on Steelhouse Lane is open Wednesday to Sunday, and during the school holidays. Visit museum.west-midlands.police.uk for more information.



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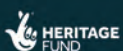
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Events previews from around the region



YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Tues 12 - Sun 17 March

The world's oldest and most prestigious badminton tournament (it was first held in 1899), the YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships returns to Utilita Arena (for the 31st time) this month.

The tournament comprises 155 matches and 50 hours of live badminton, contested in front of a global audience of more than 350 million people.

Homebuilding & Renovating Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 21 - Sun 24 March

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2024, the Homebuilding & Renovating Show brings together designers, experts, builders and suppliers to help you create the home of your dreams.

Visitors can discover all the latest products, join a seminar or masterclass, and check out an architect's opinion on everything from small plots to big builds.

For people keen to maximise the efficiency of their home, the show also features the Home Energy Academy, which includes all-new theatre sessions, and contributions from eco-energy-focused experts in the show's Advice Centre.



Monster Jam Ramped Up

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Fri 29 - Sun 31 March

World-class drivers showing off crazy skills and all-out racing in 12,000-pound Monster Jam trucks are among the mouthwatering attractions featured in adrenaline-charged motorsport event Monster Jam Ramped Up. A fierce head-to-head battle for the Event Championship will see the trucks take on numerous fan-favourite stunts, including sky wheelies, big-air jumps and backflips. The show also features Monstergon, a multi-sided metal ramp which is making its debut in Birmingham.



Get crafting at the NEC... NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 March

Crafting fanatics will be descending in droves on the NEC this month when Creative Craft Show, Sewing For Pleasure and Fashion And Embroidery make a welcome return to the venue.

With all three shows available to enjoy for the price of one, visitors can check out a variety of workshops and demonstrations

presented by creatives in a wide range of disciplines, including crochet, ceramics, goldwork and glass fusion, to name but a few. There's also a new-for-2024 all-day 'masterclass' workshop to sample, which comes complete with lunch and refreshments as well as all the required materials and tools.



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rafmuseum.org/midlands
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 Shropshire, TF11 8UP

The Royal Air Force Museum is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000922) and is a charity registered in England and Wales (1197541)

Events previews from around the region



Space, Race And Fly RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford, Sat 23 March - Sun 7 April

Family-friendly STEM-based events are all the rage at RAF Museum Midlands this Easter!

Attractions include a time-travelling science show - A Volatile History Of Chemistry (23 & 24 March and 2 & 3 April) and the interactive

Apollo 11 Academy - Space Race show (29 - 31 March). The Shropshire Astronomical Society will be hosting special stargazing evenings on 23, 24 & 27 March, and there's a 3D film about space flight to enjoy from 4 to 7 April in an immersive mobile planetarium.



Countrytastic Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Thurs 28 March

An educational event aimed at the under-11s, Countrytastic provides families with a great opportunity to learn about food, farming and the countryside.

Show highlights include a host of both indoor and outdoor activities, including

animal meet-and-greets, arts & crafts, cookery workshops and tractor rides. This year's theme is Farming Heroes, with organisers encouraging visitors to come dressed as their favourite superhero.

Feed The Need For Speed

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, Sat 23 March - Sun 14 April

It's all about speed at the British Motor Museum this Easter, with the popular Midlands attraction inviting visitors to explore some of Britain's fastest cars and take part in a number of associated activities. Highlights include a fastest car trail, a workshop where you can make your very own fast car, and daily racing-driver tours. The latter attraction provides youngsters with the chance to join energetic racing-driver characters for an interactive journey through the museum collections, learning about the venue's greatest speed machines along the way. A traditional Easter Egg hunt is also available to enjoy.



AGBO Rally

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sun 17 March

With Weston Park having been its home since 1997, the annual AGBO Rally makes a welcome return to the venue this month. The event will see 80 rally cars from all vintages and eras take on the stages around Weston - including the iconic watersplash! The event is also home to two championships in 2024: the AWMMC Heart of England Stage Rally Championship and the HRCR Mini Sports Cup.



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What's On recommends: Places to visit in the Midlands



Severn Valley Railway

Kidderminster: Station Dr, Kidderminster, DY10 1QX; Bridgnorth: 2 Hollybush Rd, Bridgnorth, WV16 4AX Website: svr.co.uk

Operating mainly steam-hauled passenger trains between Bridgnorth, Bewdley and Kidderminster, this much-loved railway transports visitors on a route of about 16 miles along the beautiful Severn Valley. The journey includes a stop-off at the Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, where passengers can check out massive locomotives, enjoy themed exhibitions of unique railway vehicles and meet Gordon the Blue Engine.

Those starting their journey at Bridgnorth will also have the option of stop-offs at Bewdley and Kidderminster, the latter of which boasts a railway museum.

PRICES: Freedom Of The Line adult tickets £25, child (four - 15-year-olds) £16.50, Small Family Saver (one adult and up to two children) £52, Large Family Saver (two adults and up to four children) £77.

Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

Utilita Arena Birmingham, King Edwards Road, Birmingham, B1 2AA Website: legolanddiscoverycentre.com/birmingham

Legoland Discovery Centre is a great place to get creative with your little ones.

The venue houses a city builder area, a duplo farm, two rides - Kingdom's Quest and Merlin's Apprentice Ride - and a 4D cinema. Perhaps the most impressive attraction at the centre is Lego Miniland. Built from more than 1.5 million Lego bricks, Miniland is a replica of Birmingham. The model includes Lego constructions of Bullring, the BT Tower, The Mailbox and the Library of Birmingham.

PRICES: Standard Play Session tickets start from £20, Anytime Entry ticket £30, adults and pre-schoolers £12 (online only).



Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

Millennium Point, Curzon St, Birmingham, B4 7XG Website: birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank

Located in Birmingham city centre, Thinktank offers a great day out for visitors of all ages.

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

Highlights include MiniBrum - an interactive mini city for under-eights - a 4k planetarium and a science garden.

PRICES: Adults from £15.50, children (three - 15-year-olds) from £7.50, concessions £12.50, under-threes go free.

The Bear Grylls Adventure

Birmingham International Railway Station, Exhibition Way, Marston Green, B40 1PA Website: beargryllsadventure.com

Celebrity adventurer Bear Grylls has certainly pulled out all the stops with this popular visitor attraction, with activities including high ropes, indoor archery and climbing, escape rooms, axe-throwing and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course.

The more-courageous visitor can check out Cage Snorkel and Shark Dive, where they can 'take the plunge' with blacktip reef sharks and tropical fish.

Fancy experiencing the thrill of free-falling at 12,000ft without having to jump out of a plane? Then iFly is for you! The weightless adventure takes place in a wind tunnel and comprises two one-minute flights to get the adrenaline pumping.

PRICES: Activities start from £20pp with online advance tickets.



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The Lock-up, Steelhouse Lane
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What's On recommends: Places to visit in the Midlands



Roundhouse Birmingham

1 Sheepcote St, Birmingham, B16 8AE
 Website: roundhousebirmingham.org.uk

A unique Grade II listed building at the heart of Birmingham's canal network, The Roundhouse is a hub from which to explore the city. The venue is looked after by Roundhouse Birmingham, who are dedicated to sharing stories of the city's industrial heritage in new and imaginative ways.

Attractions include walks, cycle tours, boat trips and a range of kayak and paddleboarding tours. For those wanting to 'go it alone', there are pay-as-you-feel local audio tours or printed trails from which to choose.

PRICES: The Roundhouse Visitor Centre and Display Space are free to enter, kayak tours range from £24.50 - £50, kayak taster sessions are £8 - £10 and walking tours range from £8 - £14.

Stratford Butterfly Farm

Swan's Nest Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 7LS
 Website: butterflyfarm.co.uk

Set in a large greenhouse landscaped with waterfalls, ponds and tropical plants, Stratford Butterfly Farm is home to hundreds of the world's most spectacular butterflies.

The popular venue features a 'discovery zone' - inhabited by giant silkmoths and their cocoons - and the Minibeast Metropolis - home to snakes, reptiles, amphibians and other invertebrates.

The Butterfly Farm's connections to the rainforests of Belize and the Maya civilisation are also in evidence, with more than 30 replicated ancient Maya artefacts on display throughout the attraction.

PRICES: £8.95 adult, £8.45 students and seniors, £7.95 children aged three to 16.



Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park

Warwickshire, CV35 9HZ Website: comptonverney.org.uk

Compton Verney is widely considered to be an art gallery of international standing. The Georgian house is set in more than 120 acres of Grade II listed classical parkland, created in the 18th century by eminent landscape architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Although the original estate was split up and sold a century ago, the 'pleasure grounds' still clearly reflect the sweeping grassland, ornamental lakes and Cedars of Lebanon for which Brown is famous.

PRICES: Adults £19.80, 19 - 25-year-olds £10, under-18s free.

Coventry Transport Museum

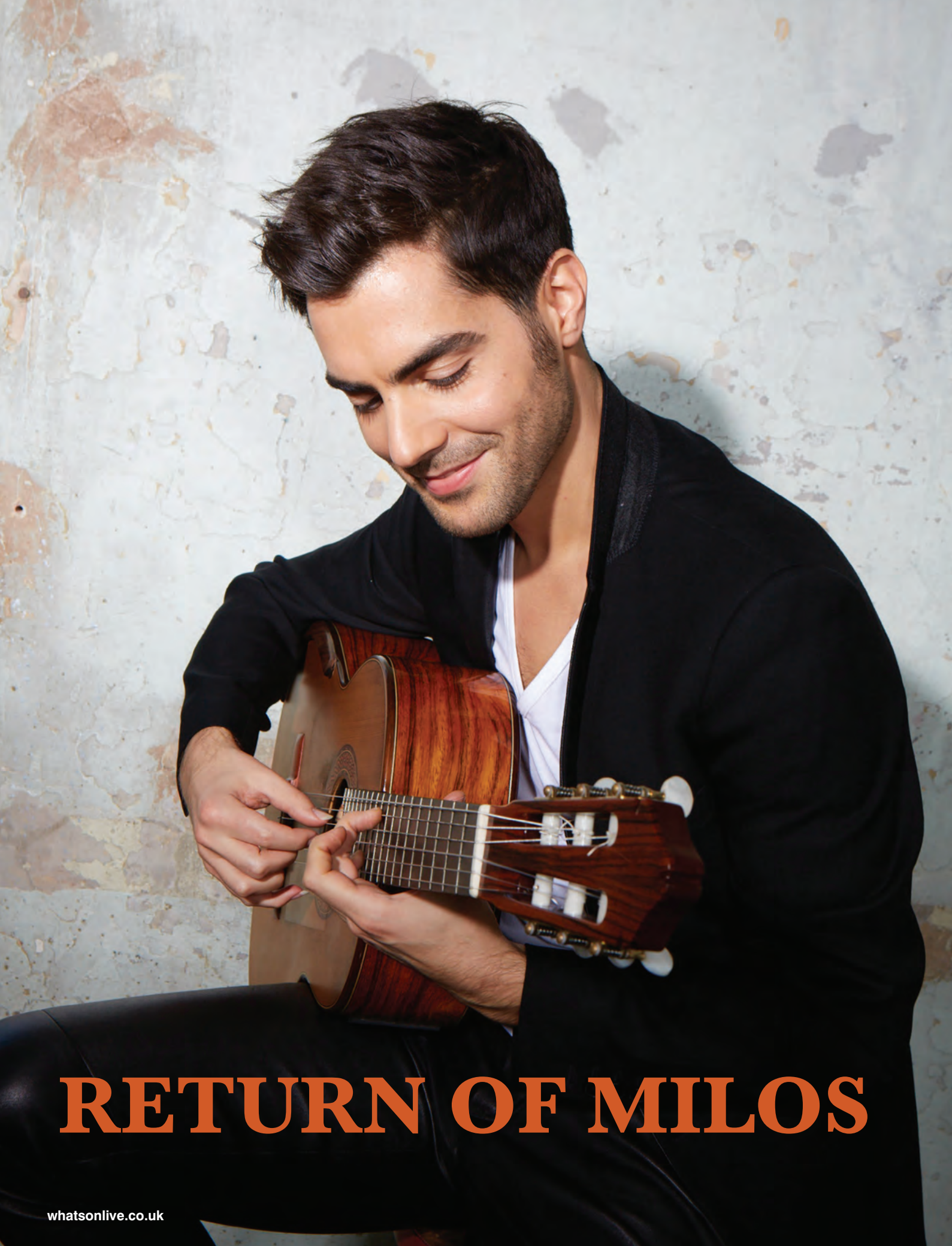
Millennium Place, Hales St, Coventry, CV1 1JD
 Website: transport-museum.com

This popular museum not only houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles on the planet, it also tells the story of a city which changed the world through transport.

There are 14 fully accessible galleries to enjoy at the venue, featuring, among other attractions, pioneering bicycles, transport champions, innovative, memorable and luxurious vehicles from the last 200 years, and the world's two fastest cars.

PRICES: Adults from £14, concessions (senior & student) from £10.50, junior (five - 16-year-olds) from £7, under-fours and essential carers free.





RETURN OF MILOS

Described by BBC Music Magazine as 'one of the six best classical guitarists of the last 100 years', Montenegro-born Milos Karadaglic this month makes a welcome return to Warwick Arts Centre, where he'll be joined by the Arcangelo Chamber Orchestra to present a programme of Baroque classics...

Is your most recent album, *Baroque*, a bit of a reset for you, Milos?

I tend not to look at things in this way, because I always see music as one thing. I have changed through the years, and so has the world around me. I feel that it has never been more important to really be true to yourself. That's the only way that we, as artists, are going to be able to survive and stay relevant in a world that is constantly changing around us. So in many ways, yes, it's a bit of a reset if you want to look at it like that; but for me, it's just a natural return to the core values of who I am as a musician.

There are some interesting choices within *Baroque* - can you tell us a bit more about the selection process?

Baroque is the treasure trove of the pieces that I have loved over the years; pieces that have been played by so many of my heroes and colleagues, and works that I have enjoyed as a listener. I wanted to see how I could tackle the subject of Baroque music from that perspective; not looking at it from the perspective of the classical guitar, where the view on Baroque is limited to just a handful of composers. It was a big process to make the selection because some pieces work and some pieces don't work for the guitar. But the one thing that makes them all come together is the variety of styles and influences. Each piece on the album is a little bit like a Baroque pearl. Each one is slightly different, and each one has its own beauty. And yet, at the same time, all together as an album they make just one perfect whole. I have very rarely enjoyed the process of making an album as much as I have this one - working with Jonathan Cohen and Arcangelo

and arranging the works together with Michael Lewin. I feel really proud of this one.

Many of the pieces were written for other instruments. Did that present challenges in terms of translating them to guitar? And if so, how did you get over them?

There were many challenges. There were pieces that I would work on until the very end, and then I would realise that a phrase wouldn't work simply because of the limitations of the guitar compared to the keyboard, or the fact that I don't have a bow like you have on the violin or on the cello. Whenever you are dealing with transcriptions, it's so important to know that the main moral guide in any transcription should be that you should only be doing it if it adds another layer of expression, another layer of quality and another idea to what is already there from the composer. The moment it becomes a compromise, an ego trip, rather than something that serves the music and the purpose of why it's done, I've always been very conscious of that throughout my career. It only makes sense if it stays true to the message.

Which are your favourite tracks on the album?

It was tremendous fun to play the Vivaldi concerto movements that were written for four solo violins. But also, all my life I've been drawn to pieces that are lyrical and that wake up your inner heartstring: pieces like the Rameau, Handel and Couperin. Finding a way to make the guitar sing, and finding a way to make the string become a voice, is what always gives me the most pleasure - and that is always what I love sharing the most

with my audience in concert. Rameau's *The Arts And The Hours* and Handel's *Menuet* are two such pieces on the album.

What are your plans for the year ahead?

I'm touring Baroque in the UK, America, and in the summer at festivals. And at the same time, I'm very much thinking about the next album and the next cycle. That's never easy, because so much consideration and thought goes into that. It's a process that always lasts for many months before that journey becomes clear. Right now, I'm in the middle of exactly that.

You've played Warwick Arts Centre before. Any memories of previous appearances there?

Yes, of course. How could I forget?! Coventry was a huge open-air festival organised by the BBC, and that's always really special because you get to play in front of a very wide audience. That's something I love doing very much because guitar is that perfect instrument that bridges the gap between classical and mainstream. It really is always very special. I have been to Warwick Arts Centre numerous times with orchestras and solo, and every time I played there, there was something I remembered. I also love coming here as I have close friends that live nearby, and seeing them every time makes it feel very, very memorable.

.....

Milos Karadaglic performs at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Saturday 9 March.



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Your week-
by-week
listings guide
March 2024

the list



Jurassic Earth at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre - Sun 24 March

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

What's On

Fri 1 - Sun 10 March



Daniel Kemish -
The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury
Wed 6 March

Mon 11 - Sun 17 March



Giovanni: Let Me Entertain You -
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
Tues 12 March

Mon 18 - Sun 24 March



The Time Machine: A Comedy -
Lichfield Garrick
Tues 19 - Sat 23 March

Mon 25 - Sun 31 March



Russell Kane -
Stourbridge Town Hall
Fri 29 March

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

VICTORIAN RADICALS Exhibition presenting works by 19th-century artists, designers & makers, from the Pre-Raphaelites to the arts & crafts movement, until Thurs 31 Oct

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

START THE PRESS! With a vintage, flatbed printing press as a centrepiece, West Midlands printmakers will produce original prints to fill the gallery walls, making work in real time. Presented as part of Ikon's 60th anniversary year, until Sun 21 Apr

EXODUS CROOKS: EPIPHANY (TEMPORAIRE) Exhibition combining sculpture, film and text in an exploration of memories, histories and traditions transferred through time and shared space, until Sun 21 Apr

New Art Gallery, Walsall

PLANET BRILL RESIDENCY Presentation exploring seasonal eating and food waste through discursive online work and the creation of a mural on the studio walls, until Sun 5 May

THE WORLD THAT BELONGS TO US Featuring works of intergenerational artists from the South Asian diasporas of the UK, US and Canada, the exhibition explores community, belonging, migrant storytelling and queer world-making, until Sun 9 June

...AS WE GATHERED ON THE SHARDS OF A FALLEN MIRROR BALL Exhibition of new work by Sophia-Layla Afsar (based in Karachi, Pakistan) and Alex Billingham (based in the West Midlands), following the artists' back-to-back residences in both Karachi and Walsall, until Sun 30 June

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

FRESH AIR FOR THE POTTERIES Celebrating the 150th anniversary of local photographer William Blake's birth, until Tues 5 May

CARBONIFEROUS MONSTERS: 100 MILLION YEARS BEFORE THE DINOSAURS Exhibition for all ages, exploring prehistoric forests and swamps, and the ancient creatures that lived there, until Sun 2 June

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

SEE ME Balcony exhibition by photographer Ming de Nasty featuring 14 new portraits of older members of the LGBT+ community in Shropshire. Exhibitions curated from the project can also be seen at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury Library

and The Hive, Shrewsbury, until Sun 14 Apr

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

POP ART AND POETRY A kaleidoscope of Pop ceramics by key artists from around the world, until Sun 7 Apr

ED ISAACS: DRAWING PLACES Exhibition of intricate, large-scale pencil drawings. Wolverhampton-based artist Isaacs primarily focuses on capturing the 'spirit of an environment', until Sun 24 Mar

FRIENDS IN FOCUS Exhibition bringing together a selection of artworks from the gallery's permanent collection, acquired with support from the Friends of Wolverhampton Art Gallery & Museums, until Mar

Elsewhere:

SHREWSBURY STREETSCAPE PROJECT Exhibition presenting a selection of James St Clair Wade's architectural streetscapes, highlighting the richness and variety of the town's architecture, until Tues 12 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

GEORGIA REDPATH: NATURE | ARCHITECTURE New works by Georgia Redpath, using a limited palette of geometric building blocks to craft a sculptural world, until Tues 26 Mar, Stourbridge Glass Museum

DREAMS OF BRUM On-tour exhibition from Ikon Gallery, featuring portraits by Birmingham-based photographer Maryam Wahid, until Sun 31 Mar, Handsworth Library

HARLEQUINADE: A GREAT BRITISH PANTO! Exhibition that uses puppets and Toy Theatre to explore Harlequinade: a clown-led, slapstick adaptation of commedia dell'arte, which became a popular element of Victorian panto, until Sun 31 Mar, Bantock House, Wolverhampton

CAROLINE GLANVILLE Exhibition of observational works in watercolour, inspired by the Shropshire-based artist's rural surroundings, Fri 1 - Wed 27 Mar, Rose Paterson Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shropshire

SPRING EXHIBITION 2024 Featuring paintings and ceramics from Lucia Fraser, drypoint intaglio prints from Faith Chevannes and dreamlike abstracts from Karen Ulph, Fri 1 Mar - Fri 31 May, Ironbridge Fine Arts, Shropshire

A WOMAN WITHIN Exhibition featuring the work of Maryellen Butler, Mon 4 March - Sat 6 April, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

ASSOCIATION OF ANIMAL ARTISTS A selection of artwork 'as diverse as nature itself', in an array of media and styles, Thurs 28 Mar - Thurs 25 Apr, Rose Paterson Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shropshire



Daniel Kemish - The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Gigs

FIZZ + MAYA DELILAH Fri 1 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

POTTER PAYER Fri 1 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

ALESTORM + KORPIKLAANI + HEIDEVOLK Fri 1 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LUCINDA WILLIAMS Fri 1 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

RICK ASTLEY + BELINDA CARLISLE Fri 1 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

ANT LAW & ALEX HITCHCOCK Fri 1 Mar, 1000 Trades, B'ham

FROM GOLD TO RIO Fri 1 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

BACK TO BACHARACH Fri 1 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

LABOUR OF LOVE - UB40 TRIBUTE Fri 1 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

AMERICAN FOUR TOPS Fri 1 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

NICK HARPER Fri 1 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

PETE KENT Fri 1 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

ALEX HARVEY EXPERIENCE Fri 1 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

CALLING PLANET EARTH Fri 1 Mar, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

VICKY JACKSON IS PINK Fri 1 Mar, The Station,

Cannock

TOTALLY TINA Fri 1 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

TOMMY SCOTT (SPACE) DUO Fri 1 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

WHITESNAKE UK + JOAN JETT TRIBUTE Fri 1 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SOUND OF THE SIRENS Fri 1 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Fri 1 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

THE ENDINGS Fri 1 Mar, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

KARL LOXLEY Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ELVANA Sat 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NEWDAD Sat 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PULSE + HAZE + GUTTER PUPPY + DUNEBUG + VIOLENT GIANTS Sat 2 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE LANCASHIRE HOTPOTS + PANTOGOGO Sat 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

EDITORS + WINGS OF DESIRE Sat 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC Sat 2 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

SIMON AND GARFUNKEL THROUGH THE YEARS Sat 2 Mar, The Wulfrun at The Halls W'hampton

REGGAE BOYZ FEAT MICHELLE Sat 2 Mar, The Hangar, Wolverhampton

THE ZUTONS Sat 2 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

MOTLEY CRUDE + SNOG + OZZBEST Sat 2 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ABBA INFERNO Sat 2 Mar, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

BARRY STEELE PRESENTS: THE ROY ORBISON STORY Sat 2 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE STEPS EXPERIENCE Sat 2 Mar, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

WISE WOMAN Sat 2 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

NEW PURPLE CELEBRATION Sat 2 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

LUNA KISS + CIVIC GREEN Sat 2 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE VERTIGO BAND Sat 2 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

JANICE BURNS AND JON DORAN Sat 2 Mar, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

JA RULE + KERI HILSON + LLOYD + MYA Sun 3 Mar, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

GEORGIA CRANDON Sun 3 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE Sun 3 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

EVERLY BROTHERS AND FRIENDS Sun 3 Mar, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

RICH PARSONS Sun 3 Mar, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

KNOCKED LOOSE + DEAFHEAVEN + HEADBUSSA Mon 4 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

ALBERT LEE Mon 4 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

POLARIS + SILENT PLANET + THORNHILL + PALEDUSK Tues 5 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

BLAZIN FIDDLES Tues 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MIKE FARRIS Tues 5 Mar, Telford Theatre, Oakengates, Shrops

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Tues 5 Mar, Aston Hall, Wrexham

LUST FOR LIFE + FIFTEEN LIONS Wed 6 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAD JOCKS & ENGLISHMEN Wed 6 Mar, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THEO KATZMAN Wed 6 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

THE PRETENDERS Wed 6 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JAMES ARTHUR + DEAN LEWIS Wed 6 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE GEORGE HARRISON STORY Wed 6 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DANIEL KEMISH Wed 6 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MOTHER MOTHER + CRAWLERS Thurs 7 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

SUNBIRDS Thurs 7 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

UNDERCOVER HIPPIE Thurs 7 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

AADAL Thurs 7 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 7 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Thurs 7 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

ANGELINE MORRISON Thurs 7 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

HEARTBREAK - THE TOM PETTY SHOW Thurs 7 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

CAST Fri 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BRAINSTORM Fri 8 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

LUCA SIMIAN + DOWNFALL 77 + RED BY NIGHT + THE ACHILLES + THE TYSMS Fri 8 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

10CC + PAUL CANNING Fri 8 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JASON DERULO + AFRO B Fri 8 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

CALLING PLANET EARTH Fri 8 Mar, Sutton

Coldfield Town Hall

THE MAJOR TOMS - BOWIE TRIBUTE Fri 8 Mar, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

STRICTLY ABBA Fri 8 Mar, Churchill's, Wednesbury

JIVE TALKIN' - BEE GEES TRIBUTE Fri 8 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

BLACK CELEBRATION - DEPECHE MODE TRIBUTE Fri 8 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BAY CITY ROLLERS Fri 8 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 8 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TOM MEIGHAN Fri 8 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ROD AND THE FACEZ Fri 8 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

KAISER MONKEY KILLERS Fri 8 Mar, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

JAKE BUGG Fri 8 Mar, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

CHRIS BRAIN Fri 8 Mar, The Albion, Burton upon Trent

BACK INTO HELL: A TRIBUTE TO MEATLOAF Fri 8 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

THE BOOTIFUL SOUTH Fri 8 Mar, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE SOUND OF SPRINGSTEEN Fri 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COLDPLACE Fri 8 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MANOR HEIGHTS + LOBSTER Fri 8 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES Fri 8 Mar, Aston Hall, Wrexham

BEN PORTSMOUTH: THIS IS ELVIS Sat 9 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

SOUND OF SPRINGSTEEN Sat 9 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

ESSENTIAL 80S V 90S Sat 9 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BOOTLEG ABBA Sat 9 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

JOHN OTWAY Sat 9 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's,

Stourbridge

HEARTBREAK - THE TOM PETTY SHOW Sat 9 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

RED RUM CLUB Sat 9 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DAN BUDD AND HIS BAND AS ROBBIE WILLIAMS Sat 9 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MERSEY BEATLES Sat 9 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ELECTROMANTICS Sat 9 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

THE BEATLES SOUND Sat 9 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall

RE-TAKE THAT Sat 9 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

THE GEORGE MICHAEL LEGACY Sat 9 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK, JOHN MCCUSKER & JOHN DOYLE Sat 9 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GAZ HUGHES QUARTET Sat 9 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

GLAM 45 Sat 9 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

MANOR HEIGHTS + LOBSTER Sat 9 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ACROBVT Sat 9 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

ALIEN FEELINGS + CHASING THE FALL + CAPESTHORNE Sat 9 Mar, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

GIANT ROOKS + ANDREW CUSHIN Sun 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Sun 10 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

THE GEORGE HARRISON STORY Sun 10 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE RAT PACK SHOW Sun 10 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GOAT MAN & THE MOTH Sun 10 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

RBC SPRING OPERA: CINDERELLA
Featuring Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's Vocal & Operatic Studies Department. Performance comprises Massenet's Cendrillon, until Sat 2 Mar, Gas Street Central, Birmingham

CENTRE STAGE: CBSO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE Programme includes works by Bach, Avison & Handel, Fri 1 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

BOURNVILLE LUNCHTIME CONCERT
Featuring Allan Schiller & John Humphreys (piano duet), Fri 1 Mar, Bournville Quaker Meeting House, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME CONCERT AT ST CHAD'S
Featuring David Joyce (violin) & Richard Silk (piano), Fri 1 Mar, St Chad's Shrewsbury

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHOIR: REFLECTIONS - MUSIC FOR LENT
Featuring Adrian Lucas (conductor). Programme includes works by Haydn, Bach & Albinoni, Sat 2 Mar, Lichfield Cathedral

SPRING CONCERT: KEELE CHAPEL SINGERS Featuring Peter de Cruz (conductor) and David Ballantyne (piano). Programme includes works by Mozart & K Jenkins, Sat 2 Mar, Keele University Chapel, Staffs

SHREWSBURY MALE VOICE CHOIR FUNDRAISING CONCERT Also featuring Of One Accord. Funds raised will go to Margaret Junior School, Uganda, Sat 2 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

FRANCESCA MASSEY ORGAN CONCERT Sat 2 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

UNIVERSITY CAMERATA Featuring Emma Baker, Belén Clemente Gargallo, Naomi Hnat, Michael Stahl & Miles Swinden (conductors).

Programme includes works by Purcell, Weir, Barber, Gibbons, Elgar & more... Sun 3 Mar, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, B'ham

PURCELL: DIDO AND AENEAS Featuring vocal faculty students from Shrewsbury School, Sun 3 Mar, Maidment Auditorium, Shrewsbury School, Shropshire

BARNARDO'S NATIONAL CHORAL COMPETITION Featuring Douglas Coombes (conductor) alongside 22 competing school choirs, Tues 5 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RYAN CORBETT ACCORDION CONCERT Programme includes works by Bach, Scarlatti, Mozart, Grieg & more... Wed 6 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

ADELPHI QUARTET Featuring Maxime Michaluk & Esther Agustí Matabosch (violins), Adam Newman (viola) and Nepomuk Braun (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, Purcell &

Britten, Wed 6 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BIRMINGHAM CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: NEXT Featuring the NEXT Cohort. Programme includes Morton Feldman's 'timeless' studies, and works by D Jaskot, T Murail & I Mundry, Fri 8 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

DAVID THOMAS ORGAN RECITAL Fri 8 Mar, St Chad's Shrewsbury

RHOS MALE VOICE CHOIR Fri 8 Mar, Maidment Building, Shrewsbury School

BRAHMS: A GERMAN REQUIEM Featuring Shrewsbury School Community Choir, Sat 9 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: BACH, ST MATTHEW PASSION Featuring Paul Spicer (conductor), Thomas Hobbs (evangelist), Henry Waddington (Christus), Sophie Bevan (soprano), Lawrence Zazzo (countertenor), Ed Lyon (tenor) & Stephan Loges (bass), Sat 9 Mar, Lichfield Cathedral

STAFFORD SINFONIA: GREAT ROMANTICS Featuring Jack Lovell-Huckle (musical director) & Kenneth Woods (cello). Programme includes works by Clara & Robert Schumann, Beethoven & Brahms, Sat 9 Mar, Rising Brook Community Church, Stafford

KEELE BACH CHOIR: MOURNING, MERCY, MAJESTY Programme includes works by Vivaldi, Martines & Cherubini, Sat 9 Mar, Keele University Chapel, Staffordshire

HALESOWEN ORCHESTRA: CLASSICAL FAVOURITES Featuring Lee Armstrong (conductor) & Logan Gregory (violin). Programme includes works by Glinka, Butterworth, Mendelssohn, Warlock, Elgar & more... Sat 9 Mar, Cradley Heath Salvation Army Hall, Cradley Heath

FODEN'S BRASS BAND Sat 9 Mar, Alington Hall, Shrewsbury School

SEVEN LAST WORDS: A POETRY AND CELLO RECITAL Featuring Kenneth Wilson (cello and poetry). Programme comprises JS Bach's Six Suites for Solo Cello, interspersed with meditative poems, Sun 10 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

Comedy

STEPHEN BAILEY Fri 1 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

LEIGH FRANCIS Fri 1 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MARK WATSON Fri 1 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

MELANIE BRACEWELL Fri 1 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

IAN STONE, EDI JOHNSON, CAPTAIN REALITY & LESLIE GOLD Fri 1 Mar, Two

Gates Club, Tamworth

MICKY P KERR, BEN NORRIS, KATE BARRON & COMIC TBC Fri 1 - Sat 2 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM DAVIS Sat 2 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MARK WATSON Sat 2 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

SIMON WOZNAK, ANDREW BIRD & COMICS TBC Sat 2 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

GARY DELANEY, NABIL ABDULRASHID, TAL DAVIES & WAYNE BEESE Sat 2 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

RICHARD BLACKWOOD Sat 2 Mar, Bilston Town Hall

SUSAN MURRAY, ROGER MONKHOUSE, ALISTAIR WILLIAMS & CHARLIE LEWIS Sat 2 Mar, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

TOMMY SANDHU Sat 2 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

RICHARD BLACKWOOD Sun 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

VIDURA BR Sun 3 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ALFIE MOORE Sun 3 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

LOU CONRAN & EDDY BRIMSON Sun 3 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

FRANKIE BOYLE Sun 3 Mar, Aston Hall, Wrexham

TANYALEE DAVIS Tues 5 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BRENNAN REECE, MANDY MUDEN, KEVIN DANIEL, LOUIS ETIENNE & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 7 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

CHRIS KENT Thurs 7 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

STAN BOARDMAN Thurs 7 Mar, Brierley Hill Club, Dudley

GAVIN WEBSTER, PHIL JERKY, MICHAEL HENRY & DAN SMITH Thurs 7 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

JON COURTENAY Thurs 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CHRIS KENT Fri 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LINDSEY SANTORO, THANYIA MOORE, ELLIOT STEEL, COLIN HOULT (ANNA MANN) & ALEX EGAN Fri 8 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MARK WATSON Fri 8 Mar, Bilston Town Hall

JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Fri 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COMEDY IN THE ATTIC Fri 8 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

LINDSEY SANTORO, THANYIA MOORE, ELLIOT STEEL & COLIN HOULT (ANNA MANN) Sat 9 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MARK NELSON Sat 9 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BIG DEAL COMEDY Sat 9 Mar, Old Joint

Stock, Birmingham

JOSH JONES Sat 9 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

MELANIE BRACEWELL Sun 10 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE BAR AT THE EDGE OF TIME Frozen Light present a multi-sensory spectacular for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities, until Fri 1 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

A LEAP IN THE DARK Ron Hutchinson's comedy caper sees eight actors take on a whole host of characters in a fast-paced homage to the BBC and the invention of radio plays, until Sat 2 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN THE MUSICAL A timeless story of love, courage and redemption, based on the award-winning 1980s movie of the same name, until Sat 2 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

FARM BOY A Lichfield Garrick production of Michael Morpurgo's compelling sequel to War Horse, until Sun 10 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur version of the award-winning musical featuring dancefloor classics including Hot Stuff, It's Raining Men, I Will Survive, Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, Finally and many more... until Sat 2 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play, inspired by the life of Nina Simone, follows a successful singer and civil rights activist as she seeks redemption after the untimely death of her father, until Sat 2 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

SIX THE MUSICAL Smash-hit musical in which the six wives of Henry VIII take to the stage to tell their stories by fusing historical heartbreak and 21st-century girl power, until Sun 3 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BHANGRA NATION A 'brash, intoxicating and joyous musical comedy celebrating traditions we inherit and those we create', until Sat 16 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Mathew Baynton (Horrible Histories/Ghosts) stars as Bottom in Shakespeare's captivating comedy, until Sat 30 Mar, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THIS IS NOT MEDEA A dark comedy written by an immigrant from the EU with a few stories to share about life in Britain today, Fri 1 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DISASTER:

SURVIVING THE EARLY YEARS OF

MOTHERHOOD One-woman play giving an honest and frank account of the realities of parenting, Fri 1 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

QUEER MY THROAT Generation Q Collective's new gig theatre show - a loud and proud journey through history, 'climaxing in queer joy', Sat 2 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

(UN)SEEN A song cycle, providing a new perspective on the experiences of immigrants in the UK, Sat 2 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ELLEN KENT: MADAMA BUTTERFLY New production of Puccini's heart-breaking story. Sopranos Elena Dee (Korea) & Alyona Kistenyoova (Ukraine) star, Sat 2 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

DONUTS A celebration of how music brings us together, no matter what life throws at us, Sun 3 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

LA BOHEME Ukraine's Dnipro Opera presents Puccini's passionate story of two young Bohemian lovers. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Sun 13 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

REVISION ON TOUR: MACBETH Dickens Theatre Company present a fresh version of the Bard's blood-spattered tragedy, Mon 4 - Tues 5 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

WICKED Award-winning musical telling the untold story of the witches of Oz, Tues 5 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS The Highbury Players present an amateur version of Dennis Potter's wartime classic, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Mar, Highbury Hall, Sutton Coldfield

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE Lucy Bailey directs a new version of Agatha Christie's bestselling crime novel, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham



BONNIE & CLYDE Catherine Tyldesley (Coronation Street) stars as Blanche Barrow in an award-winning show about America's notorious folk heroes, Tues 5 - Sat 9 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CRACKING BY SHÓN DALE-JONES A thought-provoking solo performance about loving in the face of hatred, Wed 6 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

REVISION ON TOUR: DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE Dickens Theatre Company presents a new version of Robert

Louis Stevenson's gothic tale, Wed 6 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

WAITING ROOM Elemental theatre company present a brand-new comedy set in the Accident & Emergency department of an NHS hospital, Wed 6 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MADAMA BUTTERFLY: UKRAINIAN NATIONAL OPERA Featuring an impressive cast, and accompanied by a live orchestra. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Wed 6 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

SCHOOL OF ROCK Amateur version presented by Cabaret Theatre Company, Wed 6 - Sat 9 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

REVISION ON TOUR: ROMEO & JULIET Dickens Theatre Company presents a new version of Shakespeare's tale of star-crossed lovers, Thurs 7 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE LIGHT HOUSE A real-life story about falling in love and staying in love, even when the lights go out and you're lost in the dark, Thurs 7 - Fri 8 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HANNAH WALKER: GAMBLE A bittersweet multimedia show about addiction and its effects on families, friends and communities, Fri 8 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

ROOM Emul8 Theatre explain how and why Virginia Woolf's ideas are still so relevant today, Fri 8 Mar, Blackheath Library, Rowley Regis

LADIES DOWN UNDER New production of Amanda Whittington's heart-warming drama, Fri 8 - Sat 30 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

BUFFY REVAMPED The entire 144 episodes of the hit 1990s TV show as seen through the eyes of superfan Spike - a man who knows the show inside-out... Sun 10 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Kids Theatre

SPOT'S BIRTHDAY PARTY New interactive production based on Eric Hill's children's book, until Fri 1 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DEAR ZOO Interactive children's theatre based on Rod Campbell's much-loved lift-the-flap book, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MORGAN & WEST'S MASSIVE MAGIC SHOW FOR KIDS Enjoy family-friendly conjuring capers, mysterious magic tricks and 'larger-than-life laughs', Sun 3 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SPECIAL DELIVERY A simple story for younger audiences, using puppetry to showcase the delights of trying something unexpected. Suitable for

audiences aged three-plus, Mon 4 Mar, Bleakhouse Library, Oldbury (10.30am & 11.30am)

SPECIAL DELIVERY A simple story for younger audiences, using puppetry to showcase the delights of trying something unexpected. Suitable for audiences aged three-plus, Mon 4 Mar, Brandhall Library, Oldbury (2.30pm)

THE SOOTY SHOW Family entertainment featuring Sooty, Soo, Sweep, Butch the Bulldog, Ramsbottom the snake and circus superstar Michael Jordan, Sun 10 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Dance

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY Birmingham Royal Ballet present Sir Peter Wright's production of the much-loved fairytale, with Tchaikovsky's magical score played live by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, until Sat 2 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

GRIEF IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS Helen Calcutt's radical new dance adaptation of Max Porter's award-winning text, Fri 1 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ASIAN SPRING: A CELEBRATION OF DANCE Join hundreds of local dancers for an afternoon of Kathak and Bhangra, showcasing the rich tapestry of South Asian culture through dance, Sun 3 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

40/40 BY KATHERINA RADEVA Solo dance performance showcasing the joys and sorrows of 40 years - from childhood parties and rhythm gymnastics through to defiant divorce and dancing for the joy of it, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Light Entertainment

RICHARD JONES: SOLDIER OF ILLUSION Experience the impossible with the Britain's Got Talent winner, Fri 1 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

FOOTBALL CLICHÉS LIVE Join the adjudication panel of Adam Hurrey, Charlie Eccleshare and David Walker for 'the most pedantic footballing night of all time', Fri 1 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

JAMES PHELAN: THE GREATEST MAGICIAN Magic show which promises to leave you 'aching from laughter and dizzy in disbelief', Fri 1 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

IMPROV WOLVES Featuring completely new comedy sketches created on the spot and based entirely on audience suggestions, Sat 2 Mar, Central

Library, West Bromwich

HENRY BLOFELD: MY DEAR OLD THINGS Join the former Test Match Special commentator as he shares tales of Johnners, Arlott and other larger-than-life characters from the world of cricket, Sat 2 Mar, Halesowen Town Hall

SCOTTISH FALSETTO SOCKS: EUROVISION SOCK CONTEST 'Earth's funniest footwear' are back with their latest comedy hour, featuring songs, sketches and Gags Sans Frontieres, Sat 2 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ASTON VILLA LEGENDS Paul Merson, Andy Townsend, Dion Dublin and Dean Saunders discuss all things football... Mon 4 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring an all-star cast of singers and performers, accompanied by the Keltic Storm Band and world champion Gael Force Irish dancers from Kerry, Mayo and Clare, Tues 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ILLUSIONATI: A MAGICAL CONSPIRACY Join The Great Baldini as he reveals (and demonstrates) how the Illusionati sell their magical services to the highest bidder... Wed 6 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

ILLUSIONATI: A MAGICAL CONSPIRACY Join The Great Baldini as he reveals (and demonstrates) how the Illusionati sell their magical services to the highest bidder... Fri 8 Mar, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge

DREAMCOAT STARS Concert-style performance where the stars of Joseph present hits from the musicals alongside brand-new songs and arrangements, Thurs 7 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

IRELAND THE SHOW Featuring an all-star cast of singers and performers, accompanied by the Keltic Storm Band and world champion Gael Force Irish dancers from Kerry, Mayo and Clare, Fri 8 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

QUEENZ - THE SHOW WITH BALLS Dazzling divas deliver 'a night of fun and fabulousness' with live vocals and a setlist of party pop anthems, Fri 8 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX: HORIZONS The Guinness World Record holder presents 'a celebration of our civilisation, our music, art, philosophy and science', Sat 9 Mar, Civic Hall, The Halls, Wolverhampton

THE CIRCUS OF HORRORS: DR HAZES CABARET OF CURIOSITIES Featuring sword swallows, hairculean aerialists hanging from their hair whilst suspended above the auditorium, whirlwind jugglers, twisted contortionists, voodoo acrobats, pickled people, hula-hooping sideshow showgirls and lots

more... Sat 9 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ILLUSIONATI: A MAGICAL CONSPIRACY Join The Great Baldini as he reveals (and demonstrates) how the Illusionati sell their magical services to the highest bidder... Sat 9 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CIRQUE: THE GREATEST SHOW Variety spectacular featuring contortionists and 'thrilling feats of agility and flair', Sat 9 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE BUGLE LIVE 2024 Live version of the long-running podcast in which Andy Zaltman chairs an evening of 'freshly hewn topical satire, as well as probable and certifiable lies and other assorted high-grade nonsense', Sun 10 Mar, Old Rep, Birmingham

SAM RABONE'S BIG BOSTIN' VARIETY SHOW The Garrick's own panto dame presents a handpicked programme of entertainment - including magic from Mark James, ventriloquism from Crackerjack's Max Fulham, music from Kiki Deville and comedy from Kings Heath housewife Mrs Barbara Nice, Sun 10 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Talks & Spoken Word

JUMPROV! The UK's first Black and Brown Improv group present a performance made up entirely on the spot, Sat 2 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

PROFESSOR A C GRAYLING Join the historian and philosopher as he explores the three biggest challenges facing the world today, Mon 4 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BEN FOGLE: WILD Brand-new show in which the adventurer shares true stories of his encounters with people and animals, Tues 5 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BRIAN BILSTON AND HENRY NORMAL An evening of poetry from 'the Banksy of poetry' (Bilston) and the founder of Manchester Poetry Festival (Normal), Fri 8 Mar, The Halls, W'hampton

Events

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Featuring a host of exhibitors who can help to plan your special day, Fri 1 - Sun 3 Mar, NEC, Birmingham



VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA Travel in style in 'a luxurious vintage carriage' and indulge in 'a delectable spread' presented on traditional vintage chinaware, Sat 2 & Sat 9 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BEYOND THE MASK: POISON, POLICE, AND PUNISHMENT OF THE 18TH & 19TH CENTURIES A retired Coventry West Midlands Police officer takes a look at some 18th & 19th century arsenic poisoning cases, Sat 2 Mar, West Midlands Police Museum, B'ham

THE NATIONAL EQUINE SHOW Featuring hundreds of brands and activities, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

LAMBING WEEKEND Explore the lambing barn and help welcome over 100 lambs and kids, Sat 2 - Sun 3 Mar, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

FROZEN PARTY Hosted by Elsa & Anna and featuring meet & greets, singalongs and games, Sun 3 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL Featuring a brand-new collection of short films showcasing extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography, Wed 6 - Thurs 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CRUFTS The famous annual dog show makes a welcome return, Thurs 7 - Sun 10 Mar, NEC, Birmingham



CHAT AND CRAFT: SPRING WREATH A friendly adult craft session, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Mar, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

NATIONAL SHIRE HORSE SHOW Pedigree shire horses will be put through their paces over three days of competition in various classes, Fri 8 - Sun 10 Mar, Staffordshire County Showground

INDUSTRIOUS WOMEN Guided tours inspired by women's history, presented to coincide with International Women's Day and Mother's Day, Sat 9 - Sun 10 Mar, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

MOTHER'S DAY LUNCH Treat Mum and your loved ones this Mother's day with Sunday lunch on the Severn Valley Railway, Sun 10 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

MOTHER'S DAY AFTERNOON TEA Treat the special lady in your life to an afternoon tea in the Victorian Orangery, Sun 10 Mar, Weston Park, Shropshire

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Ne-Yo - Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

Gigs

DAMIEN DEMPSEY Tues 12 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

SOUTH ARCADE Tues 12 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Tues 12 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BULLETBOYS + GARDEN OF EDEN + ALPHA SISTA Tues 12 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MUTUAL BENEFIT + ODETTA HARTMAN Wed 13 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

WILL DOWNING + MAYSA Wed 13 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN Wed 13 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TONY HADLEY Wed 13 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham



ENUFF Z'NUFF + STOP STOP Wed 13 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

TOM ODELL + SOFIA ISELLA Wed 13 Mar, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

TOM MEIGHAN Wed 13 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE CHRISTIANS Wed 13 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

DEATH VALLEY GIRLS Thurs 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WILLE & THE BANDITS +

WILLE EDWARDS Thurs 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DEAD POET SOCIETY + READY THE PRINCE Thurs 14 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

LUKE COMBS UK - TRIBUTE SHOW Thurs 14 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

ELO AGAIN Thurs 14 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

CASH RETURNS - THE MUSIC OF JOHNNY CASH Thurs 14 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

LIAM GALLAGHER AND JOHN SQUIRE Thurs 14 Mar, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

TONY CHRISTIE Thurs 14 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE ROLLING CLONES Thurs 14 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

NE-YO + MARIO Thurs 14 - Fri 15 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE LONGEST JOHNS + COLM R. MCGUINNESS Fri 15 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

FILTER Fri 15 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Fri 15 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ONE NIGHT IN DUBLIN Fri 15 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

WOMEN IN ROCK Fri 15 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

SHEF LEPPARD + TOTO UK Fri 15 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE: A TRIBUTE TO MARIO LANZA Fri 15 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

OMD + WALT DISCO Fri 15 Mar, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

SEX PISTOLS EXPOSE + BLONDIE UK Fri 15 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FLEETWOOD MAC SONGBOOK Fri 15 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES Fri 15 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ELO AGAIN Fri 15 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

MARTHA TILSTON Fri 15 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



MORETALICA + THE RUFFNECKS Fri 15 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE JUNE COLLINS BAND Fri 15 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SOLAR MOHICANS Fri 15 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

RED RUM CLUB Sat 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

FEEDER Sat 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PRAIRIE Sat 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SKINDRED Sat 16 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CATTLE DECAPITATION Sat 16 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE FUREYS Sat 16 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

THE DECADES BAND Sat 16 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

WOW! THAT'S WHAT I CALL 90S Sat 16 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

QUILL Sat 16 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE BLACK HOUNDS + STRAIGHT FOR THE SUN + ARMS TO OBLIVION + NAMELESS Sat 16 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

JOHN KIRKPATRICK Sat 16 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE STRANGLERS Sat 16 Mar, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

ELVIS - THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE Sat 16 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE TIME OF OUR LIVES Sat 16 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TOTAL-REX Sat 16 Mar, The Station, Cannock

STORY OF SOUL Sat 16 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

SOLAR MOHICANS Sat 16 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

PAUL PARKER Sat 16 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

FOREVER BILLY JOEL Sat 16 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

JEREMY MCCOMB + GARY QUINN + DAN SMALLEY Sat 16 Mar, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SAM SWEENEY Sun 17 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

CONAN + WALLOWING + VOIDLURKER + BILE CASTER Sun 17 Mar, Devil's Dog, Birmingham

JUST MY IMAGINATION: THE MUSIC OF THE TEMPTATIONS Sun 17 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JUSTIN HAYWARD Sun 17 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

HIGH ON ADAMS Sun 17 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

LÍGIA TRIO Sun 17 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE DRIFTERS Sun 17 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LEGEND - THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY Sun 17 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Programme comprises works by Wallen, Price, Trailleferne & Demessieux, Mon 11 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

CHINA SHENZHEN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Tamsin Waley-Cohen (violin), Jiapeng Nie (cello) and Daye Lin (conductor).

Programme includes works by Tan Dun, Saint-Saëns, Chausson & Respighi, Mon 11 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AFGHAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA: BREAKING THE SILENCE Programme includes Afghan traditional folk music alongside Indian & western classical, Tues 12 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

ELMORE STRING QUARTET Featuring Xander Croft and Miles Ames (violin), Inis Oírr Asano (viola) and Felix Hughes (cello). Programme includes works by Webern, Ravel & Britten, Wed 13 Mar, Westminster Theatre, Keele University, Staffordshire

CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL Featuring students from Shrewsbury School, Thurs 14 Mar, Maidment Auditorium, Shrewsbury School

LUNCHTIME CONCERT AT ST CHAD'S Featuring Abigail Baylis (soprano), Fri 15 Mar, St Chad's Shrewsbury

ENSEMBLE HESPERI: HANDEL IN THE STRAND Featuring Magdalena Loth-Hill (baroque violin), Mary-Jannet Leith (recorders), Florence Petit (baroque cello) & Thomas Allery (harpsichord). Programme includes works by Handel, Purcell, Telemann & more... Sat 16 Mar, St Alkmunds Church, Shrewsbury

BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: BACH, B MINOR MASS Featuring David Wynne (conductor), Emilia Morton (soprano), Martha McLorinan (mezzo soprano), Jack Granby (tenor), Andrew Tipple (bass) & Kevin Gill (organ), Sat 16 Mar, Lichfield Cathedral

THE MARCHES CHOIR: A STUNNING DVOŘÁK CONCERT Featuring Alistair Auld (musical director), Caroline Clarke (soprano), Stephanie Windsor-Lewis (mezzo), Andrew Morris (tenor) & Nicholas Morris (bass). Programme includes works by Dvořák & Massenet, Sat 16 Mar, St John's Church, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

THE PHOENIX SINGERS: THE GENIUS OF HENRY PURCELL Featuring David Thomas (conductor) & the Noxwode Baroque Ensemble. Programme includes a complete performance of Purcell's Ode for St Cecilia's Day, Sat 16 Mar, St Chad's Church Shrewsbury

Comedy

PHIL ELLIS Wed 13 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT CHORLEY Wed 13 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

DOM JOLY Wed 13 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, LAURA LEXX & DANA ALEXANDER Thurs 14 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LUISA OMIELAN Thurs 14 Mar, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

DANIEL FOXF Fri 15 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SOPHIE MCCARTNEY Fri 15 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

RUSSELL KANE Fri 15 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

THE SCUMMY MUMMIES Fri 15 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

JASON PATTERSON, LAURA LEXX, ALEX KEALY & DANA ALEXANDER Fri 15 - Sat 16 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL RILEY Sat 16 Mar, Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

DAMION LARKIN & COMICS TBC Sat 16 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

LLOYD GRIFFITH Sat 16 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



LLOYD GRIFFITH Sun 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE WELLS Sun 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

MOVE OVER MRS MARKHAM The Stafford Players present an amateur version of John Chapman & Ray Cooney's farce, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS The Highbury Players present an amateur version of Dennis Potter's wartime classic, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Mar, Highbury Hall, Sutton Coldfield

THE METAMORPHOSIS New adaptation of Franz Kafka's classic story about a man whose society causes him to

feel so isolated and worthless that he transforms into a giant insect, Wed 13 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

YOU'RE BARD! Four actors present four Shakespeare shows 'as never seen before'... Wed 13 Mar, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THE WINTER'S TALE Shrewsbury Youth Theatre present Shakespeare's tale of jealousy, loyalty and misplaced accusations, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Thurs 14 Mar, Tittensor Village Hall, Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent

WANTED Gazebo Theatre present a powerful drama exploring the stories of five extraordinary women, Thurs 14 - Fri 15 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

INDIGO GIANT A haunting new drama inspired by Dinabandhu Mitra's trail-blazing Indigo Mirror - a play that shook colonial India, Thurs 14 - Sat 16 Mar, The Rep, Birmingham

MADAGASCAR THE MUSICAL Karim Zeroual (CBBC & Strictly Come Dancing) stars as King Julien in a stage show based on the Dreamworks adventure film for younger audiences, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Fri 15 Mar, Armitage with Handsacre Village Hall, Rugeley, Staffordshire

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Sat 16 Mar, Abbots Bromley Village Hall, Burton-upon-Trent

JARMAN Solo play in which Mark Farrelly (Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope & Howard's End) tells the story of filmmaker, painter, activist & writer Derek Jarman, Sat 16 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Sun 17 Mar, Barton-under-Needwood Village Hall, Burton-upon-Trent

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL JR Amateur production performed by students from Pauline Quirke Academy in Shrewsbury, Sun 17 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MAY CONTAIN FOOD, MAY CONTAIN YOU Award-winning theatre company Protein host 'an evening of entertainment with a difference', with song, dance, mime, food and a raffle all on the menu, Sun 17 Mar, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

Kids Theatre

CHARLIE COOK'S FAVOURITE BOOK New musical adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's story celebrating the joys of reading, Tues 12 - Thurs 14 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

SHREK THE MUSICAL JR. Amateur version, Tues 12 - Sat 16 Mar, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

PLAYTIME Relaxed, participatory session with Last Baguette Theatre Company, created for children ages 2 - 6 and their grown-ups, Thurs 14 Mar, Central Library, West Bromwich

CLAYTIME The award-winning Indefinite Articles present a play with clay for very young children, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Mar, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Dance

GIOVANNI: LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU The Strictly favourite is joined by a cast of professional dancers and West End performers for a show of 'non-stop action', Tues 12 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



BREWHOUSE DANCE PLATFORM Showcasing and celebrating the talent of dancers from across East Staffordshire, Wed 13 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

SAO PAULO DANCE COMPANY The Brazilian dance company fuse classical ballet and Latin American dance in a programme of three works, Fri 15 - Sat 16 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Light Entertainment

VAMPIRES ROCK Steve Steinman's 'musical sensation', fusing narrative, comedy, horror and rock anthems, Mon 11 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

QUEENZ - THE SHOW WITH BALLS Dazzling divas deliver 'a night of fun and fabulousness' with live vocals and a setlist of party pop anthems, Tues 12 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

SASHA VELOUR THE BIG REVEAL LIVE SHOW An immersive evening of drag,

storytelling and live art. A special guest star and post-show book signings also feature, Tues 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ROB BRYDON: A NIGHT OF SONGS & LAUGHTER Join Rob as he shares his personal musical journey - from South Wales to Hollywood and back, Wed 13 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



LA VOIX: THE RED AMBITION TOUR 'Britain's funniest redhead' swings into town with her most ambitious show to date, Thurs 14 Mar, Old Rep, Birmingham

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic celebration of the most iconic moments in music & comedy from the 1950s, 60s, 70s & 80s, Thurs 14 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FORBIDDEN NIGHTS Celebrating nine years of muscles, mayhem and over 11,000 shirt rips! Thurs 14 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

WOS DOES POP Walsall Operatic Society present an evening of pop favourites spanning six decades, Thurs 14 - Sat 16 Mar, The Hub @ St Marys, Lichfield

DANIEL MARTINEZ FLAMENCO COMPANY: ANDALUCIA Classical music meets the passion and fire of flamenco in a regional representation of the eight regions of Andalusia, Fri 15 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

IMPROV WOLVES Featuring completely new comedy sketches created on the spot, based entirely on audience suggestions. Every show is different! Fri 15 Mar, Central Library, West Bromwich

DR JOHN COOPER CLARKE An evening with the 'original people's poet', Fri 15 Mar, The Wulfrun, The Halls, Wolverhampton



FANTASIA Dance showcase featuring students from Shrewsbury's Footlights Dance School, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TOSCANA STRINGS: MONKEY PUZZLE AND FERDINAND THE BULL Featuring 'mesmerising music, enchanting

dance and audience participation', Sun 17 Mar, The Hub at St Marys, Lichfield

Talks & Spoken Word

THE SERIAL KILLER NEXT DOOR

Psychological therapist and crime commentator Emma Kenny discusses what creates a serial killer, Tues 12 Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

STEVEN BARTLETT PRESENTS: THE BUSINESS & LIFE SPEAKING TOUR

Learn how to cultivate the mindset and strategy required to overcome challenges, stay focused, and turn your dreams into reality, Thurs 14 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



HIT THE ODE X UNISLAM SPECIAL

Performance poetry evening featuring Safia Elhillo, Yomi Sode & Bridget Hart. Bohdan Piasecki hosts, Fri 15 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

REMEMBERING YORK LESBIAN ARTS FESTIVAL

Authors Manda Scott and Jane Traies are joined by former festival director Helen Sandler for an evening celebrating lesbian stories and histories, Fri 15 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

PAUL MCKENNA: SUCCESS FOR LIFE

Brand-new show in which the behavioural scientist uses the latest psychological techniques to help you move beyond your limitations, Sat 16 Mar, The Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

UNISLAM 2024 Poetry festival based around the UK & Ireland National Inter-University Poetry Slam, Sun 17 Mar, The Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

Events

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL 2024 Featuring 28 races across four days, Tues 12 - Fri 15 Mar, Cheltenham Racecourse



YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024 Bringing together the best badminton players from around the world, Tues 12 - Sun 17 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

VICTORIAN PRINTERS EXPERIENCE DAY

Learn the art of printmaking and discover the intricacies of a traditional letterpress as you design and typeset your very own poster, Wed 13 Mar, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

THE DISTRIBUTED ENERGY SHOW Free-to-attend exhibition & conference that brings together the entire supply chain on diversified and distributed energy resources, Wed 13 - Thurs 14 Mar, Telford International Centre

VICTORIAN BLACKSMITH EXPERIENCE DAY

Pull on some gloves, pick up a hammer and feel the heat of the furnace! Thurs 14 - Fri 15 Mar, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

FASHION & EMBROIDERY Including exclusive never-before-seen features and contributions from industry experts, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW The UK's biggest mixed craft show, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

SEWING FOR PLEASURE Meet sewing personalities as seen on TV, chat to your favourite social-media sewing stars and marvel at catwalk displays, Thurs 14 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

FUSING FRIDAY - SPRING SCENE Make your own spring scene in the glass-fusing studio, Fri 15 Mar, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

RED BY NIGHT Enjoy an evening of live entertainment, industrial demonstrations, steam action and living history, Fri 15 - Sat 16 Mar, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

ARNOLD SPORTS FESTIVAL UK 2024 Bodybuilding expo boasting a record-breaking prize, Fri 15 - Sun 17 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

DYSLEXIA SHOW The UK's leading exhibition dedicated to dyslexia and neurodiversity, Fri 15 - Sat 16 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

LITTLE BO PEEP Meet Little Bo Peep and baby animals, Sat 16 Mar, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

AI FUTURES: BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

Join researchers from the University of Birmingham's Centre for Human Brain Health (CHBH) to celebrate Brain Awareness Week 2024, Sat 16 Mar, The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

MIDLANDS GRAND NATIONAL Runners and riders compete for some of the most sought-after titles in the region, Sat 16 Mar, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

MAGNIFICENT 7 RIDE AGAIN An evening

of top championship boxing fights, Sat 16 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

BUDO COMBAT LEAGUE A day of lightweight combat bouts, Sat 16 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MURDER OF JULIUS CASTERBROOK: A VICTORIAN MURDER MYSTERY A

Victorian-inspired murder-mystery night, Sat 16 Mar, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

BONGO'S BINGO A St Patrick's version of the original bingo rave sensation, Sat 16 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GIN TRAINS Sample a variety of gins whilst enjoying a scenic train journey, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

SPRING GIFT FAYRE Featuring a whole host of suppliers selling local and hand-made goods at the Engine House, Sat 16 - Sun 17 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THE PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO SHOW

Check out and buy the latest cameras and accessories, learn new skills and techniques, and be inspired by top creators, Sat 16 - Tues 19 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

EASTER EGG HUNT Make your way along the trail and find spring-inspired activities for the whole family to enjoy, Sat 16 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

PLAY UNSTOPPABLE Design your own spirit animal, add your creation to the Lego Flower Cart and share your best moves at the Play Unstoppable Dance Party, Sat 16 Mar - Mon 6 May, Legoland Discovery Centre B'ham

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTORS FAIR

Featuring traders from across the UK selling a wide range of items from yesteryear, Sun 17 Mar, Himley Hall, Dudley

AGBO RALLY Eighty rally cars from all vintages and eras take on the stages around Weston - including the iconic watersplash! Sun 17 Mar, Weston Park, Shropshire



THE COVENTRY MUSIC MUSEUM

OPENING TIMES

THURSDAY - SATURDAY - 10.00am to 4.00pm
last entry at 3.30pm.

SUNDAYS - 10.00am to 3.00pm
last entry 2.30pm.

ADMISSION

£5.00 - ADULT
£3.00 - CONCESSION
(STUDENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS)
£3.00 - PEOPLE OF DETERMINATION
FREE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 15*

*CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

80 WALSGRAVE ROAD COVENTRY CV2 4ED

Gigs

THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Mon 18 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

JUDAS PRIEST + SAXON + URIAH HEEP Tues 19 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE MARY WALLOPERS Wed 20 Mar, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

TOMMY BLAIZE Wed 20 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

MILES SPILBURY Wed 20 Mar, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

BASKERY Wed 20 Mar, Albert & Co Frankville, Shrewsbury

BROWN HORSE Thurs 21 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LUKAS GRAHAM Thurs 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SEVEN WONDERS - FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE Thurs 21 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

LUTHER STARRING HARRY CAMBRIDGE Thurs 21 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

BIG COUNTRY + THE ICICLE WORKS Thurs 21 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ANDREW CUSHIN Thurs 21 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

A CELEBRATION OF CELINE DION Thurs 21 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Thurs 21 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

ALICEISSLEEPING Thurs 21 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

TRISH CLOWES & ROSS STANLEY Thurs 21 Mar, The Gateway Education & Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

GHETTS Fri 22 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SMILE Fri 22 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

FROM THE JAM Fri 22 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

MR BIG + JARED JAMES NICHOLS Fri 22 Mar,

KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

MORETALLICA Fri 22 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Fri 22 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

JOHN KIRKPATRICK Fri 22 Mar, The Albion, Burton on Trent

ROB LAMBERTI - CELEBRATING GEORGE MICHAEL Fri 22 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE MAGIC OF THE BEE GEES Fri 22 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

JOHNNY 2 BAD Fri 22 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE RONALDOS Fri 22 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE WAVE PICTURES Fri 22 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HAIG Fri 22 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE BARTELLS Fri 22 - Sat 23 Mar, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SI CRANSTOUN Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BLEACHERS Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

BROKEN DRUMSTICK + ROOM 11 + THE VIOLETS + SHUTUSUP! + THE ESSENTIALS Sat 23 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE STAIRS Sat 23 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

DODGY + CHRIS HELME Sat 23 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MADISON BEER + JANN Sat 23 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GIpsy KINGS Sat 23 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SIMPLE MINDS + DEL AMITRI Sat 23 Mar, Utilita Arena B'ham

SMALL CHANGES + MR APOLLO Sat 23 Mar, Thimblemill Library, Bearwood, Smethwick

THE FATHER TEDS Sat 23 Mar, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

TAYLORMANIA Sat 23

Mar, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

UK BJORN Sat 23 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

JAZ COLEMAN Sat 23 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM Sat 23 Mar, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

TWIN ATLANTIC Sat 23 Mar, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

FLINT FIRE - THE PRODIGY TRIBUTE Sat 23 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? TINA TURNER TRIBUTE Sat 23 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

KOALA Sat 23 Mar, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

A VISION OF ELVIS Sat 23 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE REAL THING Sat 23 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DIRTY DC Sat 23 Mar, The Station, Cannock

SHOW OF HANDS Sat 23 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall

TOM BALL Sat 23 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE CLASSIC BLUES SHOW Sat 23 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

HAIG + THE FIENDS Sat 23 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

MR BLACK Sat 23 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

SURF'S UP - BEACH BOYS TRIBUTE Sat 23 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

IN YOUR FACE + WAILING BANSHEE Sat 23 Mar, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

TIPITINA Sat 23 Mar, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

HENRY MOODIE Sun 24 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RICHARD SHINDELL Sun 24 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

VILLIERS QUARTET Featuring Katie Stillman and Tamaki Higashi (violins), Carmen Flores (viola) & Leo Melvin (cello). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Glass, Puccini & E Alberga, Wed 20 Mar, St. Nicholas Church, Codsall

JOURNEY TO WHERE Featuring Trish Clowes (Saxophone) & Ross Stanley (piano), Thurs 21 Mar, Gateway Education & Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

CSO CHORUS: FAURÉ REQUIEM Featuring Rosanne Philippens (violin), Benjamin Appl (baritone) & Alexandre Bloch (conductor). Programme also includes works by Saint-Saëns & Ravel, Thurs 21 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CSO: BAROQUE TO BROADWAY Featuring Danielle de Niese (soprano) Niall O'Sullivan (trumpet) & Michael Seal (conductor), Fri 22 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

HALLÉ: FINNISH SKIES Featuring Kristiina Poska (conductor) & Jess Gillam (soloist). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Harle & Sibelius, Fri 22 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

LUNCHTIME CONCERT AT ST CHAD'S Featuring the students of Chetham's School of Music, Fri 22 Mar, St Chad's Shrewsbury

WOMBOURNE & DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY Conducted by Edward Caine. Programme comprises Bach's Mass in B Minor, Sat 23 Mar, St John's Church, Wolverhampton

SHREWSBURY CHORAL SPRING CONCERT Featuring Yuxuan Zhao (piano). Programme includes works by Cherubini & Tchaikovsky, Sat 23 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

BCMG: CHERRY BLOSSOM CONCERT Featuring Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. Programme includes music by Japanese composers whose work is inspired by nature, Sun 24 Mar, Oozells Square, Birmingham

MADELEINE PICKERING IN CONCERT Also featuring Julian Chan (piano), Programme includes works by Schumann, Poulenc, Sibelius & Britten, Sun 24 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire



Comedy

MILES JUPP Mon 18 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme



JESSICA FOSTEKEW Tues 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

VITTORIO ANGELONE Tues 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL FOOT Wed 20 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ED GAMBLE Wed 20 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, NATHAN CATON & ADAM BLOOM Thurs 21 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDY PARSONS Thurs 21 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



ROB AUTON Fri 22 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KATE LUCAS, ANDY ROBINSON, NATHAN CATON, ADAM BLOOM & MARK BITTLESTONE Fri 22 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GEOFF NORCOTT Fri 22 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



JO ENRIGHT, JON PEARSON, HASAN AL-HABIB & WAYNE BEESE Fri 22 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SIMON EVANS Fri 22 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

KATE LUCAS, ANDY ROBINSON, NATHAN CATON & ADAM BLOOM Sat 23 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SEANN WALSH, PETER RETHINASAMY, LOUISE YOUNG & WAYNE BEESE Sat 23 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

GEOFF NORCOTT Sat 23 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

IAIN STIRLING Sat 23 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

AURIE STYLA Sun 24 Mar, The Glee

Club, Birmingham

IAIN STIRLING Sun 24 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Theatre

PETER PAN GOES WRONG Mischief Theatre's spin on a timeless classic follows the not-entirely-competent Cornley Drama Society as they do their best to mount a production of JM Barrie's classic story, Mon 18 - Sat 23 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Tues 19 Mar, New Oscott Village, Sutton Coldfield

NEL'S PLACE A new musical from Sheep Soup which examines what material things really mean to us, and how easily we can become buried by the past, Tues 19 - Wed 20 Mar; Birmingham Hippodrome

THE TIME MACHINE - A COMEDY Acclaimed show (very) loosely adapted from HG Wells' novel, Tues 19 - Sat 23 Mar, Lichfield Garrick



FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Wed 20 Mar, Marchington Woodlands Village Hall, Uttoxeter

AWOL Rob Gee comedy concerning two old men who escape from a care home and go to a metal festival, Wed 20 Mar, The Hub at St Marys, Lichfield

MAY CONTAIN FOOD, MAY CONTAIN YOU Award-winning theatre company Protein host 'an evening of entertainment with a difference', with song, dance, mime, food and a raffle all on the menu, Wed 20 Mar, Stoke St Milborough Village Hall, Ludlow, South Shropshire

LIFE WITH OSCAR One-man show in which actor/filmmaker Nick Cohen assumes numerous characters while re-living his desperate Hollywood years in a tragicomic true-life Sunset Boulevard, Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE BAR BY THE EDGE OF TIME Frozen Light present a multi-sensory spectacular for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities, Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

LEARNING TO FLY One-man show in

which James Rowland blends theatre, comedy and music to tell the story of his remarkable friendship with a scary old lady who lived on his street, Thurs 21 Mar, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Thurs 21 Mar, Alstonefield Village Hall, Ashbourne, Derbyshire

SANKOFA A semi-autobiographical show about legacy, heritage and what it means to be a part of the African diaspora, Fri 22 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

DESERT ISLAND FLICKS Two leading ladies re-imagine, remake and spoof 90 of the most memorable movie moments of all time in just 90 minutes, Fri 22 Mar, Clungunford Village Hall, Craven Arms, South Shropshire



FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Fri 22 Mar, Burntwood Memorial Hall, Rugeley, Staffordshire

LEARNING TO FLY One-man show in which James Rowland blends theatre, comedy and music to tell the story of his remarkable friendship with the scary old lady who lived on his street, Fri 22 Mar, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THREE MEN IN A BOAT Jerome K Jerome's comic masterpiece, telling a tale of men behaving badly whilst messing about in boats, Fri 22 Mar, Harley Village Hall, Nr Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND Presented by Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre, Fri 22 - Sat 23 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE CHILDREN BY LUCY KIRKWOOD A thought-provoking drama exploring the complexities of relationships, responsibilities and the impact of our choices... Fri 22 - Sat 23 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolves

MINORITY REPORT Staging of Phillip K Dick's sci-fi thriller, which challenges our beliefs about justice and free will in a real-time chase through a London of the future, Fri 22 Mar - Sat 6 Apr, The Rep, Birmingham

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Sat 23 Mar, Denstone Village Hall, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire



Jurassic Earth - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THREE MEN IN A BOAT Jerome K Jerome's comic masterpiece, telling a tale of men behaving badly whilst messing about in boats, Sat 23 Mar, Chapel Lawn Village Hall, Bucknell, South Shropshire

LEARNING TO FLY One-man show in which James Rowland blends theatre, comedy and music to tell the story of his remarkable friendship with the scary old lady who lived on his street, Sat 23 Mar, The Market Theatre, Ledbury, South Herefordshire

FARM BOY New version of Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, combining drama, storytelling and original music, Sun 24 Mar, Weston Village Hall, Stafford

DESERT ISLAND FLICKS Two leading ladies re-imagine, remake and spoof 90 of the most memorable movie moments of all time in just 90 minutes, Sun 24 Mar, Habberley Village Hall, Pontesbury, Shropshire

THREE MEN IN A BOAT Jerome K Jerome's comic masterpiece, telling a tale of men behaving badly whilst messing about in boats, Sun 24 Mar, Bitterley Village Hall, Ludlow, South Shropshire

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Colin Baker (Doctor Who) and Terry Molloy (The Archers) join forces to play the world's greatest detective and his faithful associate in a new production of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's classic thriller, Sun 24 Mar, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

Kids Theatre

PEPPA PIG'S FUN DAY OUT Songs, dance and muddy puddles aplenty as Peppa and her family and friends go on an adventure to the zoo... Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

DOGS DON'T DO BALLET Little Angel Theatre fuse puppetry, storytelling, dance and comedy in a warm-hearted tale for younger audiences, Sat 23 - Mon 25 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

JURASSIC EARTH Meet the bravest of rangers as they introduce their herd of dinosaurs - including the world's largest walking T Rex! Sun 24 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ALICE IN WONDERLAND Immersion Theatre's family musical, based on Lewis Carroll's classic story, Sun 24 Mar, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

TORTOISE & THE HARE Northern Ballet present 'the perfect introduction to ballet for younger audiences', Sun 24 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

JURASSIC LIVE Award-winning and interactive family show in which the audience gets to see life-sized monstrous beasts close up! Sun 24 - Tues 26 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Dance

DIVERSITY: SUPERNOVA New production from the Britain's Got Talent winners. Expect spectacular routines in popping, breakdance and acrobatics, Wed 20 - Thurs 21 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SAMAAGAMA 2024 Embark on a cultural odyssey with Chitraleka Dance Company's student showcase, Sun 24 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

Light Entertainment

AN EVENING WITH THE FAST SHOW Featuring original cast members Simon Day, Charlie Higson, John Thomson, Paul Whitehouse, Mark Williams and Arabella Weir, Mon 18 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE CIRCUS OF HORRORS: DR HAZES CABARET OF CURIOSITIES Featuring sword swallowers, hairculean aerialists hanging from their hair whilst suspended above the auditorium, whirlwind jugglers, twisted contortionists, voodoo



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acrobats, pickled people, hula-hooping sideshow showgirls and lots more... Tues 19 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



PROFESSOR BRIAN COX: HORIZONS The Guinness World Record holder presents 'a celebration of our civilisation, our music, art, philosophy and science', Wed 20 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

ROBERT TEMPLE: RED RAW HYPNOTIST Brand-new show in which volunteers from the audience create improvised comedy under the influence of hypnosis - live on stage, Thurs 21 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent



STUART MICHAEL: THE PSYCHIC MEDIUM Direct from the West End, Thurs 21 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

JOIN THE DOTS The all-singing, all-dancing Polka Dots present an evening of close harmonies and wit, Fri 22 Mar, Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton, South Shropshire

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE An evening of 'sparkling entertainment fusing stylish cabaret, comedy, music, circus and burlesque', Fri 22 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JOIN THE DOTS The all-singing, all-dancing Polka Dots present an evening of close harmonies and wit, Sat 23 Mar, Cawley Hall, Eye, North Herefordshire

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE An evening of 'sparkling entertainment fusing stylish cabaret, comedy, music, circus and burlesque', Sat 23 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

Talks & Spoken Word

BEN FOGLE: WILD Brand-new show in which the adventurer shares true stories of his encounters with people and animals, Mon 18 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TOP HAT SPOKEN WORD OPEN MIC Hosted by Joss Musgrove Knibb, Tues 19 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER Scottish detective David Swindle offers a unique insight into the minds of some of history's most notorious murderers, Tues 19 Mar, Theatre, Severn, Shrewsbury

THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL - THE INSIDE STORY Journalist & broadcaster Nick Wallis reveals even more shocking details and stories about the scandal that has gripped the nation, Sun 24 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Events

VICTORIAN BLACKSMITH EXPERIENCE DAY Pull on some gloves, pick up a hammer and feel the heat of the furnace! Tues 19 - Wed 20 Mar, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

NATIONAL HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING SHOW Hear from inspiring speakers live on stage, get tailored advice for your project, and see, touch and compare all the latest products, Thurs 21 - Sun 24 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

AI FUTURES: AI AND THE FUTURE OF POLICING Hear from University of Birmingham academics about the latest AI advancements in the criminal justice system, Thurs 21 Mar, The Exchange, Centenary Square Birmingham

CHAT AND PAINT: SPRING SCENE Fun and friendly adult chat & paint session, Fri 22 Mar, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

PRACTICAL CLASSICS CLASSIC CAR & RESTORATION SHOW Explore automotive history, from rustic gems to pristine classics, Fri 22 - Sun 24 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

PIRATE TREASURE HUNT Join Captain Careless on a swashbuckling adventure, Fri 22 Mar - Sun 21 Apr, National SEA LIFE Centre, B'ham

WORLD WATER DAY ACTIVITIES Get hands-on exploring water, both as a habitat and a source of power, Sat 23 Mar, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

THE SPICE TRAIN Indulge in an evening of curry with friends while travelling on the Severn Valley Railway, Sat 23 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

ULTRA WHITE COLLAR BOXING Charity fundraising evening of boxing bouts featuring boxers who have trained hard for an eight-week period, Sat 23 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY DAY Find out about recent archaeological excavations in the Staffordshire area, Sat 23 Mar, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

THE NATIONAL OUTDOOR EXPO Be inspired by some of the world's greatest outdoor enthusiasts, take part in a range of performance workshops, and get your adrenaline



Space, Race And Fly! - Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

going via one of the many interactive features, Sat 23 - Sun 24 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

EASTER EGG HUNT Make your way along the trail and find nature-inspired activities for the whole family to enjoy, Sat 23 Mar - Tues 2 Apr, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

EGGSTRONAUTS Design a special spacecraft to protect the egghead crew from a messy end, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Enigenuity, Ironbridge

SPACE, RACE AND FLY! A STEM-based event featuring activities, shows and more... Sat 23 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

DINO EGG HATCHERY Help find dino eggs around the farm - then watch them hatch! Sat 23 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Lower Drayton Farm, Staffordshire

EASTER WONDERLAND Featuring 'the Great Alice In Wonderland Egg Hunt' and egg-hunt trails around the farm, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, Shropshire

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA Take the tractor & trailer ride up to the Woodland Trail and meet the Easter Bunny, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, National Forest Adventure Farm,

Burton-upon-Trent

EASTER EXTRAVAGANZA Take a walk through the magical woodland and see the park dressed with all things Easter, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 7 Apr, Wonderland Midlands, Telford

HOPPING MAD Create your own unique bunny out of air dry clay, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 14 Apr, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

AN EGGSTRAORDINARY EASTER Join the residents at Blists Hill Victorian Town for egg hunts, a poster trail and Victorian egg dancing, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 14 Apr, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

EASTER ADVENTURE QUEST Hunt for clues in the castle grounds, track down the Easter eggs and get rewarded with a tasty chocolate treat, Sat 23 Mar - Sun 14 Apr, Stokesay Castle, Shropshire

WEDDING FAIR Featuring up to 30 exhibitors for bridalwear, photographers, florists and more... Sun 24 Mar, Himley Hall, Dudley

GLASSING FUSING - SPRING SCENE Make your own spring scene in the glass-fusing studio, Sun 24 Mar, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge



Easter days out at Severn Valley Railway - Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster



Slash featuring Myles Kennedy And The Conspirators - Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

Gigs

CHRIS SHIFLETT Mon 25 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

MICHAEL BALL Mon 25 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

RACHEAL SAGE Mon 25 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

MR BEN & THE BENS Tues 26 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DUBLIN LEGENDS Tues 26 Mar, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

CARA DILLON Wed 27 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

REBECCA CAINE Wed 27 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE OVERTONES Wed 27 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PENDULUM + SCARLXRD + SHOCKONE Thurs 28 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

KERRANG'D! + NIRVARDY Thurs 28 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 28 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE SCRIBES Fri 29 Mar, The Night Owl, B'ham

SHOWHAWK DUO Fri 29 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SAY SHE SHE Fri 29 Mar, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

COLDPLACE Fri 29 Mar, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

U2 EXPERIENCE Fri 29 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

NICK PARKER Fri 29 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

YOURYTHMICS Fri 29 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ABSOLUTE ABBA Fri 29 Mar, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

THE CORAL Fri 29 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

ULTIMATE BLINK 182 Fri 29 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

UNTAMED SHREWS Fri 29 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CAPTAIN STINGRAY'S GROOVE MACHINE Fri 29 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

SHOW OF HANDS Fri 29 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SAM & THE HOT RODS Fri 29 Mar, SpArC, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

PROTOJE Sat 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GRIFF Sat 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HAPPY MONDAYS + INSPIRAL CARPETS + STEREO MCS Sat 30 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE STEVIE WONDER CELEBRATION Sat 30 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

SLASH FEATURING MYLES KENNEDY AND THE CONSPIRATORS Sat 30 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

SIGNING OFF UB40 Sat 30 Mar, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

GUITAR HEROES Sat 30 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

SASS BROWN AND THE RIVER DEEP BAND Sat 30 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

BLIND CHANNEL + GHØSTKID + ROCK BAND FROM HELL Sat 30 Mar, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE HIVES Sat 30 Mar, The Civic at The Halls

Wolverhampton

JUST RADIOHEAD Sat 30 Mar, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

EXTREME QUEEN - QUEEN TRIBUTE Sat 30 Mar, Octagon, Stoke-on-Trent

JOLIE HOLLAND Sat 30 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

INTO THE SHADOWS Sat 30 Mar, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THE DEVOUT - DEPECHE MODE TRIBUTE Sat 30 Mar, The Station, Cannock

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN' Sat 30 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

MICROBABY Sat 30 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE BEAUTIFUL WAYS Sat 30 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

MARTI PELLOW + CASEY MCQUILLEN Sun 31 Mar, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

DIRTY DC Sun 31 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

I'AM GALLAGHER Sun 31 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THUNDERCAT Sun 31 Mar, The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton

THE MUSIC OF THE TEMPTATIONS Sun 31 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SOUTHERN COMPANION - CHRIS STAPLETON TRIBUTE Sun 31 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SONIC BOOM BAND Sun 31 Mar, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

DISCOTECH Sun 31 Mar, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT Also featuring the Lichfield Cathedral Choir. Programme includes works by Handel, Byrd, Mozart, Elgar, Trotter & Lamb, Mon 25 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL CHOIR: BACH, ST JOHN PASSION Featuring Geraint Bowen (director), David de Winter (evangelist and tenor), William Gaunt (Christus), Zoë Brookshaw (soprano), Matthew Farrell (alto), James Geidt (bass) & Marches Baroque, Tues 26 Mar, Hereford Cathedral

CBSO 23/24: RHAPSODY IN BLUE Featuring Iann Volkov (conductor) and Stewart Goodyear (piano). Programme includes works by Ives, Zappa, Lewis & Gershwin, Wed 27 Mar, Symphony Hall Birmingham

EX CATHEDRA: GOOD FRIDAY ST JOHN PASSION 300TH ANNIVERSARY Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor) James Robinson (Evangelist), Themba Mvula (Jesus), Lawrence White (Pilate and Bass), Margaret Lingas and Katie Trethewey (soprano), Mercè Bruguera Abelló & Gabriella Liandu (alto), Bradley Smith (tenor) & Thomas Lowen (bass), Fri 29 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

KARL JENKINS 80TH BIRTHDAY CONCERT Featuring Sir Karl Jenkins (conductor), the London Concert Orchestra & the Canzonella Choir. Programme comprises selected works by Jenkins, Sat 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

NIGEL PURSEY ORGAN RECITAL Sat 30 Mar, Shrewsbury Abbey

Comedy

JAMIE HUTCHINSON Sun 24 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ROSIE JONES Sun 24 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ADAM KAY Mon 25 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

DOM JOLY Tues 26 Mar, Lichfield Garrick



COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, PAUL TONKINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 28 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

REGINALD D HUNTER Thurs 28 Mar, Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

MIKE COX, ANDREW MENSAH, JIN HAO LI & PAUL MOORE Fri 29 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TATTY MACLEOD Fri 29 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FRANKIE BOYLE Fri 29 Mar, The Alexandra, Birmingham

RUSSELL KANE Fri 29 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall



MIKE COX, ANDREW MENSAH, PAUL TONKINSON & COMIC TBC Sat 30 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LEIGH FRANCIS Sun 31 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ROUGH WORKS: NEW MATERIAL NIGHT Sun 31 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JUSTIN MOORHOUSE Sun 31 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

THE MOUSETRAP 70TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Todd Carty (EastEnders) and Gwyneth Strong (Only Fools And Horses) star in a touring production of 'the world's longest-running play', Mon 25 - Sat 30 Mar, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL JR Amateur production presented by Coppice Performing Arts School in partnership with Flexus Dance Collective, Tues 26 - Wed 27 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

MAYBE DICK Comic retelling of Moby Dick, Herman Melville's classic tale of revenge and retribution, Wed 27 - Thurs 28 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

OLIVER! Tamworth Musical Theatre Company present an amateur version of Dickens' classic tale, Wed 27 - Sat 30 Mar, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE Lying Lips Theatre Company presents John Ford's story of incestuous love. Note that this performance contains partial nudity, smoking

herbal or e-cigarettes, stroboscopic lighting effects, violent scenes, adult themes, drug abuse and scenes of a sexual nature, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

TOP SECRET: THE MAGIC OF SCIENCE 'A show to inspire and educate every budding magician and scientist', Mon 25 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre



EXCITING SCIENCE Fun and educational show for audiences aged four-plus, Tues 26 Mar, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ALONG CAME A MAGPIE A playful and heart-warming story which uses puppetry to navigate the intricacies of friendship. Suitable for two- to six-year-olds, Wed 27 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE ULTIMATE BUBBLE SHOW Featuring exciting stunts, amazing magic and spectacular bubble displays, Wed 27 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ALICE IN WONDERLAND Immersion Theatre's family musical, based on Lewis Carroll's classic story, Wed 27 - Thurs 28 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CLAYTIME The award-winning Indefinite Articles present a play with clay for very young children, Thurs 28 - Fri 29 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AWFUL AUNTIE LIVE ON STAGE! Birmingham Stage Company present David Williams' much-loved adventure featuring a small ghost, a huge owl and a very awful auntie, Thurs 28 - Sun 31 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DEAR ZOO Interactive children's theatre based on Rod Campbell's much-loved lift-the-flap book, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Dance

BRB: TCHAIKOVSKY CLASSICS Featuring Birmingham Royal Ballet & Royal Ballet Sinfonia performing highlights from The Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake and The Nutcracker, Thurs 28 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KILL THE LIGHTS Student showcase from the Angela Beardmore School of Dance, Thurs 28 - Sat 30 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Light Entertainment

I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE Join host Jack Dee and a star-studded cast of comedians for an evening of inspired nonsense. Colin Sell provides piano accompaniment, Tues 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BUFFY REVAMPED The entire 144 episodes of the hit 1990s TV show as seen through the eyes of superfan Spike - a man who knows the show inside-out... Tues 26 Mar, The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

GRAFFITI CLASSICS - THE COMEDY STRING QUARTET An all-singing, all-dancing musical comedy show, Thurs 28 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE MANCHESTER UNITED LEGENDS Evening of entertainment and banter, hosted by Brian McClair and Andrew Cole, Thurs 28 Mar, Wulfrun Hall, The Halls, Wolverhampton

SHELL SUIT CHER: BELIEVE IN BINGO Laugh, dance and singalong as Tracey Collins (aka Tina Turner Tea Lady) brings her brand-new weird and wonderful character to the stage, Fri 29 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

ANDY & THE ODD SOCKS Featuring a host of popular songs from their much-loved CBBC TV series, Sat 30 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS Join Jake and Elwood - and the award-winning CBB Band - for a 'hand-clapping, foot-stomping musical spectacular', Sat 30 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Talks & Spoken Word

SIR GEOFF HURST: THE FAREWELL TOUR Join the football legend as he chats about his career, modern-day football and that 1966 hat-trick, Wed 27 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

HANS REY: MISHAPS & MAYHEM Untold stories and legendary tales from the mountain-bike pioneer, adventurer & former trials champion, Sat 30 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Awful Auntie - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Events

AI FUTURES: CODE MASTERS' EASTER HUNT Pick up a self-guided trail and crack the code - get it right and you'll be led to a safety deposit box featuring a tasty surprise, Mon 25 - Thurs 28 Mar, The Exchange, Centenary Square, Birmingham

EASTER HOLIDAYS ACTIVITY - FEATHERED ADVENTURES A series of fun bird-based family activities to enjoy over the Easter break, Mon 25 - Fri 29 Mar, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shrops

PREPARING FOR EASTER Pop in and get crafty - exploring how Christian countries prepare for Easter, Wed 27 Mar, Lichfield Cathedral

CORNER EXOTICS: REPTILE ROADSHOW Meet over 30 exotic animals and learn about the environments that they come from, Wed 27 Mar, Wem Town Hall, Shropshire

MEET THE EASTER BUNNIES Join Benji and Honey Bunny as they search for some Easter eggs, Wed 27 Mar, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

BRUM HIGHLIGHTS PADDLE TOUR See Birmingham from a different perspective, Wed 27 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, Roundhouse, Birmingham

WORKERS OF THE ROUNDHOUSE TOURS Pop in for a free drop-in tour and get to know the curious survivor on the canal, Wed 27 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, Roundhouse, Birmingham

COUNTRYTASTIC Fun-filled day of indoor and outdoor activities where kids can learn all about farming and the countryside, Thurs 28 Mar, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

INSOMNIA THE GAMING FESTIVAL Immerse yourself in a world of non-stop gaming, with everything from the latest video games to retro classics, Thurs 28 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, NEC, Birmingham

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY Immerse

yourself in the world of Lewis Carroll as you join beloved characters for a thrilling tea party, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

MADE ON THE BORDERS: HOMEMADE EASTER FESTIVAL Event supporting local crafters and makers, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY Immerse yourself in the world of Lewis Carroll as you join beloved characters for a thrilling tea party, Fri 29 - Sat 30 Mar, Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

MONSTER JAM RAMPED UP Featuring high-flying stunts and an all-star line-up of monster trucks, Fri 29 - Sun 31 Mar, Utilita Arena Birmingham

BUSTLING BIRMINGHAM KAYAK TOUR See Birmingham from a different perspective, Fri 29 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, The Roundhouse, Birmingham

EXPLORE HIDDEN BIRMINGHAM KAYAK TOUR Discover Birmingham's canals, exploring areas accessible only by water, Fri 29 Mar - Mon 1 Apr, The Roundhouse, Birmingham

ALICE IN EASTER WONDERLAND Explore the mysterious tunnels and caverns with Alice and her Wonderland pals, Fri 29 Mar - Tues 2 Apr, Dudley Canal & Caverns

MORE CANALS THAN VENICE? WALKING TOUR Explore and learn about canal history, Sat 30 Mar, The Roundhouse, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM BINGO WALKING TOUR Walking tour 'that mixes canals and comedians; Baskerville and Brutalism; and heavyweight politicians with heavy metal', Sat 30 Mar, Roundhouse, Birmingham

BONGO'S BINGO Easter Bank Holiday version of the original bingo rave sensation, Sat 30 Mar, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SANDWELL'S GREAT BIG CAR BOOT Featuring a wide range of items for sale, along with food stalls, Sun 31 Mar, Sandwell Valley

Enter now at whatsonlive.co.uk to be in with a chance of bagging one of these fabulous prizes!



Win! A family ticket to see Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's Charlie Cook's Favourite Book!

Little Angel Theatre bring to life Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's Charlie Cook's Favourite Book. Featuring clever puppetry and enchanting songs, the new production visits Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre from Thursday 4 to Sunday 7 April... We have a family ticket to give away for the 1.30pm performance on Saturday the 6th.

Competition closes Friday 22 March



Win! Two tickets to see 101 Dalmatians: The Musical

Telling the story of fashionista Cruella de Vil's attempts to swipe all the Dalmatian puppies in town to create a fabulous fur coat for herself, this hit musical visits the region direct from London's West End.

We have two tickets to give away for the show when it stops off at The Alexandra, Birmingham on Tuesday 2 July.

Competition closes Friday 21 June



Win! A family ticket to Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum!

Situated in Millennium Point, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum has four floors to explore and features more than 200 hands-on displays, historical collections and natural science specimens to enjoy. The popular visitor attraction is offering a family ticket to one lucky What's On reader - date of visit to be arranged.

Competition closes Friday 8 March



Win! A family ticket to see Madagascar The Musical!

Join in the fun as Alex, Marty and friends escape from their home in New York's Central Park Zoo and embark on a journey to the madcap world of King Julien's Madagascar.

We have a family ticket (four people) to give away for the Thursday 14 March performance at The Alexandra, Birmingham.

Competition closes Monday 4 March

For your chance to WIN! with What's On, visit:
whatsonlive.co.uk

LIVE MUSIC IN SHREWSBURY

MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2024

SHROPSHIRE'S LARGEST LIVE MUSIC VENUE

THE BUTTERMARKE

SHREWSBURY



HEARTBREAK
THE TOM PETTY SHOW

THURS 7 MARCH



COLDPLACE
The World's Leading Tribute to Coldplay

Thanks for trying the Coldplay Bag
Coldplace are pure quality
Phil Harvey (Coldplay)

FRI 8 MARCH



THE DEFINITIVE TRIBUTE TO
GLAM ROCK

**BLOCK
BUSTER**

GLAM 45 LIVE BAND

SWEET | SLADE | TREK | MUD | DAVID BOWIE
ALICE IN CHAINS | SPINALDANCE | DAVEY ESSEX
RAY CITY ROCKERS | SWEET QUARTET AND MANY MORE

SAT 9 MARCH



LAS VEGAS LIVE
WITH **The RAT PACK**

25th ANNIVERSARY TOUR

The Original & Longest Running Rat Pack Show

MOTHER'S DAY - SUN 10 MARCH



**The Rolling
Clones**

THURS 14 MARCH



More METALLICA

UK METALLICA TRIBUTE

FRIDAY 15 MARCH



THURS 21 MARCH

**UK PINK
FLOYD**

EXPERIENCE

THE AUTHENTIC TRIBUTE TO THE FLOYD



**Johnny
2
BAD**

FRI 22 MAR

THE UK'S NO.1 UB40 LIVE TRIBUTE BAND



**COMEDY
HOTSPOT**

SHREWSBURY

EASTER SPECIAL
THURS 28 MARCH

Ryan
McDonnell

Kevin
Finn

Louie
Green

Raymond &
Mr Timpkins
Revue



FRI 29 MAR

Link 82



CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF
CHRIS STAPLETON

SUN 31 MAR

THE STAPLETON
SESSIONS LIVE
BY THE SOUTHERN
COMPANION
+ SPECIAL GUESTS



THE WORLD'S NO.1 GUNS 'N' ROSES LIVE TRIBUTE

★★★★★

FRI 5 APRIL

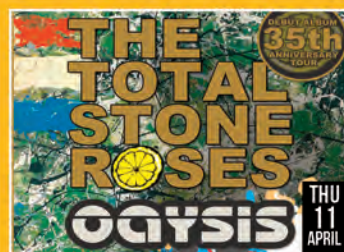
GUNS2ROSES



A TRIBUTE TO
**THE HUMAN
LEAGUE**

LOVE *distr*ACTION

SAT 6 APRIL



35th
ANNIVERSARY
TOUR

**THE
TOTAL
STONE
ROSES**

OGYSIS

THU 11 APRIL



"BEST NIGHT EVER"

FRI 12 APRIL

BARRIOKE



**HARRY
STYLES
HOUSE
PARTY**

**TAYLOR
SWIFT
THE ERAS PARTY**

SUN 14 APRIL 3PM TO 7PM



CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF
ROXY MUSIC & BRYAN FERRY

ROXY MAGIC

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

★★★★★

"WOW!" - Bryan Ferry

FRI 19 APRIL



WHO'S NEXT

CELEBRATE 60 YEARS OF

THE WHO

SUN 5 MAY



THE BEST
PINK TRIBUTE
IN THE WORLD

Vicky Jackson

TRIBUTE ARTIST
& HER FULL LIVE BAND!

SAT 4 MAY



Totally TINA!

THE ORIGINAL AWARD-WINNING TINA TURNER SPECTACULAR!

FRI 10 MAY



A CELEBRATION OF

**BOB
MARLEY**

SAT 11 MAY

FEATURING

**THE
MARLEY
EXPERIENCE**

BOB MARLEY'S NO.1 TRIBUTE BAND



**FLEETING
RUMOURS**

FRI 17 MAY

GREATEST HITS TOUR

GO YOUR OWN WAY • DON'T STOP • EVERETTSHINE • DRAGONS • LITTLE UPS • COPPY • BELIEVE • THE CHAIR •
SHEILA • WINDHAM • ALBATROSS • SEVEN WINDMILLS • THE BERRY WORLD



Meat Loaf

BAT OUT OF HELL

GREATEST HITS LIVE!

SAT 18 MAY

STARRING
ITV'S CRAIG HALFORD



**IN THE AIR
TONIGHT**

THE UK'S LEADING SHOW CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF

Phil Collins & Genesis

AS SEEN ON BBC AND THE KELLY CLARKSON SHOW

FRI 24 MAY



HSBC **BWF**
World Tour
Super 1000



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ON SALE!
MAKING HISTORY SINCE 1899

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ALL ENGLAND
2024

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12 - 17 MARCH
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