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JACK WHITEHALL
OUT ON TOUR



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thelist

Your 16-page week
by week listings guide

FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley's gothic horror
classic at Lichfield Garrick



DUNCAN OAKLEY

brings a bagful of gags to
Stafford venue



AUTOSPORT FUN

four-wheel extravaganza
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Stellar line-up announced for Shrewsbury's folk festival

Shrewsbury Folk Festival is this year celebrating its 20th anniversary with a stellar line-up of stars.

Loudon Wainwright III, Eric Bibb (pictured), former Bellowhead frontman Jon Boden, The Unthanks, Oysterband, The Young'uns, Le Vent Du Nord and Seth Lakeman will be among the headliners performing at the popular event, which takes place at the town's West Midlands Showground from Friday 25 to Monday 28 August.

The festival also features four music stages, a dance tent, more than 100 workshops, dedicated children and youth programmes, a craft fair, real ale, wine and cocktail bars, and a food village. Commenting on this year's event, Festival Director Alan Surtees said: "We're very excited to have secured some great musicians for 2017 at this very early stage. Last year was a vintage year, but with an already strong line-up and our ongoing commitment to extremely high production values, we're pretty sure that 2017 will top it. The feedback we had from last year was phenomenal from visitors and artists alike. The BBC 6 Music and Radio Two presenter Mark Radcliffe described it as 'a little bit of heaven', and that sums it up."

For more information, visit shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk



New season of concerts from Lichfield Arts



Lichfield Arts has announced a mouthwatering programme of concerts for its winter/spring season.

Internationally recognised names such as Martin Carthy, Martin Taylor, Laurence Jones, Nancy Kerr (pictured above), The Jive Aces and Craobh Rua all feature, as do performers who scored a big hit with audiences at 2016's Fuse Festival, including Little Brother Eli and The Jar Family. The concerts take place at the Lichfield Guildhall.

Tickets and details for all events are available online at lichfieldarts.org.uk or from Lichfield Arts box office on 01543 262223. See Lichfield Arts on Facebook and Twitter for the latest updates.

Midlands dance company to premiere new work

Birmingham Repertory Theatre will host the world premiere of a brand new dance work in March.

MK Ultra is the latest offering from highly rated local ensemble Rosie Kay Dance Company.

The piece has been inspired by 'the bizarre realm of pop culture, mind-control conspiracies and Illuminati imagery'.

Commenting on the show, the company's artistic director, Rosie Kay, said: "MK Ultra is the result of three years of intense research which has taken me through the world of surveillance, state police, torture and brainwashing, through to pop culture, mainstream media and celebrity breakdowns, all the way back to politics and a comment on the post-culturism state we are in now.

"At a time when everything is fake, or at least we don't trust what's real anymore, MK Ultra looks at what this world really feels like and what effect it is having on us, whether we know it or not."

The show can be enjoyed at The REP on Friday 17 & Saturday 18 March. For tickets, ring 0121 236 4455 or visit birmingham-rep.co.uk



Midlands actress Julie becomes ambassador for air ambulance charity

Birmingham-born actress Julie Walters has become an ambassador for the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

Since its inception in 1991, the air ambulance has airlifted and helped save over 46,000 lives.

The charity covers a population in excess of six million, across the counties of Worcestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and the West Midlands.



Mountain film festival returns to the Midlands

'The world's most prestigious mountain film festival' is once again visiting the Midlands this year.

Presenting evenings of adventure movies at the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre (1 February and 29 March) and Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury (6 April), the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour is sure to prove a big hit with thrill-seeking adventurers.

Commenting on this year's event, tour coordinator Rosie Fuller said: "Viewers can expect high-adrenaline action sports, epic scenery, mind-blowing journeys and some hair-raising moments in the last wild corners of the planet!"

For more information, visit banff-uk.com.

X Factor favourite at the Racecourse

Midlands-based fans of Olly Murs can catch up with the singer at Wrexham's Racecourse Ground this summer, when he appears at the venue as part of a series of outdoor shows.

One-time X Factor star Olly will play 20 UK gigs during the period from early June to mid-August.

The shows will follow on from his spring arena tour.

He performs at the Racecourse Ground on Saturday 24 June.

For more information, visit ollymurs.com.

What A Feeling - Flashdance tours to the Midlands

The stage musical version of hit 1980s movie Flashdance is set to tour the UK for the first time in six years, stopping off at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre in the autumn and Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre in early December.

Featuring Oscar-winning title track What A Feeling, the show tells the story of an 18-year-old welder who finds her dream of becoming a professional dancer complicated by a burgeoning romance.

The show visits the Regent from Monday 25 to Saturday 30 September and the New Alex from Monday 4 to Saturday 9 December. For more information, visit flashdanceuktour.co.uk



Shropshire funnyman to headline new comedy festival

Shrewsbury will host its first ever international comedy festival this summer, with Shropshire-born funnyman and Inbetweeners star Greg Davies headlining the event.

The three-day laugh-in, taking place from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 July, features 15 hour-long performances in four town-centre venues.

Commenting on the event, its co-founder, Kevin Bland, said: "Securing someone of Greg Davies' calibre for our inaugural festival is fantastic. Before all the TV and film success, he was the best compere in the business, and we're really excited he's agreed to perform. We will be announcing the other acts in the coming weeks, but we can start by saying that the brilliant Joe Lycett will join Greg in the gala show line-up.

"Shrewsbury has a great tradition of hosting festivals. We have one for everything, from beer to flowers, food to comics and street theatre to folk music, so it's time for some comedy too!"

Jack set for a Wolverhampton Christmas

The Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's 2016/17 pantomime production of Aladdin may still be in full swing, but that hasn't stopped the popular venue from announcing its panto offering for next Christmas. Opening on Saturday 9 December, Jack And The Beanstalk promises to be a real giant of a festive show and runs until Sunday 14 January 2018.

An 'all-star cast' will be announced soon. Tickets for the production are now available and can be booked in person, by phone on 01902 429212 or online at grandtheatre.co.uk.

Anniversary programme at Ironbridge Gorge Museums

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust will be hosting a programme of special events and activities in 2017 to mark its 50th anniversary.

The Trust runs the Shropshire World Heritage Site's 10 award-winning attractions, including Blists Hill Victorian Town, Enginuity, Broseley Pipeworks, the Coalport China and Jackfield Tile Museums and the tar tunnel.

Included in the line-up of special events taking place at the popular visitor attraction over the next few months is the reopening of the Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, which is being totally refurbished over the winter in time for Easter. The redeveloped museum will feature numerous interactive games and puzzles, a family-friendly trail and a 'digital table', providing youngsters with the opportunity to view dozens of historic images.

For further information, call 01952 433 424 or visit ironbridge.org.uk.



First Word

Gangsta Granny needs young dance star

Birmingham Stage Company is looking for a dancer to play the character of Diane when its touring production of David Walliams' *Gangsta Granny* visits the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Wednesday 22 to Sunday 26 March. Applicants must be above compulsory school age and fit the look of the character's description - Diane is 11 years old and around 5'4" in height. The character has a small solo disco dance in the middle of the show and is part of the finale dance. The production is two hours and 15 minutes in length. For more information about how to apply, visit the news section of grandtheatre.co.uk. All submissions must be received by Monday 16 January.



House! Bingo hall to get much-needed facelift

A dilapidated former bingo hall in the Black Country is set to receive a facelift. The Dudley Hippodrome was originally opened as a theatre in 1938 and was then used as a bingo hall from 1964 until its closure in 2009. The council bought the building in 2010 and has agreed to lease it to newly formed steering group Black Country Hippodrome Ltd for a period of five years. Commenting on the agreement, steering group board member Steve Daniels said: "We're delighted to have signed the lease, and it's the first big step in our plans to restore this local landmark to its former glory. There are big challenges ahead, and we're confident that we will meet them. We've worked well in partnership with the council and hope that this continues until we achieve our goal."

Name a penguin at Dudley Zoo

Dudley Zoo is offering members of the general public the chance to adopt and name a penguin. The popular visitor attraction boasts a colony of 85 penguins, 40 of which are currently known only by an identification number. "With so many names to think of, we decided to let visitors have the job," says the zoo's marketing manager, Andrea Hales. "We're offering a limited number of penguin adoption packages where adopters can name their animal themselves - which makes it extra special. We'll then add the chosen name to the penguin's official records, which will remain with it for its entire lifetime." The special adoption packages start from £50 and include a certificate, an animal fact sheet and photo, the quarterly ZooNooz newsletter and a zoo admission ticket. To adopt and name a penguin, visit dudleyzoo.org.uk or call 01384 215313.

Last call for help to illuminate Light House

Wolverhampton's Light House Cinema & Café/Bar is hoping to raise £10,000 on Crowd Funder to pay for illuminated signage on the outside of the building. The Black Country's only independent cinema and mixed-arts venue, the Light House is based in the city's historic Victorian Chubb Buildings. "It seems such a simple thing," says the Light House's chief executive officer, Kelly Jeffs, "a sign on a building to let everyone around know you exist. Sadly, it's an issue we've had to keep putting on the back burner due to constant financial challenges, especially recently in light of the austerity measures that we and many other arts organisations across the UK have had to endure. So please help by donating to us through Crowd Funder, and let's get this building lit up!" The project is using Flexible funding and will receive all pledges made by 2.02pm on 6 January. Payment and personal details are protected.



Birmingham's gay symphony orchestra in Proms team-up with Miss Moneypenny's

A local gay orchestra will this autumn join forces with a legendary club brand to present a unique event in Birmingham. The 60-piece Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra will perform at the city's Symphony Hall to help celebrate the 25th anniversary of dance music scene favourite Miss Moneypenny's. The popular club night is renowned for its energetic brand of house music mixed with creative themes, dancers, theatrical artistes and live performers. Commenting on the event, Miss Moneypenny's musical director, Jim Ryan, said: "When we started planning Miss Moneypenny's return to Birmingham, we knew we had to come up with something spectacular. Interpreting the sound of Miss Moneypenny's with an orchestra is something we're very excited about. To be working with the brilliant Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra is truly inspiring." Miss Moneypenny's A Night At The Proms takes place at Symphony Hall on Friday 24 November.

History of panto celebrated in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton's Light House Media Centre is this month hosting an exhibition celebrating the history of pantomime in the city. The exhibition has been mounted to coincide with the Grand Theatre's production of *Aladdin* and is available to view until Sunday 22 January. Highlights include a patchwork magic carpet pieced together as part of a community project, a rail of costumes for children to try on, a display of archive programmes, and walls of information dedicated to memorable moments and performers from across the years.



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Brendan Cole

Strictly regular prepares to dance All Night Long in the Midlands

He's been a TV star both in New Zealand and the UK, become a proud family man, and he's just finished his 14th season of BBC One's *Strictly Come Dancing* - now Brendan Cole is preparing to get back on the road with his latest live solo spectacular, *All Night Long*. In between tour arrangements, rehearsals and general dad duties, the ever-busy Brendan found time for a quick chat with us about his forthcoming show, stopping off at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre and Birmingham's Symphony Hall in early 2017.

"I just got a message through about 10 minutes before we spoke saying that an extra day of rehearsals has just been added for one of the dances, and it's constantly like, 'Oh my goodness, how am I going to fit this in?' There are so many things that need to happen with a show like this, from getting the right cast so that everyone gels on stage, to getting the costumes, sorting out the lighting and staging, and even just the logistics of travelling to different venues - making sure you're not going from somewhere down south one night to somewhere up north the next."

All Night Long follows a string of three hugely popular stage shows - *Live & Unjudged*, *Licence To Thrill* and *A Night To Remember* - and Cole knows from experience that developing a show on this scale can take a year or more. But as hectic as things can get, for him, there's

something immensely satisfying about this process, resulting in a greater sense of pride in the finished product.

"We started working on ideas for this show while I was still touring my last production - I was already discussing potential songs with my musical director and my singers, and as the things start building, it's incredibly exciting. Of course every stage has its challenges, but as an artist it's fantastic to be able to have something that's your own on the road."

Putting together a show from scratch naturally gives him a much greater level of creative control than he would typically have as a dancer in another production. Nevertheless, every stage show is to some extent a collaboration, and Cole is happy to give credit where it's due.

"This is definitely my show - all aspects of it have my fingerprints somewhere within them, but it's still very much collaborative. When choreographing, what I like to do is get a basic idea of what we'll be doing throughout the show and then develop that further with the other dancers. It's very important that they feel comfortable on stage and are doing things that are inspiring to them, because otherwise you're not going to get the best out of them. So I would say it's about 60 to 70% me, and then the rest we do together. But most choreographers will work with a team - my team just happens to be my cast."

As much as anything, then, it's the cast that makes the show, and Cole has assembled a hugely talented team to help realise his ideas on stage.

"We've got a really dynamic cast. Everyone's got something a little bit unique about them, and they all bring something different. You always want to be inspired by your contemporaries - you want to be pushed by what they do and to push them with what you do. Also, if I have to run off for a costume change, I want whoever I leave out there to be able to hold that stage and be amazing.

"When my leading lady, Faye [Huddleston], first came in for casting, straight away I thought, 'Wow, what a presence that girl's got!' And when we started dancing together, it felt great and she looked great, and I'm really excited to see what we produce out on stage, especially in the more intimate ballroom numbers."

As much as he enjoys the high-octane, energetic routines, it's these more intimate, understated numbers that are always Cole's favourites to perform, providing the emotional heart of a show.

"I always love the waltzes - the really beautiful ones that are very special emotionally. That's where you see the audience really connect with you, and it creates this amazing atmosphere that



brings them into the show.”

Nevertheless, for those who prefer something with a bit more pizzazz, there'll still be plenty to look forward to. As ever, this promises to be a thrillingly varied production, with 22 numbers ranging from delicate waltzes to dramatic power ballads and from upbeat jives to sexy tangos and rumbas.

“In my first production, we did a back-lit number behind a screen so the shadows of the dancers were projected onto it, and the audience loved it. This year, we're going back to that idea, but this time the screens will be moving and we'll be dancing with them to a really powerful Tina Turner number called I Can't Stand The Rain, so that's quite exciting. We're also working on a great little Argentine tango at the moment which is coming along nicely.”

As anyone who's seen any of Cole's previous live productions will know, they're more than just their choreography. Like Strictly itself, these shows offer an all-round entertainment package, complete with discussion, incredible costumes, fabulous sets and carefully chosen music, all designed to appeal to an audience that spans generations.

“There's no through-narrative to the show, but what it offers is a chance for people to experience a bit of Strictly magic first-

hand after it disappears from our screens at the end of the year. When creating modern productions, I think it's really important to have something for everybody. Strictly has a very diverse audience covering all ages, and we have to try to cater for all of them. Hopefully it should be a really good night out where people can celebrate what they know and love.”

Cole isn't the only Strictly star to have created a series of successful shows off the back of his TV appearances. His co-star, Anton du Beke, also tours productions in a similar format and scale, and as the success of the series continues, there's also an increasing number of smaller post-Strictly shows springing up around the country.

“Most of them are very different to this, so there's not really any competition. Anton and myself have been touring for quite a long time now, and we've both got shows that are similar in style, but I think they run side-by-side very well. We've got a really good friendship and we're all very supportive of each other in what we choose to put on.”

Having joined the show during its very first season back in 2004, Cole has become one of the stalwarts of the Strictly family. While others have gone on to other things, for Cole, there's something special about the series that keeps him coming

back for more.

“I love the show! It's a magical show to be a part of, and I think we're very lucky. There are so many aspects of it for people to enjoy, whether it's the raw emotions and the relationships, the creativity or just the spectacle of it. It's a lovely thing to have as part of your life.”

But when he's able to tear himself away from the bright lights of the studio, he loves being out on tour, and his West Midlands dates are two of the shows he's looking forward to most.

“Wolverhampton will be our opening night, so there's going to be a lot of nerves and excitement. You can only do so much in rehearsals, so we won't know exactly what the show's going to look like till it comes together on stage. And then in Birmingham, Symphony Hall is just a magnificent venue - I genuinely get tingles when I walk in there. So going from Wolverhampton at the start of the tour and coming back to perform at what's probably one of the best venues in the northern hemisphere, if not the world, is going to be sensational, and I can't wait to play both.”

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Popular Shropshire restaurant receives the Thai royal court's seal of approval

A Shropshire eatery has received the Thai Royal Seal Of Approval. The Broseley-based King And Thai has become only the seventh restaurant outside London, and only the 14th in the country, to receive the honour from the Thai royal court. Commenting on the news, The King And Thai's award-winning

chef, Suree Coates, said: "To be honoured by the Thai royal household is the icing on the cake for my career. "Being born in Thailand and remaining passionate about my homeland and its cultures, cuisine and foods is second nature to me, so to be recognised in such a way really is special."



REVIEW: Bella, Wolverhampton Contemporary Italian dining



Established in 2001, Bella has been an integral part of the Wolverhampton food scene for many years now. The fashionable eatery, situated on Chapel Ash, is only a short walk from the city centre.

On arrival there, we were warmly greeted by the very smartly dressed staff and quickly shown to a window seat. The interior is sharp, clean and contemporary, the muted greys of the walls a perfect backdrop to the dark sheen of the tables sparkling with steel and glassware.

While perusing the menu, we were brought a beautifully presented amuse bouche of crispbread with crayfish cocktail - a tantalising taste experience which served to heighten our expectations of the food to come.

To start, I chose from the specials menu sun-dried Girasole Pasta filled with white fish and finished with a cherry tomato and seafood fumet. These sunflower-shaped ravioli were cooked to perfection. Firm to the bite - al dente, as the Italians would say - the pasta envelopes

burst with the fresh flavour of the fish within, the fumet and cherry tomatoes working well to enhance the flavours.

My dining partner opted for Beef Carpaccio with capers, basil mayo and a rocket and parmesan salad, served with a homemade crisp bread. The dish was beautifully presented and proved to be a real 'melt in the mouth' experience. The complex flavour of the aged beef was perfectly complemented by the basil mayo and the sharpness of the capers.

For me, the test of an Italian restaurant is in the quality of the lasagne, and it was on the specials menu I found a contemporary twist on this staple of Italian dining. Bella's lasagne was layered with slow-braised oxtail, topped with gratin and finished with a beef tomato sauce. Once the crisp gratin topping was breached, the softness of the lasagne yielded easily to my fork. The oxtail contained within was flavoursome and tender, the beef tomato sauce wonderfully rich.

My partner selected the Calfs Liver served with a basil mash and a side of green salad. Served pink, as is a must, the dish was reported to be 'sublime'.

For dessert, I opted for a classic Crème Brulee. It came with a light, crisp, sugar topping which easily gave way to the soft vanilla creaminess below. The flavour was good, but the texture had curdled somewhat.

Now, the test of an Italian restaurant for my partner is in the quality of the tiramisù; so that

is, of course, what he ordered. Looking quite elegant presented in a tall glass, the dessert came without the traditional finger biscuits. This served only to improve the dish; its texture was smooth and velvety, its flavours perfectly balanced. Indeed, it turned out to be the best tiramisù my partner had ever had.

Throughout the evening the staff were extremely professional but friendly and approachable too. The restaurant itself wasn't overly busy (it was a Tuesday evening) and consequently the atmosphere was somewhat muted. With this in mind, we felt the lighting could have been brought down a touch, to lend a warmer, more intimate feel to the evening.

The all-round quality of food and service will not only bring us back to Bella but also ensure the restaurant remains a highlight of Wolverhampton's ever-developing dining-out scene.

Ted Finlay

Food:
 Service:
 Ambience:
 Overall value:
OVERALL

Bella
 82 Chapel Ash
 Wolverhampton
 WV3 0TY
 Tel: 01902 427555

Darlingside

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Tues 31 January

Massachusetts-based four-piece Darlingside are rapidly becoming one of the most talked-about bands in contemporary American music. Taking their influences from '60s folk, bluegrass, indie rock and classical, the band were last year named Folk Alliance International's Artist Of The Year.

Their name originates from a songwriting class taken by members at Williams College.

"Pesticide is used to kill pests," explains the band's Dave Senft. "Fratricide is when you kill your brother. A former teacher of ours used to say 'kill your darlings', which is to say, if you fall in love with something you've written, you should cross it out.

"We like that idea, and we thought a good name for it might be 'darlingcide', but we changed the 'c' to an 's' because we're not super into death."



The White Buffalo

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Sat 21 January



The White Buffalo is the professional moniker of American singer-songwriter Jake Smith.

The dark blues artist is probably best known for his numerous song placements in TV show Sons Of Anarchy, including the series-finale song, Come Join The Murder. Co-written with the programme's producer, Kurt Sutter, it was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Music & Lyrics.

This current tour features releases from Smith's back-catalogue which are being made widely available in Europe for the first time.

MC Hansen And Carly Dow

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 15 January;
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 20 January

Danish singer and guitar player MC Hansen - here accompanied by Jacob Chano on the harmonium - combines the storytelling of traditional folk music with contemporary country sounds. He and Chano visit the Midlands this month in the company of Canadian soul-folk artist Carly Dow, who's performing in the UK for the very first time.



EnChante

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 20 January

Talented four-piece EnChante have created a unique sound that's reminiscent of vintage French music with classical undertones, dramatic interpretations and a haunting heartbeat. With Paris-born singer-songwriter Jocelyne being joined by

Ron Thomas, Nick Thompson and Paul Strach, the band have delighted audiences in concert halls and at festivals across the UK and Europe.

The Blue Aeroplanes

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham,
Thurs 19 January

Combining rock, folk, punk and poetry, The Blue Aeroplanes released their most critically acclaimed album, Swagger, in 1990. Their touring career, meanwhile, has seen them supporting numerous big-name bands, including REM and Siouxsie & The Banshees.

The longest-lasting Aeroplanes line-up to date visits Birmingham this month in support of new album Welcome, Stranger!. Ex-members have gone on to play with Massive Attack, Suede, Placebo, Goldfrapp and Primal Scream, to name but a few.



The Carrivick Sisters

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
Sun 22 January; Kitchen Garden Cafe,
Birmingham, Mon 23 January



Having performed together since 2006, The Carrivick Sisters are one of the UK's top bluegrass and folk acts. Twins Laura and Charlotte showcase their original songs and instrumentals along with a few carefully chosen covers on guitar, mandolin, fiddle, dobro and clawhammer banjo. The pair have released five albums to date - the most recent being *Over The Edge* in 2013 - and regularly perform at major festivals in Canada and mainland Europe.

Quill

Lichfield Garrick, Staffordshire,
Sat 28 January



When bass guitarist Ben Brain died suddenly in 2012, his wife and Quill's lead singer, Joy Strachan-Brain, was of a mind to call time on the band's 30-plus years of musicmaking.

Eventually, though, she decided it was more important to battle on, in so doing ensuring that the songs Ben had written for a new album would eventually be heard...

The popular Tamworth band have developed a unique musical style over the years, incorporating influences that include Celtic folk and rock. They perform a repertoire that features a number of time-honoured classics.



A Day To Remember

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,
Wed 25 January

Since their inception in 2003, A Day To Remember have sold over one million records, racked up over 400 million Spotify

streams, 500 million YouTube streams and produced two gold-selling albums. The metalcore/pop punk five-piece visit Birmingham in support of their much-anticipated new album, *Bad Vibrations*. Support on the night comes from New Found Glory, Neck Deep and Moose Blood.

Tommy Emmanuel

Town Hall, Birmingham, Fri 20 January

Australian guitarist, songwriter and occasional singer Tommy Emmanuel is best known for his complex fingerstyle technique, energetic performances and the use of percussive effects on the guitar. With a career spanning five decades, he's a household name down under and boasts thousands of fans worldwide. In recent times he's also become a bonafide YouTube sensation, accumulating over 29 million views.

Tommy is here promoting his album, *It's Never Too Late*, which features original music with no vocals or guests.

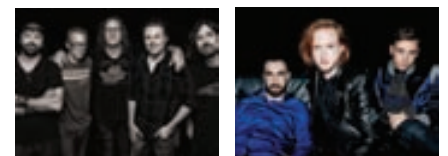


Candlebox

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton,
Tues 24 January

Best known for hits such as *Far Behind*, *Cover Me* and *You*, Candlebox have released six studio albums, all of which have achieved multi-platinum and gold certification.

Singer Kevin Martin is the only survivor from the original 1990 line-up, although current drummer Dave Krusen, formerly of Pearl Jam, has been in and out of the band since 1996.



Two Door Cinema Club

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Tues 24 January

Comprising Alex Trimble, Kevin Baird and Sam Halliday, Two Door Cinema Club released debut album *Tourist History* back in 2010. Their follow-up offering, *Beacon*, went to number one in the Irish albums chart and number two in the UK chart. Re-energised by a self-imposed hiatus, the band return for an extensive headline tour in support of third studio album *Gameshow*.

Kaiser Chiefs

Kaiser Chiefs' Simon Rix chats to Lauren Foster about the band's Stay Together tour, which heads to the Midlands this month...



Firstly, what can your Birmingham audience expect from your show at Barclaycard Arena?

Because the UK has our biggest fanbase in the world, it's always one of our favourite tours. We can bring the most production, lights, fire, lasers, video screens and stuff to it. Every Kaiser Chiefs gig, even in the tiniest club with no production, we want to make sure everyone has a brilliant night. That's our mission - to give everyone the best night.

Your new album, Stay Together, has more pop and electro influences compared to, for example, your debut album, Employment. Why the change in direction?

I think when we started working on the album, one of the things we wanted to do was make an album with a bit more groove. Ricky wanted to write a bit more about relationships and love, subjects we've avoided as a band because it's tricky talking about them in front of four of your mates. Musically we wanted to make people dance a bit and groove a bit, in a Talking Heads sort of way. Then we found a guy called Brian Higgins who also wanted to do all of those things, so he became the sixth member of the band. Brian's background is much more pop than ours. He's traditionally a keyboard player, so obviously he was going to bring those things out of us. I do feel like, even when we wrote I Predict A Riot and Ruby, we were coming more from the place of a band in a dirty rehearsal room in Leeds, playing loud guitars, than maybe we are now. But I do still feel like we tried to write pop songs because we wanted to compete with the biggest names around at the time. I think that's the same now; we want to write big songs - songs that



Every Kaiser Chiefs gig, even in the tiniest club with no production, we want to make sure everyone has a brilliant night...



can be heard on the radio by loads and loads of people, songs that you can hear in the Barclaycard Arena. I think there's still a lot of Kaiser Chiefs DNA in the songs.

Sixteen years and six albums after you started out, Kaiser Chiefs are still very much in the limelight. Why do you think that is?

Because we've changed and moved with the times. We're not trying to make a Frank Ocean or a Kanye record. I still think we're making records that we're expected to make, but we're also aware that things change and music is different. Streaming is massive now, but even when our last album came out, it wasn't something we'd even thought about. But now, obviously, it's really, really important, and by the time we do another album in another few years' time, there'll be something else, another new way of listening to music. I always feel like good songs will conquer everything. People do ask us how we've stayed together for so long, and I think it's because we're friends and we make each other laugh, no matter what's happening in our world.

Do you all generally have the same opinions, musically, when producing new material?

Me and my girlfriend don't agree all the time. In the band I've got another four girlfriends, and they're all men, so it makes it tricky. We agree on a surprising amount of stuff considering it's been 16 years of making decisions, but there are definitely differences of opinion. On this record, we had a couple of co-writes on there and Brian, the producer, was really involved from day one. I think that was us saying that, after 16 years, you sometimes have to listen to other people, see what

their opinion is and go with that. Maybe it won't work, but you can just try something else the next time round. I think that's the really good thing about our career - we've now got to a stage where we can do what we want.

Did you always want to pursue a career in music?

The five of us always thought we were going to do it, so any jobs we had were jobs to support being in a band. Me and Peanut were civil servants for a bit, but we didn't really like it very much. We always wanted to be in a band. I've been in bands since I was about 11, and my dad was in a band too. It's a crazy idea because it can backfire massively, but even though we all went to university, we all still felt like music was number one.

What advice would you give to young bands and artists who are looking to follow in your footsteps?

Keep going! If you love music and music is your passion, you can have a career in music. You might be singing on a cruise ship or doing workshops or music therapy - there are loads of amazing careers in music. We've been lucky enough to do what we do, which is great.

What's the most memorable performance of your career?

The first Glastonbury we ever played, in 2005, was a bit of a moment. The album had come out in March and we'd been away in America, so we hadn't really realised that Employment was big. Then we played Glastonbury and everyone sang all the words to the songs back to us! Elland Road in Leeds, that was a great final homecoming celebration. Last year, we played the Maracanã, the World Cup stadium, which was a really amazing gig.

The second we went on, it started raining, and the second we came off, it stopped - but nobody cared, because it was Brazil, so it was hot.

Support acts Ngod and Spring King will be joining you on tour. How did that come about?

We've done gigs with Spring King before. We really liked and got on with them, and they've really worked with our audience. You can get some of your favourite bands to support and it just doesn't work out. Our fans really like Spring King, and we like them as people and we like their music. We've known Ngod a long, long time. We saw them recently and they were great - plus, it's always good to support the local music scene. We could do with a couple of girls, though. After we announced it, we realised it was all men, so I do apologise about that.

And finally, your upcoming Stay Together tour is your first arena tour in two years. What are you looking forward to the most about being back on tour?

Doing the arena gigs is always great; it's an opportunity to put on a big show. Throughout a lot of our career, I think everyone's seen us as a great warm-up band. We've done a lot of early-evening festival slots on the main stage, which is always good, but we're at the point in our career where we really feel like we want to have a big show, with great lights and screens. So that's what we're looking forward to the most, putting on a really big show for everybody.

.....
Kaiser Chiefs perform at the Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, on Saturday 25 February

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Birmingham Philharmonic

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 29 January

Richard Laing picks up the baton to conduct the first concert of Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra's 2017 programme.

One of the Midlands' best known and most admired non-professional orchestras, the Birmingham Phil on this occasion presents a programme of movie classics, including Williams' *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, Arnold's *Bridge On The River Kwai*, Herrmann's *Vertigo* and Bernstein's *West Side Story: Symphonic Dances*.

Halle Orchestra

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 6 January



Joshua Ellicott

The Manchester-based Halle has been a real force to be reckoned with since performing its first concert over 150 years ago.

Although the orchestra is renowned for its affinity with English music - particularly the works of Elgar and Delius - it's the sounds of Vienna which are being celebrated in this latest concert.

Stephen Bell conducts a programme that includes numerous pieces by Johan Strauss, Lehar's *Gold And Silver Waltz*, Suppe's *Light Cavalry Overture* and Josef Strauss's *Feurfest Polka*.

The concert further benefits from the talents of Manchester-born tenor Joshua Ellicott.

Maria Camahort Quintet

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 25 January

St Martin in the Fields and the Southbank Centre are among the prestigious UK venues at which the Maria Camahort Quintet have performed.

The ensemble promise their New Vic programme will take the audience on 'a vivid journey' between the Spanish Classical repertoire and the traditional music of the Iberian peninsula.

"We have a very special timbre as a quintet," says London-based Spanish guitarist Maria, who formed the quintet in 2011. "Our unusual combination of instruments is violin and voice, soprano, guitar, cello, percussion & guitar. It's a combination which creates a real originality."



St Petersburg Philharmonic

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 26 January

Russia's oldest symphony orchestra makes a welcome return to the Midlands to perform a concert that features two of the country's most spectacular orchestral showpieces - Prokofiev's *Romeo And Juliet* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.

The programme is completed by Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No3*. Yuri Temirkanov, the orchestra's chief conductor since 1988 and its 10th in all, leads from the front in a concert that also features the masterly Nikolai Lugansky on piano.



Nikolai Lugansky

Endymion

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 28 January



Endymion is 38 years old in 2017 and, somewhat unusually for so well established a chamber group, retains most of its original players. The original line-up comprised a number of outstanding National Youth Orchestra students, drawn together by a shared desire to champion mixed chamber music of all genres. This Ludlow concert sees them appearing as a horn trio and presenting the following programme: Beethoven - *Violin Sonata in F major, Op24, Spring Sonata*; Ligeti - *Trio for horn, violin and piano, Hommage à Brahms*; Brahms - *Trio for horn, violin and piano, in E flat major, Op40*.

Get **VOTING** for your favourite
Midlands events and venues in the...

What's On Readers' Awards 2017

Some of last year's winners...



Yes, it's time for you to show just how much you appreciate Birmingham and the West Midlands' ever-vibrant arts and entertainment scene.

Nominate and vote online for your favourites to help them secure a place in our **What's On Readers' Awards Top 5 Shortlist**.

The shortlist will be announced in our February issue, when you'll have another chance to VOTE for your WINNER in each category. So get voting now!

And, complete our Readership Survey for the chance to **WIN £1000 cash!**

VOTE for your NOMINATIONS by Monday 23 January 2017

The Top 5 Shortlist in each category will be announced at the end of January - you'll then get the chance to VOTE one more time for your WINNER. Voting closes the end of February.

WINNERS will be announced in the Spring

CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

Best Large Regional Theatre
Best Small Theatre
Best Touring Musical
Best Home Produced Show
Best Home Produced Theatre
Best Touring Show
Best Kids Show
Best Arts Venue
Best Large Music Venue
Best Independent Live Gigs Venue
Best Gallery
Best Exhibition
Best Midlands Band
Best Dance Production
Best Operatic Production
Best Midlands Personality
Best Midlands Comedian
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Best Festival
Best Restaurant
Best Nightclub
Best Regional Orchestra
Best Independent Cinema
Best Amateur Theatre Company
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Festivals



When it comes to music - regardless of your preference, be it jazz, indie, folk, classical, world or pop - you're almost certain to find a festival in the Midlands to suit your taste. And 2016 looks set to be another bumper year for the regions festival goers. We here at What's On will keep you updated as further line-up announcements are revealed.

FEBRUARY

HRH METAL 2017 Celebrating its 10th year, the festival will feature over 40 bands across three arenas over two days, line up includes Skindred and Sodom, Sat 11- Sun 12 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham. More information at hrhmetal.com

THE INTER VARSITY FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL The 66th IVDFD will see performances from Sons Libres, Purcell's Polyphonic Party, Playford Minor Contravention, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Feb, various venues in Coventry. More information at ivfdf.org

MARCH

DARKER DAYS FESTIVAL Featuring seven bands from the UK and overseas specialising in the darker side of the aural arts, Sat 18 Mar, The Musician, Leicester

APRIL

NANTWICH JAZZ, BLUES & MUSIC FESTIVAL Celebrating its 21st year, the line up includes Geno Washington, King King, Rebecca Downes, Thurs 13 - Mon 17 April, various venues in Nantwich. More information and tickets available at nantwichjazz.com

CHELTENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL Line-up includes The Chick Corea Trio, Snarky Puppy and Meshell Ndegecello, Wed 26 Apr - Mon 1 May, various venues in Cheltenham. More information and tickets at cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz

HANDMADE FESTIVAL Line-up yet to be announced, three-day family friendly music festival, Fri 28 Apr - Sun 30 Apr, various venues in Leicester. More information and tickets at handmadefestival.co.uk

UPTON UPON SEVERN FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Barber Sisters, Huw Williams and Hekety, Fri 28 Apr - Mon 1 May, various venues, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire. More information and tickets at uptonfolk.org

LEAMINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL Line-up includes baritone Roderick Williams, Fri 28 Apr - Tues 2 May, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington Spa. More information at leamingtonmusic.org

DEMENTIA AWARE FEST Line-up includes White Tyger, Martyr De Mona and Left for Red, Sat 29 - Sun 30 Apr, The Roadhouse, Birmingham. More information and tickets at theroadhousebirmingham.com

FUDGESTOCK Line-up has yet to be announced, Sun 30 Apr, Robin 2, Wolverhampton. More information at therobin.co.uk

SWINGAMAJIG Line-up has yet to be announced, Sun 30 Apr, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham. More information at and tickets at swingamajig.co.uk

MAY

BEARDED THEORY Line-up includes Slaves, Skunk Anasie and Cast, Thurs 25 - Sun 28 May, Catton Hall, South Derbyshire. More information and tickets at beardedtheory.co.uk

BREAKING BANDS Line-up includes Forgotten Remains, Seething Akira and Massive Wagons, Fri 26 - Sun 28 May, Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club, Bromsgrove. More information and tickets at breakingbandsfestival.com

MELLO Line-up includes Hawkwind, Goldie Lookin Chain and Altered Images, Fri 26 - Sun 28 May, Throckmorton Airfield, Worcestershire. More information at mellofestival.co.uk

CHESTER FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Chris Sherburn & Denny Bartley, Belshazzar's Feast and

The Wilson Family, Fri 26 - Mon 29 May, Kelsall Village. More information and tickets at chesterfolk.org.uk

UPRISING 2017 Line-up includes Onslaught, Lawnmower Deth and Kill II This, Sat 27 May, De Montfort Hall, Leicester. More information at demontforhall.co.uk

SLAMDUNK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Enter Shikari, Don Broco and Bowling For Soup, Sat 27 May, Genting Arena, Birmingham. Tickets can be purchased from slamdunkmusic.com

BIRMINGHAM PRIDE Line-up to be announced, Sat 27 - Sun 28 May, Birmingham Gay Village. Information and tickets at birminghampride.com

DOT TO DOT FESTIVAL Line-up has yet to be announced, Sun 28 May, various venues in Nottingham. More information at dottodotfestival.co.uk

JUNE

WIRRAL FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Lindisfarne, Martin & Eliza Carthy and Vin Garbutt, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 June, The Whitby Club, Cheshire. More information and tickets at wirralfolkonthecoast.com

THE ACOUSTIC FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN Line-up includes Gaz Brookfield, Boy on a Dolphin and TV Smith, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 June, Uttoxeter Racecourse. More information and tickets at acousticfestival.co.uk

LICHFIELD BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 2 - Sun 4 June, various venues, Lichfield, Staffordshire. More information and tickets at lichfieldarts.org.uk

WYCHWOOD FESTIVAL Line-up includes Levellers, OMD and Katie Ashworth, Fri 2 - Sun 4 June, Cheltenham Racecourse. More information and tickets at wychwoodfestival.com

ASPARAFEST Line-up includes 3 Daft Monkeys, The Pyrates and Brimstone, Fri 2 - Sun 4 June, Ashdown Farm, Evesham, Worcestershire. More information and tickets at asparafest.co.uk

ENGLISH HAYDN FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Wed 7 - Sun 11 June, Bridgnorth. Information at englishhaydn.com

GATE TO SOUTHWELL FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Kate Rusby, Jon Boden and Le Vent dy Nord, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 June, Southwell, Nottingham. More information and tickets at southwellfolkfestival.org.uk

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL Headlining are System of a Down, Biffy Clyro and Aerosmith, Fri 9 - Sun 11 June, Donington Park, Derby. Information and tickets at downloadfestival.co.uk

SONIC ROCK SOLSTICE 2017 Line-up includes Doctor and the Medics, Heavy Metal Kids and Night of the Hawks, Fri 16 - Sun 18 June, Stoke Prior Space Port, Bromsgrove. More information and tickets at sonicrocksolstice.com

UKULELE FESTIVAL OF GREAT BRITAIN Line-up has yet to be announced, Fri 16 - Sun 18 June, various venues in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. More information and tickets at ukulelefestival.co.uk

KINETON MUSIC FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Sat 17 June, Kineton Sports and Social Club, Little Kineton. More information and tickets at kinetonmusicfestival.co.uk

LEAMINGTON PEACE FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Sat 17 - Sun 18 June, Pump Rooms Gardens, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. More information at peacefestival.org.uk

FOXTON LOCKS FESTIVAL Line-up has yet to be announced, Sat 17 - Sun 18 June, Foxton Locks, Leicestershire. Information and tickets at foxtonlocksfestival.co.uk

GLASTONBURY The first headliners to be confirmed is Radiohead, Wed 21 - Sun 25 June, Worthy Farm, Somerset. More information at glastonburyfestivals.co.uk

UPTON-UPON-SEVERN JAZZ FESTIVAL Line-up includes Alan Barnes, Bent Persson and Dart Valley Stompers, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 June, venues across Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire. More information and tickets at uptonjazz.co.uk

BARN ON THE FARM FESTIVAL Line-up has yet to be announced, Thurs 29 June - Mon 3 July, Over Farm Market, Gloucestershire. Information and tickets at barnonthefarm.co.uk

NIBLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL Line-up has yet to be announced, Fri 30 June - Sat 1 July, North Nibley, Gloucestershire. Information and tickets at nibleyfestival.co.uk

ALSO FESTIVAL Line-up has yet to be announced, Fri 30 June - Sun 2 July, Park Farm, Compton Verney. More information at also-festival.com

JULY

LLANGOLLEN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD Line-up to be announced, Mon 3 - Sun 9 July, Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen. More information and tickets at international-eisteddfod.co.uk

2000TREES FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Thurs 6 - Sun 9 July, Upcote Farm, Cheltenham. More information and tickets at twothousandtreesfestival.co.uk

NOISILY FESTIVAL Line-up includes Gabriel Ananda, Zen Mechanics and Beardyman, Thurs 6 - Sun 9 July, Coney Woods at Noseley Hall, Leicestershire. More information and tickets at noisilyfestival.com

FUSE FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July, Beacon Park, Lichfield, Staffordshire. More information and tickets at fuselichfield.org.uk

LINTON FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July, The Alma Inn, Linton, Herefordshire.

More information and tickets at lintonfestival.org

CAMPERJAM Line-up to be announced, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July, Weston Park, Shropshire. Information and tickets at camperjam.com

MOSTLY JAZZ, FUNK AND SOUL FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 7 - Sun 9 July, Moseley Park, Birmingham. More information and tickets at mostlyjazz.co.uk

ELECTRIC DAISY CARNIVAL 2017 Line-up to be announced, Sat 8 July, Milton Keynes. More information and tickets at uk.electricdaisycarnival.com

BROMSGROVE FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes 3 Daft Monkeys, The Lost Notes and Thirsty Work, Thurs 13 - Sun 16 July, various venues across Bromsgrove. More information and tickets at bromsgrovefolkclub.co.uk

LATITUDE 2017 Line-up has yet to be announced, Thurs 13 - Sun 16 July, Henham Park Estate, Suffolk. More information and tickets at latitudefestival.com

LOVEBOX 2017 The first act to be confirmed is Frank Ocean, Fri 14 - Sat 15 July, Victoria Park, London. More information and tickets at loveboxfestival.com

BIRMINGHAM FEST Line-up to be announced, Fri 14 - Sun 30 July, various theatres across Birmingham. More information and tickets at birminghamfest.co.uk

BUG JAM Line-up to be announced, Fri 16 - Sun 18 July, Santa Pod Raceway, Northamptonshire. More information and tickets at bugjam.co.uk

DEERSTOCK 2017 Line-up to be announced, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July, Newton Cross Country Course, Nottinghamshire. More information and tickets at deerstock.co.uk

NOZSTOCK Line-up to be announced, Fri 21 - Sun 23 July, Rowden Paddocks, Bromyard, Herefordshire. More information and tickets at nozstock.com

SPLENDOUR Line-up to be announced, Sat 22 July, Wollaton Park, Nottingham. More information and tickets at splendourfestival.com

WARWICK FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Oysterband, Spooky Men's Chorale and Andy Kershaw, Thurs 27 - Sun 30 July, Warwick School, Warwick. More information and tickets at warwickfolkfestival.co.uk

BAREFOOT FESTIVAL Line-up has yet to be announced, Fri 28 - Sun 30 July, Prestwold Hall, Leicestershire. More information and tickets at barefootfestival.com

CARFEST NORTH Line-up has yet to be announced, Fri 28 - Sun 30 July, Bolesworth Castle, Cheshire. More information and tickets at carfest.org

MADE BIRMINGHAM Line-up has yet to be announced, Sat 29 July, The Rainbow Venues, Digbeth. More information and tickets at madebirmingham.com

AUGUST

110 ABOVE FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Aug, Gosspall Hall Farm, Leicestershire. More information and tickets at 110above.com

BULLDOG BASH Line-up to be announced, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 Aug, Long Marston Airfield, Stratford Upon Avon. More information and tickets at bulldogbash.co.uk

BLOODSTOCK OPEN AIR Amon Amarth, Hatebreed and Hell headline, Thurs 10 - Sun 13 Aug, Catton Hall, Derbyshire. More information and tickets at bloodstock.uk.com

LAKEFEST Line-up has yet to be announced, Thurs 10 - Mon 14 Aug, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire. More information and tickets at lakefest.co.uk

FARMER PHIL'S FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 11 - Sun 13 Aug, near Gatten Farm, Shropshire. More information and tickets at farmerphilsfestival.com

THE JUST SO FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Aug, Rode Hall Parkland, Cheshire. More information and tickets at justsofestival.org.uk

FLASHBACK FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Aug, Thoresbury Estate, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. More information and tickets at theflashbackfestival.com

GLOWORM Line-up to be announced, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Aug, Clumber Park, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. More information and tickets at glowormfestival.co.uk

V FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Aug, Weston Park, Shropshire. More information and tickets at vfestival.com

FAKE FESTIVALS The UK's only touring tribute bands festival. Oasis, Guns n' Roses and New 2 announced, Sat 26 Aug, The Quarry, Shrewsbury. More information and tickets at fakefestivals.co.uk

SHAMBALA Line-up to be announced, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Aug, a secret location near Market Harborough, Northamptonshire. More information at shambalafestival.org

PRESTEIGNE FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Thurs 24 - Tues 29 Aug, Powys, Wales. More information and tickets at presteignefestival.com

CREAMFIELDS Line-up to be announced, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Aug, Cheshire. More information at creamfields.com

READING FESTIVAL Muse, Major Lazer and Bastille are amongst the first to be announced, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Aug, Little John's Farm, Reading, Berkshire. More information at readingfestival.com

SUNSHINE FESTIVAL Line-up includes The Three Degrees, The Wurzels and Elkie Brooks, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Aug, Fish Meadow, Upton upon Severn, Worcestershire. More information and tickets at uptonfestival.co.uk

BEERMAGEDDON Line-up to be announced, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Aug, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove. More information and tickets at beermageddon.co.uk

GREENBELT FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 25 - Mon 28 Aug, Boughton House, Northamptonshire. More information and tickets at greenbelt.org.uk

SHREWSBURY FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Alma, Coven and Maz O'Connor, Fri 25 - Mon 28 Aug, Greenhouse West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury. More information and tickets at shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk

SEPTEMBER

MOSELEY FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 1 - Sun 3 Sept, Moseley Park, Birmingham. More information and tickets at moseleyfolk.co.uk

ONBOARD THE CRAFT FESTIVAL Terminal Cheesecake, Bernie Torme and Quartz have been announced, Fri 8 - Sat 9 Sept, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove. More information and tickets at sonicrocksolstice.com

BROMYARD FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 8 - Sun 10 Sept, Bromyard, Herefordshire. More information and tickets at bromyardfolkfestival.co.uk

WORCESTER MUSIC FESTIVAL Line-up to be announced, Fri 15 - Sun 17 Sept, venues across Worcester. More information and tickets at worcestermusicfestival.co.uk

OCTOBER

LICHFIELD FESTIVAL OF FOLK Line-up to be announced, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Oct, venues around Lichfield, Staffordshire. More information at lichfieldarts.org.uk

For full festivals listings for 2017, head to whatsonlive.co.uk

REGINALD D HUNTER

Back on the road with a brand new show for 2017



Following a tour around Ireland over the summer, TV, radio and stand-up comedy star Reginald D Hunter is back on the road with a brand new show for 2017, stopping off in Leamington, Birmingham, Stafford and Shrewsbury in the spring.

Since moving to the UK 20 years ago, the US-born comic has become as familiar as any home-grown talent, with a reputation for thoughtful, politically conscious and often deliberately provocative routines - and his latest offering, *Some People vs Reginald D Hunter*, looks set to be no different. Having worked the circuit for so long, he's well placed to give a verdict on the state of modern comedy, and as far as he's concerned, current offerings leave something to be desired, though the reasons are more complex than you might imagine...

"At the minute, I am concerned about comedy in general," Hunter confesses, "there's something about it that seems kind of muted. It seems as if it's become very fractured and politicised, and too self-conscious about trying to be anti-backlash..."

"I don't want to come off like I'm blaming comedy. In recent times, it's gotten a little too easy in Western culture to attribute blame. I think comedians just don't quite know what to say at the moment, because so much of comedy is based on having an object of satire or ridicule, and in this day and age, it's so easy to offend people, in a different way to how it has been in the past. I worry that comedy is getting more and more afraid to speak its mind."

There is evidence to support his point of view. Remarkably, Hunter has himself come under fire for his treatment of race in routines - whether it's his choice of language or, in one notable instance,

including jokes on the subject at all. His last tour, The Aluminium Negro, provoked walk-outs (not all that unusual) and he has spoken in the past about those he dubs "Outragists", those who come along to shows specifically to be offended by what they hear - a relatively recent phenomenon he believes has its roots in discussions around political correctness going back to the '90s.

"My momma used to say, 'It's one thing to be offended, and it's yet another thing to go out of your way to be offended.' There's something new about this, and I think it's in large part to do with the growth of identity politics, which makes people insistent that their specific group's plight and history be recognised and given its due."

As a medium that's designed to comment on the society in which it finds itself, it's inevitable that changes in comedy should reflect the wider cultural and political shifts we've been experiencing over the last few years.

"Ever since the '80s, our media, our leaders and our culture have been repeatedly stressing personal happiness and individualism, and all of those things are fine and well, but they're also the opposite of community. So all those of us who embraced those ideas of individualism, being able to custom design our entertainment and our lives, all of a sudden, one day we went, 'Hey, where's the community?' It's hard to have community when half the room has on headphones and the other half are staring at their phones."

To an extent, the growth of the internet and increasing globalisation, coupled with a focus on personal freedom over collectivity and solidarity have collapsed the distinctions between nations, resulting in a kind of disconnect and insularity spread across much of Europe and America.

"The greatest problem with having maximum choice is a lack of consensus. I do believe the power to change things resides in us, and that we have the numbers, but we're too busy bickering amongst ourselves. I mean, I love England and everything, but if you go to a town hall meeting and somebody's talking

about getting this new park installed so the kids have somewhere to play, somebody's gonna raise their hand and say, 'Well, what colour we gonna paint the slides?' or 'Where're disabled people gonna park?' And they ain't even finished talking yet! That's what makes me fear for fascism - it's like, out of a supreme lack of consensus, someone will rise and be thrust into a place where they will be involved in creating a new consensus. We forget that, before 1945, fascism was considered a legitimate form of government."

In a way, it should be comedy's job to criticise and satirise these issues - just as it's the job of a political opposition to tackle them head on. At present, however, both seem to be struggling to present a coherent and effective challenge.

"The problem with the stillness and the stagnation of stand-up comedy is the same as the problem with our politics: there are too many people - often hidden people - invested in the status quo. On the one hand, if you are profiting from a system, even if most people aren't, then why would you want to change it? On the other hand, there are a lot of people opting for the status quo even though they know it's not that great because they're scared the alternative will be worse."

All of this will doubtless surface in his new show. While his last tour was described as containing some of his most personal material in years, he now feels that "there's a whole lot of things to comment about other than my life right now". And as long as comedy remains half-asleep, he feels a responsibility to try to "shake it back up".

"Having written most of this [new show] before Trump got elected, I've been thinking a lot in this material about the OJ Simpson case, which I think directly leads us to the racial moment in America right now," he offers, tantalisingly, but won't say more. "Movies do trailers..." he laughs.

But for all his keeping an eye on developments back in the motherland, after two decades away, he's getting closer and closer to having lived in Britain for as long as he was in the States.

"It's just surprising," he says, sounding genuinely bemused. "It feels more like 10 years than 20!"

Asked whether that diminishes his ability to riff on his outsider status and observe us from a distance, he's not so sure.

"I felt like an outsider in America when I was growing up, and I feel like an outsider in Britain now. The difference is that feeling like an outsider in Britain seems... normal. There are people who've lived here all their lives who feel like outsiders, but one of the things I love about Britain is that it makes room for what y'all like to call the eccentric. I mean, hell, Britain makes a warm and comfortable space for mother****ers who just like staring at trains! I think that's very evolved."

There's reason to be optimistic then, despite the grown sense of division born out of contemporary political discourse, and despite the fact that he's anticipating more walk-outs and "p****ed off people" when he embarks on his tour in April. As he already said, he believes the power to make a change lies within us. And the simplest thing that we can do to start with?

"Start calling things what they are. There's so much euphemistic language - things like 'war on terrorism' or 'perception management' - that's just a fancy way of saying lies. I think when we collectively in Western culture don't call things what they are, added to all the drugs - prescription and otherwise - and all the propaganda nonsense in the system, it's no wonder people are going f***ing crazy! If you eliminate the euphemisms, I think you'll find that a lot of the mental health issues people are suffering will begin to clear up a bit, I really do."

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Some People vs Reginald D Hunter shows at: Royal Spa Centre, Leamington, Saturday 6 May; New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Friday 12 May; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Saturday 20 May; and Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wednesday 24 May



Jack Whitehall

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 January; Genting Arena, Birmingham, Thurs 16 February; Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Sun 26 Feb

A fella who's had no trouble whatsoever getting his boat race on the goggle-box, Jack Whitehall's highly animated style of delivery is developing all the time, as is his repertoire of material. Subject matter has ranged from his father's desperate attempts to get quoted in his show, to his 2010 cocaine shame, as exposed at the time by the News Of The World. As for his jokes, previous chuckle-muscle exercisers have included: "I've never laughed a woman into bed, but I've laughed one out of bed many times," and "I'm posh, but I don't take any stick for it. It's like I always say, sticks and stones may break my bones but f*** it, I'm with Bupa."

Six of the best...

Lee Hurst

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 13 January

Back in the mid-1990s' era of lads' mags, Brit Pop and Euro '96, Lee Hurst was one of the most popular and familiar funnymen on television. It's strange to think, therefore, that his later career has included a decade's gap between one national tour and the next. He's reacquainted himself with life on the road in the last few years, presenting an act that's as sharp, cheeky and witty as ever it was. A proudly no-nonsense comedian, Lee's called this latest offering Comedy Show No 9, for the simple reason that, as the man himself explains, "it's a show, it's the ninth one and it's comedy - what else do you need to know? Come along for a night of laughs with that bald bloke you thought was dead."



Duncan Oakley

Couture, Stafford, Sat 21 January; Religion, Wolverhampton, Sat 21 January

Just as comfortable with the guitar, harmonica, drums and piano as he is with a big bagful of top gags, Duncan Oakley presents what's probably most easily described as a musical comedy act. He's a performer best kept out of earshot of your grandmother, with his stand-up routine being liberally peppered with four-letter expletives and gags about drinking and having sex. There's some silly stuff in there too - a previous musical composition bore the title The Girl With A Bum For A Face...



Paul Sinha

The Bramall, Birmingham, Thurs 19 January

A gay Asian doctor turned funnyman, Paul Sinha has enjoyed great success at the Edinburgh Festival. He's also a clever and articulate contributor to numerous radio and television shows, perhaps most notably ITV's award-winning quiz series, The Chase, where he's been one of the regular 'Chasers' since 2011. Alongside his stand-up, Paul has also carved out a further career for himself as a professional quizzer, attaining grandmaster status a couple of years ago and reaching a career-high UK ranking in 2015. His stand-up routines often include anecdotes and one-liners about gay dating, including: "I've recently downloaded a new smartphone app to give me the location for all the single, middle-aged men in my area. It's called Uber."



Tiff Stevenson

mac, Birmingham, Thurs 26 January

She may not be the most inventive of comedians, but 2011 Show Me The Funny contestant Tiffany Stevenson more than makes up for a lack of imagination with her charming personality and engaging style of delivery. She's been described as 'a breathing version of Heat magazine', is appealingly self-disparaging, and ensures that her audience never have to wait too long for a punchline.

An example of her style of humour is as follows: "You can tell how good a medical person is in bed depending on which area of medicine they work in. The paramedics obviously like a quick 'get in and out', the GPs cover a lot of areas but don't really know what's going on, and the surgeons like to go in there, rummage around, mess things up and then leave something behind that shouldn't have been there."



Andrew Ryan

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 January

Irishman Andrew Ryan is a rising star on the UK comedy circuit, albeit one who would greatly benefit from finding a unique selling point. With his amiable persona and confident style of delivery ensuring his show is a comfortable ride for his audience, he peddles a self-deprecating and hugely endearing line in humour, happily waxing lyrical about his low self-esteem, ever-present anxiety and tendency towards paranoia. Although an occasional impulse to over-explain his material puts an unnecessary brake on the laughometer from time to time, he's got an act which, if carefully polished, could really start to shine.



Gary Delaney

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 13 January; The Glee Club, Birmingham; Sun 15 January; Henry Tudor House, Thurs 19 January

"The hardest part of running competitively in Wales must be keeping up with the Joneses," quips Gary Delaney. Gary's certainly no one-gag pony: "My girlfriend's dog died, so to cheer her up I went out and got her an identical one. She was livid and yelled, 'What am I going to do with two dead dogs?'" Or how about: "The president of France said that the English are arrogant with their refusal to learn foreign languages. At least I think that's what he said. It all just sounded like haw-he-haw-he-haw-he-haw to me."



Ruth Graham

Old Joint Stock, Theatre, Fri 27 January

At the last count, Ruth Graham reckoned she'd made 27 house moves during the course of her life and been employed in 46 jobs, ranging from bellydancer to funeral celebrant. Judging by those statistics, it would seem she likes to move on quickly, so fingers crossed she at least stays in the Old Joint Stock for long enough to finish this show... Often compared to Fascinating Aida and Victoria Wood, Ruth presents a set that's big on comedy characters and original songs, covering topics that range from internet dating and social media to childhood and the trials and tribulations of running a B&B.



Wonderland

Curiouser and curiouser! Broadway composer Frank Wildhorn tumbles down the rabbit hole in a spectacular new musical



Kerry Ellis



Wendy Peters



Dave Willetts

It was in 1886 that the wacky world of Alice's Adventures In Wonderland first made it onto the stage, in an adaptation that the novel's author, Lewis Carroll (otherwise known as Cambridge mathematician Charles Dodgson), had a hand in.

Within the writer's lifetime then, the topsyturvy story and its cast of colourful characters were already delighting audiences in performance, and a mere 17 years later, they were being interpreted through the exciting new medium of film.

One of the latest companies to join the long and noble tradition of reinventing Alice is led by Broadway composer Frank Wildhorn, whose work on shows like *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Victor/Victoria* and *Bonnie & Clyde* has earned him international acclaim. First performed in 2009, *Wonderland* has already enjoyed success in the States; now a reworked version with a brand new British cast is making its way to UK shores for a tour beginning later this month.

Following a sneak preview of some of the fabulous songs from the show, both cast and creative team were on hand to tell us more about what we can expect when it hits Birmingham in early February.

"In the late '90s, I was fortunate enough to have three shows on Broadway," says Wildhorn, "*Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and *Civil War*, and so I was living on the Upper West side in a big high-rise building. I have two sons, and the elevator up to our home was always broken. Eventually I was running out of stories to tell my kids about why they couldn't fix the elevator, and for some reason I told them that if anyone did

manage to get on it, and take it all the way down through Macy's department store, they'd eventually get to Wonderland."

Wildhorn's kids are by no means an unusual source of inspiration for him. A previous family musical, *Excalibur*, came about as an attempt to engage his children with the story of *Camelot*, which his parents had loved and taught to him, but which his own kids didn't seem to "get". Departing somewhat from Carroll's vision, the story of *Wonderland* taps into this parent-child dynamic and the idea of the passing on of stories. Like the recent Tim Burton films, it sees Alice return to *Wonderland* as an adult, only this time, she's middle-aged, a mother going through a messy separation with her partner, as well as a schoolteacher with ambitions of becoming a children's writer. Much like the books then, it aims to present a child's eye view of the complexities and contradictions of the grown-up world.

"It all starts with the idea of the child within us all," Wildhorn continues. "The opening lyrics of my song, *Finding Wonderland*, are 'We move too fast; we miss so much'. And it's true - there is a *Wonderland* in all our lives if we could only take a breath and notice it. In this particular adventure, Alice has to rescue her own child, and in doing so, she rediscovers the child within herself."

"Frank's taken the Lewis Carroll story and done something really exciting with it," adds Director Lotte Wakeham. "In the original, Alice doesn't really do very much - she's essentially a tourist in *Wonderland*. We've looked at how we can make the heroine of our show go on a great, energising adventure with her daughter



and the audience.”

Having conceived the show while living in New York, it's perhaps no surprise that Wildhorn chose the city as the setting for its original stage outing. Just like in his story to his children, Alice ends up back in Wonderland via the lift to her apartment. However, when the show arrives in Britain, it will feature a completely reimagined setting and design.

“For the UK tour, we're going back to the original story, and it will be UK based, with a relevant look and sound,” says Wakeham. “We're still making some changes to the script, and we're really excited about it. Since the source material is so quirky and quintessentially British, this version of the show will be exactly that, too.”

“I've been inspired by the original illustrations and other incarnations of the story, but I've also tried to give it a fresh angle,” explains Costume Designer Grace Smart. “I've been looking at a lot of the UK's eccentric celebrities, so that we can keep the British feel yet keep true to the original story.”

“It's about looking at what's been done before and thinking about what we can bring to the whole Alice In Wonderland world,” agrees Set Designer Andrew Riley. “It's a very episodic story - she goes to a lot of locations, and I wanted to create a contemporary visual that people will recognise.”

For the cast, getting to put their own stamp on roles completely new to UK audiences with almost no precedent to turn to has also been a thrill.

“My job is to be creative,” says Wendi Peters, who plays the Queen of Hearts. “I don't like doing anything for too long, and I just love the process of reading something off the page and thinking through how I can best tell the story. In the case of Wonderland, we've got nothing really to copy, and that's lovely. I don't think that any actor should ever copy what's been before, though of course if the material's out there you're going to have a sneaky look at what's been done previously! But apart from a performance by the Broadway cast at the Tony Awards, there's little else online - and I love that because I can think through the character myself and hopefully bring something new to it.

“It's always fun to play baddies, but you must find something in them that makes people like them a little bit. I'd like to think there'll be a bit of all my comedy heroes in my Queen of Hearts: Molly Sugden, Peggy Mount and Patricia Routledge, who played Hyacinth 'Bouquet' Bucket in Keeping Up Appearances. She's a monster, but part of you can't help loving her!”

While more than a century's worth of adaptations might have made the characters familiar in other forms, the versions of them in Wonderland will be unlike any you've previously encountered.

“This won't be a revival of any kind,” says Dave Willetts, who plays the White Rabbit. “It's essentially a new creation, and Frank is allowing us all to be a part of that. One of my grandchildren told me I had to have rabbit ears, and I guess there might be, but part of the magic is actually leaving a lot to the imagination of the

audience. It's about the characterisation, the mannerisms, what you say and the way in which you speak.”

One of the most obvious breaks from tradition is the Mad Hatter, who will be played by a young woman, Natalie McQueen. There's a good reason for this change. We can't give away too much, but rest assured, in McQueen's own words, “It's not the Hatter that you know.” Instead of the mad old man we're used to, McQueen's Hatter is feisty, edgy and full of attitude. For her, getting to play the part has been a dream come true.

“Alice in Wonderland is up there with The Little Mermaid as one of my favourite films,” she gushes. “It's just completely bonkers and I love it. When I was up on stage last night, I actually had to have a moment to convince myself that the orchestra was really there, and that it was really happening. I was sure there must have been a mistake - it just seemed too good to be true!”

Frank Wildhorn hopes that audiences from eight to 80 will be just as entranced by the magic of Wonderland as McQueen has been, and wants everyone who comes along to fully immerse themselves in the spirit of the show.

“We're hoping the audience will come dressed up as the characters,” he laughs. “You should definitely encourage that!”

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Wonderland shows at the New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, from Mon 6 to Sat 11 February; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 10 - Sat 15 July; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Mon 31 July to Sat 5 August

Evita

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 31 January - Sat 4 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 9 - Sat 13 May

Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice's third major collaboration opened to rave reviews way back in the late 1970s. It has since garnered a reputation as one of the greatest musicals ever to grace West End and Broadway stages.

Telling the real-life story of Eva Peron, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Peron, the show is packed to the rafters with memorable numbers, including On This Night Of A Thousand Stars, Buenos Aires, You Must Love Me, Another Suitcase In Another Hall and, of course, the classic Don't Cry For Me Argentina.

Casting is yet to be confirmed...



Lady Chatterley's Lover

Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 26 January - Fri 3 February

Although DH Lawrence's most famous novel was first published in the late 1920s, it was more than 30 years before the unexpurgated version finally saw the light of day. When it did, its explicit descriptions of sex and use of words which were at the time unprintable made it the subject of a watershed obscenity trial. The jury found for the defendant, the novel's publisher, Penguin Books, who went on to sell more than three million copies of the title at breakneck speed.

This Blue Orange version of Lawrence's book, recounting the story of Lady Chatterley's affair with working-class game-keeper Oliver Mellors, heads out on tour after its seven-performance run in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.

Not surprisingly given the subject matter, the show contains full-frontal nudity and scenes of a sexual nature.

Cathy

mac, Birmingham, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 January

A half century after Ken Loach's ground-breaking film Cathy Come Home turned the spotlight on the issue of homelessness in the UK, London theatre company Cardboard Citizens explores its resonances in 21st century British society.

The ensemble's mission statement is to create 'life-changing theatre' with and for homeless people, a task which they've been pursuing with great success for the last 25 years. This latest work, a new play by the award-winning Ali Taylor, reflects on the social and personal impact of spiralling

housing costs, gentrification and the challenges of forced relocation away from London.

The performance is followed by an interactive theatrical debate, with the audience being invited to participate in a live rewriting of the story.



What's In A Name?

The REP, Birmingham, Fri 27 January - Sat 11 February

British theatre director, writer and translator Jeremy Sams is the man behind this new adaptation of award-winning French farce *Le Prénom*, here receiving its British premiere. When Elizabeth and her husband invite her brother - father-to-be Vincent - his partner Anna and childhood friend Claude to dinner, an evening of mature and sophisticated conversation seems very much in prospect. Until, that is, the name of Vincent and Anna's expected child is revealed, precipitating a full-blooded argument that soon spirals spectacularly out of control...

A film version of Alexandre de La Patellière and Matthieu Delaport's original play met with great critical acclaim when it was released in 2012.

Casting includes Nigel Harman, Sarah Hadland and Ray Coulthard.

Gaslight

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Sat 14 January

Patrick Hamilton's play comes with a royal seal of approval, with both King George and Queen Elizabeth having insisted on seeing it during its hugely successful West End run. *Gaslight's* reputation was further secured by its three-plus years on Broadway, during which period it was performed an impressive 1,295 times.

All of which should nicely whet the appetite for this latest version.

Bella Manningham's life is a fun-free zone. Feeling trapped in her gloomy home, she sits alone each night dreading the sound of footsteps from locked and empty rooms, and waiting for the gaslight to dim.

When a retired detective arrives one evening with a terrifying tale to tell, Bella must work out whether her visitor is really there to help, or if she's about to descend into a pit of madness from which there can be no return...

Kara Tointon, Rupert Young and Keith Allen star.





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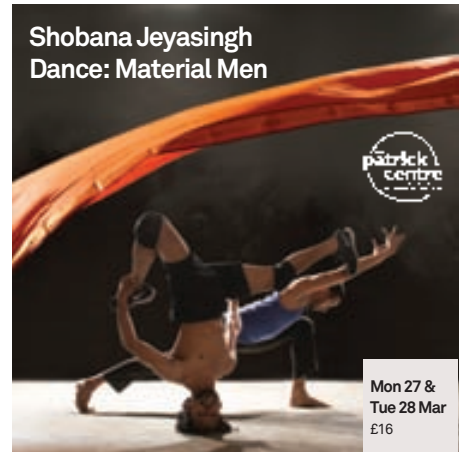
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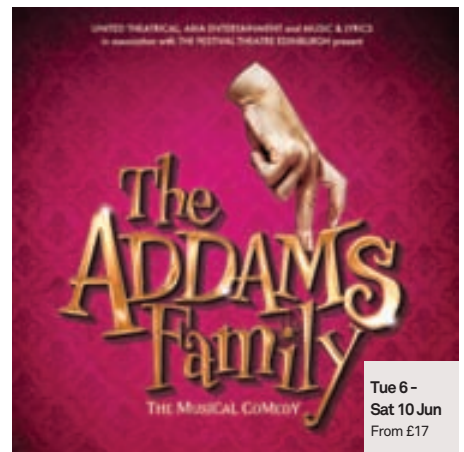
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Tue 6 - Sat 10 Jun From £17

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The Play That Goes Wrong

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 23 - Sat 28 January;
Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 3 - Sat 8 April;
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 1 - Sat 6 May;
The REP, Birmingham, Mon 19 - Sat 24 June; Malvern
Theatre, Mon 17 - Sat 22 July

A play about a play that goes wrong isn't a new idea but it's certainly a winning one - as the plaudits garnered by this cheeky Fringe hit ably illustrate. One reviewer laughed so much he feared he was going to hyperventilate, while another admitted his funny bone had been well and truly struck by the piece. Actress Joanna Lumley, meanwhile, laughed until 'the tears ran down'.

Mischief Theatre Company's Edinburgh Festival show arrives in the region on the back of a fantastic reputation and a couple of successful West End runs. For those not in the know, the play focuses on the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society's attempt to put on a 1920s-set murder-mystery. The only trouble is, the bumbling thespians are more than a little accident-prone - so much so, in fact, that they're not even sure they'll manage to reach the curtain call...



Frankenstein

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Wed 25
January; Malvern Theatre, Mon 13 - Wed 15
February; Lichfield Garrick, Fri 17 - Sat 18
February

Theatrical versions of Mary Shelley's classic gothic horror story are rare indeed, so this Blackeyed Theatre production should be well worth an evening of your time. Shelley's 1818



novel finds Dr Frankenstein giving life to a creature who so horrifies him that the scientist flees into the night. But although he can run from his ghoulish creation, he cannot hide. Soon enough Frankenstein finds himself face to face not only with the 'monster' but also with the chance to play God for a second and final time...

Blackeyed Theatre presented a hugely successful version of Dracula in 2013, so are well versed in the business of adapting classic horror stories for the stage.



The Singular Exploits Of Sherlock Holmes

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton,
Saturday 28 January

Everybody's favourite fictional sleuth makes a welcome return, donning the deerstalker, puffing the pipe, wielding the magnifying glass and, on this occasion, breaking the fourth wall to regale the audience with stories from his glittering career as the world's greatest detective.

The always-value-for-money Don't Go Into The Cellar are the theatre company staging this one-man touring show, which has met with an altogether favourable response on its travels over the past few months.

The Seven Acts Of Mercy

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,
until Fri 10 February

Anders Lustgarten's visceral new play is based on the Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's masterpiece, The Seven Acts Of Mercy.

Originally commissioned by the Church of Pio Monte della Misericordia in Naples, where it still hangs today, the painting presents (not surprisingly, given its title) seven merciful acts. These are: to visit the imprisoned; feed the hungry; bury the dead; shelter the homeless; clothe the naked; visit the sick; and refresh the thirsty. Created in 1606, the painting was Caravaggio's first after killing a man in Rome

and fleeing the city.

Four hundred years later, a retired dock worker eager to teach his grandson about the tragedy and beauty of the life he will face, turns for inspiration to the only thing he has left - a book of great works of art...



Thelma

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 20 January

A pilot-night showing of this one-woman production was given a big thumbs-up by its audience, who variously described it as hilarious, poignant, touching and 'excellently written and executed'. All of which must have pleased its writer and executor Gina George no end, as she prepared to take the show out on the road.

Bringing together powerful spoken word, both tender and not-so-tender musical moments and the chance to grapple with the delights of the Geordie dialect, the production focuses on the interaction between three generations of women - a grandmother, mother and daughter - and the effect of idolisation and isolation on their relationship with one another.

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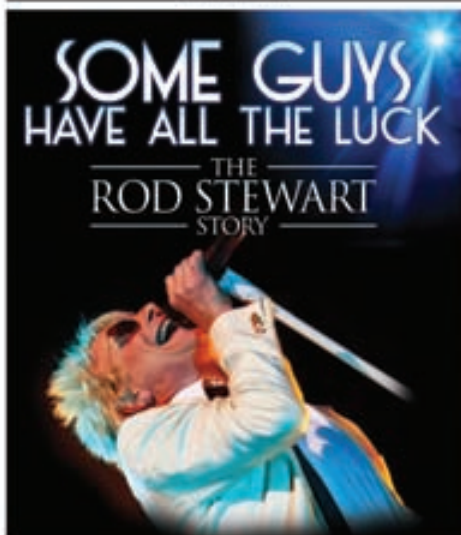
FRI 27 JAN



SAT 28 JAN



WED 8 FEB



FRI 10 - SAT 11 FEB



SUN 12 FEB



TUE 14 - SAT 18 FEB



TUE 21 - SAT 25 FEB



FRI 10 MAR



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Pantomimes and festive shows in January

Dick Whittington

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sun 29 January & Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, until Sat 7 January

Doctor Who and Torchwood star John Barrowman will be hoping the streets of the second city are paved with gold this Christmas, when he takes the title role in Birmingham Hippodrome's pantomime production of Dick Whittington.

Joining John on stage this year, to star as King Rat, is Steve McFadden, best known as EastEnders bad boy Phil Mitchell. Support comes from The Krankies (as Councillor and Jimmy Krankie), Hippodrome favourite Matt Slack (as Idle Jack), West End star Jodie Prenger (as Fairy Bow Bells) and popular Midlands panto Dame, Andrew Ryan (as Sarah the Cook).

The story of a young man who heads off on his travels in search of fame and fortune, Dick Whittington is one of the most popular of all pantomimes. It's therefore no surprise to find that our eponymous hero's journey sees him stopping off at not one, not two, but three theatres across the Midlands this Christmas.

As well as the Hippodrome, Dick's also visiting the Coventry Belgrade, where the venue's long-term panto writer, director and Dame, Iain Lauchlan, is returning for his 22nd show. Iain's heading up a production that comes complete with 'singalong songs, amazing sets and extravagant costumes' - and which will no doubt be packed to its festive rafters with action, comedy and family fun.

Aladdin

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, until Sun 22 January

The Wolverhampton Grand is certainly on a roll when it comes to providing high-quality



Dick Whittington at Birmingham Hippodrome

panto fare - and the venue's Christmas 2016 offering looks set to be every bit as energised and entertaining as any of its illustrious predecessors.

X-Factor winner Joe McElderry takes the title role in a show that also sees internet sensation Doreen Tipton making her panto debut as the Lazy Empress Of China.

Pantomime stalwart Lisa Riley stars as the Slave Of The Ring, with CBeebies' Mr Bloom - Ben Faulks - threatening to feel a collar or two as the Chief of Peking Police.

Britain's Got Talent soprano Lucy Kay appears in the role of Princess Jasmine, while illusionist Stefan Pejic plays the evil sorcerer Abanazar.

Panto regular Ian Adams dons a plethora of glamorous outfits as Widow Twankey.

Aladdin: The Wok'n'Roll Panto

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, until Sun 8 January

They've done it before and now they're doing it again. Yep, Stafford Gatehouse's oft-used strategy of imbuing their annual pantomime with a real rock'n'roll flavour has proved so popular in previous years that the venue is giving the exact same treatment to its 2016 production. So... they've taken this famous Arabian Nights story, stirred in a few time-honoured pantomime favourites, and then seasoned liberally with all manner of rock'n'roll hits - including favourites from Aretha Franklin, The Monkees, James Brown, The Temptations and The Jackson Five.

Sleeping Beauty

Malvern Theatre, until Sun 8 January

The tragic tale of a young princess who's tricked by an evil fairy and pricks her finger on a spinning wheel, causing her to sleep for



Aladdin at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

100 years, offers a great story around which to build a pantomime production of real quality.

Star of The Sooty Show, Chris Pizzey, stars as Silly Billy. Chris will be joined by a top-billing Gillian Wright - aka EastEnders' Jean Slater - Channel Five's Milkshake presenter Amy Thompson and Casualty's Rebecca Wheatley. Quinn Patrick dons the poorly applied rouge and comedy wig to play Nurse Nelly.

Cinderella

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury & Swan Theatre, Worcester, until Sun 8 January

'Son of the Potteries' Jonathan Wilkes dons the tights to star as Buttons in this ever-popular pantomime tale. Homecoming hero Jonathan is pretty much a festive fixture at the Regent Theatre nowadays, as is his good pal Christian Patterson, who's also making a welcome return. With its comical Ugly Sisters, matchmaking fairy godmother, drop-dead-gorgeous Prince Charming, super-cute mice and fits-one-foot-only glass slipper, Cinderella can justifiably lay claim to being the most popular of all pantomimes. And the Regent Theatre production isn't the only incarnation of this legendary fairytale delighting Midlands audiences this Christmas...

Theatre Severn's version of the story features all the usual panto elements of comedy, singing, dancing, audience participation and 'stunning' sets and costumes. And also very much as usual, it stars the ever-popular Brad Pitt, on this occasion appearing 'as you've never seen him before'...

Cinders is this year also putting some elbow grease into scrubbing the stage at the Swan Theatre in Worcestershire, courtesy of the well-regarded Worcester Theatre Company.



Cinderella at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



The Snowman

The Snowman

The REP, Birmingham,
Wed 11 - Sun 15 January

Making a welcome return to The Rep in its now almost-traditional New Year slot, Raymond Briggs's *The Snowman* is best known for Howard Blake's classic song, *Walking In The Air*.

When a young boy's snowman comes to life on Christmas Eve, the two set off on a night-time quest for excitement. On their travels, they meet reindeer, dancing penguins and some of the Snowman's many and varied friends.

The adventure's not without its anxieties, though, with the evil Jack Frost eager to get his icy mits on the pair of unlikely chums...

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,
Mon 30 - Tues 31 January

In a career stretching back to the mid-1960s, Eric Carle has illustrated more than 70 books - writing most of them too. None have been more famous or successful than his 1969 story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

The popular picture book has been translated into more than 60 languages, selling in excess of 52 million copies.

This stage version of Carle's much-loved tale is presented alongside three other popular children's stories by the same author - *The Artist Who Painted A Blue Horse*, *Mister Seahorse* and *The Very Lonely Firefly*.

The Snow Queen

The Blue Orange Theatre,
Wed 4 - Sat 7 January

The Snow Queen is ruler of all she surveys. When she kidnaps young Kay, it's left to his friend Gerda to save him from a bleak future in the frostbitten wastelands...

Jars Of Clay Theatre Company give this Hans Christian Andersen work a brand new treatment, presenting a timeless tale featuring 'rip-roaring fights, brand new songs and a traditional battle of good versus evil'.



The Jungle Book

The Jungle Book

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Fri 13 - Sat 14 January; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 15 January; The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Sun 5 February

Although zany funsters Oddsocks are probably best known for their humorous takes on the works of William Shakespeare, they occasionally like to shake things up a bit by looking for their inspiration elsewhere. This is one such occasion.

Made universally popular by the classic Walt Disney movie, Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* tells the story of a young boy named Mowgli who's been raised in the jungle by a family of wolves. His friends, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther, are determined to save him from the evil intentions of Shere Khan the tiger.

But keeping Mowgli safe is no walk in the jungle, as his two furry pals soon find out...

Little Howard And The Magic Pencil Of Life And Death

mac, Birmingham, Sun 29 January

If you've never heard of Big Howard and Little Howard, you're not watching enough CBBC television.

The pair have enjoyed huge success with their series, *Little Howard's Big Question* - so much so that heading out on a live tour is an absolute no-brainer for the boys.

Big Howard is human, Little Howard is an animated six-year-old who's discovered 'the magical pencil of life' that drew him - although somewhat disturbingly for the young chap, on the opposite end of the pencil is 'the eraser of death'...

What's equally disconcerting for Little H is that Big Howard has had a real-life baby - and one who's getting a little bit too much attention...

Interactive stand-up, 3D animation and a succession of singalong songs should ensure the show's young audience will be every bit as enthralled by the 'live' Howards as when they're watching them on the telly at home.



The Boy Who Bit Picasso

The Boy Who Bit Picasso

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick,
Sun 29 January

Play-clothes are very much the order of the day with this show - it's fair to say things could get decidedly messy!

An interactive theatre production for children aged four and older, *The Boy Who Bit Picasso* tells the story of how a young lad became friends with one of the greatest artists who ever lived. Along the way, the show offers audience members the chance to get really hands-on by making their own art - hence the play-clothes recommendation!

Treasure Island

The REP, Birmingham, until Sat 7 January

This latest theatrical version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic tale, a modern adaptation by Bryony Lavery, puts an interesting spin on the author's swashbuckling story, with the chief protagonist being a girl rather than a boy.

When pirates ransack her grandmother's inn, fearless Jim is drawn into the adventure of a lifetime - one which will see her not only setting sail in search of buried treasure but also spending time in the company of a one-legged pirate with murder in mind...



The Red Shoes

Heather Kincaid catches up with choreographer Matthew Bourne to talk about his stage reinvention of ‘the greatest dance film ever made’



“How would you define ballet?”

So asks the tyrannical dance instructor, Boris Lermontov, in Powell and Pressburger's 1948 classic, *The Red Shoes*, going on to reveal that, for him, “it is religion.”

Widely regarded as the greatest dance film ever made, *The Red Shoes* centres on young ballerina and star in the making Vicky Page. When Vicky falls for the company's charismatic composer, Julian Craster, the jealous Lermontov forces her to choose between love and her career, knowing full well that for Vicky, dancing is as much a necessity as living.

In a sumptuous new adaptation headed for Birmingham Hippodrome next month, Matthew Bourne reinvents the story live on stage, delving deep into the film's strange, unsettling atmosphere and the complex psychology of its characters. It's one that's been on his to-do list for quite some time.

“Generally, I don't really like films about dance, or dance about dance, so in some ways it was an odd choice for me,” Bourne reveals. “I first saw the film when I was a teenager, before I'd ever even seen a ballet, so really, it was the thing that introduced me to the world of dance, and I think that's true for many people. It was a kind of weird and eccentric world that I fell in love with the idea of.”

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale about a pair of enchanted shoes that force their wearer to dance until she dies, the film reworks Andersen's warning against vanity into a tale of all-consuming, almost Faustian ambition. Upon rewatching the movie, Bourne says he was surprised to find himself feeling more sympathetic

towards the manipulative instructor than he had been in the past. Years of experience with dancers have taught him that to be the best at something invariably demands sacrifice, and there is some truth to the view that love can be a distraction.

“People do have a problem sometimes with defining someone who is very ambitious as someone who is too pushy or whatever, but I don't think ambition should be frowned upon so much. I feel like [Vicky] knows that she's good. She doesn't expect everything to happen to her, but she knows she has talent, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that.”

In Bourne's own take on the story, Vicky has even more reason to be ambitious. A wartime orphan living with an increasingly distant aunt, she's far less privileged than in the film. Like Bourne himself, she begins as something of an outsider to this world, taking nothing for granted and accustomed to striving hard for success. To have come so far perhaps makes the prospect of hanging up her ballet shoes all the more difficult to accept.

“If you watch the film, in her very first appearance, she's sitting at the ballet in a beautiful dress with a sort of crown or tiara on her head. It's quite extreme, and perhaps that's one of the things people like about it, but when you're telling a story today, people tend to prefer the idea of someone who has to struggle a bit more. She's only from slightly more humble beginnings - she's not a Little Match Girl waif - but it's not a foregone conclusion that she's going to get everything she wants.”

In addition to rewriting Vicky's backstory, Bourne has also fleshed out the life and work of the company as a whole, providing them with a repertoire of their own.

“We have several little ballets in the piece which the company are either rehearsing or performing. There's a beach ballet which creates a link to the actual beach when they visit Monte Carlo. In the second half, we have what we call the 'Good vs Evil' ballet - it's called Concerto Macabre in the programme - which

reflects the atmosphere of what's going on in the story at that point. That's based on a famously barefoot ballet Frederick Ashton did called Dante's Sonata. We also do a bit of Les Sylphides, and then there's a big, grand, glamorous, waltzy ballet near the beginning to represent the world Vicky wants to be a part of. So it's almost like watching a bit of dance history - you can see all the references.”

It's a history that Bourne has been encouraging his dancers to investigate and work into their performances. As well as picking up on similarities between Ballet Lermontov and his own company, New Adventures, he's based his vision of them on his knowledge of 1940s Sadler's Wells, before it became the Royal Ballet, when things were still a little rough around the edges.

“The dancers in a ballet company are very different now - much more sleek and technically advanced than they would have been in those days. I always get (the dancers) to do a lot of research for my shows, and it's been quite a fun project for them to get to know what it was like then, though there were a couple of things we couldn't follow. The men at that time weren't very good, for example - anyone who was vaguely interested would be in a company because male dancers were so hard to come by, so I've told them that they have to dance better than that!”

Famously, the big finale is a new ballet version of the original Hans Christian Andersen tale, with striking visuals and an almost unreal quality. In Bourne's dance version, The Red Shoes ballet has been made to deliberately stand apart from the more traditional, period styles of design and movement employed earlier in the show.

“We've tried to make it feel like they're doing something new and original and forward-looking, so the movement is more contemporary in some ways. We've also tried to create a look that's very different from the rest of the show - I don't want to give away too much because it comes as quite a surprise when it happens, but the whole set changes. I guess it's a bit like an MGM musical with Gene Kelly or Fred Astaire where they'd have what they used to call a dream ballet.”

Not only does this mark a sharp change from the rest of the production, it's also something of a departure for Matthew Bourne and New Adventures, involving the sort of complex point work he's always tended to avoid. Even the music has been chosen to lift this sequence out of its time, pushing it into the brave new world of the 1960s with excerpts from the score of Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*.

In keeping with the movie inspiration, the whole score for the production has been pieced together from works by the legendary film composer Bernard Hermann - best known for his iconic soundtracks to *The Twilight Zone* and, among various other Hitchcock films, *Psycho*.

“Herman has a wonderful sort of bittersweet feeling about his music which really suits the story very well. I think it's one of the real surprises of the piece, how amazing the score is, and it's all been brought together and arranged by Terry Davies, so it sounds like one score rather than lots of different bits and pieces.

“I made a decision not to use any of the Hitchcock scores because people would be thinking about other things if they heard those, so I've chosen less well-known stuff from the '30s and '40s. There are some concert pieces he wrote, as well as some from a film called *The Ghost And Mrs Muir*, which I've always felt has one of the most beautiful film scores ever. There's also some from *Citizen Kane*, which I've known for many years but never realised before how great the music is for dancing.”

With the current abundance of TV talent shows, a growing obsession with celebrities and increasing competition for creative careers, the story of what it takes to be a star feels in many ways more timely now than ever, even if dancers don't yet enjoy the same recognition as their contemporaries in acting and music. But perhaps the success of shows like *Strictly* is set to change all that...

.....
The Red Shoes shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 7 to Saturday 11 February

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Motionhouse: Scattered

Old Rep, Birmingham, Tues 31 January - Fri 3 February; Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 February

Touring since 2009, Scattered sees local company Motionhouse bringing together their trademark physical dance theatre and mesmerising aerial imagery to create a unique interaction between film and live performance.

The critically acclaimed work explores the majesty and savagery of water, with seven dancers plunging into an ocean, wrestling a raging tide and sliding on an avalanche to a frozen landscape of arctic beauty.

“The Motionhouse dance experience cradles virtually all other art forms,” says the company’s co-founder and director, Kevin Finnan. “We’re working with people who are filmmakers, composers, visual artists and digital artists to create our productions. Our dancers are gymnasts, break dancers, aerialists - and this diversity in skills and art forms means a production can be a very moving experience, but also an extraordinary visual event. You should explore it even if you think it’s not for you, because it really is so incredibly diverse.”



Anton & Erin: Swing Time

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 28 January; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 24 February



Celebrity dancing duo Anton du Beke and Erin Boeg return to Birmingham’s Symphony Hall this month with their brand new show. Blending smart choreography, sassy tunes and sparkly costumes, the production pays homage to the golden years of swing and features a host of much-loved numbers, including I Got Rhythm, Moondance, Guys And Dolls, Strike Up The Band and I Could Have Danced All Night.

The popular pair are joined by a 25-piece orchestra, six ensemble dancers and guest singer Lance Ellington. Richard Balcombe conducts.

ACE Dance & Music: Ten

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 27 January

“I’m interested in exploring the concepts of moving away and leaving,” explains Ten’s choreographer, Jose Agudo, “of surviving in a land without a place to go, of looking at how and why people choose previously unimagined destinies over the lives they’d always thought they’d live - and how power can reflect the fragility of the human being.” Humanity’s universal stories are placed

under the microscope by Agudo, whose new work strikes an overarching tone that’s both epic and poetic. In the process, the choreographer brings ‘hints of Flamenco movement to the contemporary vocabulary underpinned by ACE Dance & Music’s inimitable African style’.

“Ten will build on the themes of spiritual dedication and striving,” explain ACE. “Ultimately this piece will be about humanity’s urge to reach for the power of 10 - the universal symbol of completion.”

Sonia Sabri Company: Akaar

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Sat 28 January

“We’ve always tried to create something which is groundbreaking and pioneering,” says Sonia Sabri. “I feel proud to say that we’ve presented something that’s very new and very different. We’ve been at the forefront of creating new ideas, and that’s exactly what we intend to continue doing.” Sabri’s belief in the need to push the boundaries of dance is reflected in this special performance event. “It aims to celebrate emerging and undiscovered talent,” she explains, “and to support the interest and breadth of South Asian arts being created across the Midlands.”

Featuring both individuals and groups, the show includes non-South Asian artists and performers who are presenting work with a South Asian flavour.



Highly Sprung: Fall Out

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 13 - Sat 14 January



This latest work from Midlands-based Highly Sprung Performance Co has been produced in response to what the company describes as a growing concern about young people ‘no longer having a voice or control over their own future’.

The story focuses on three teenagers on the roof of a nightclub, thrown together through circumstance, who’re all searching for an answer to the same question - who, if anybody, cares?

A young revolutionary named Jay thinks he knows how to bring about change: “Thousands of us,” he says, “on the last day of exams - we’re all gonna jump. They’ll have to listen to us then, they’ll have no choice...” Set in empty studio spaces, Fall Out combines physical theatre performance with the experience of a club night.

“Audiences are invited to enter a nightclub,” Highly Sprung explain. “Dance becomes interspersed with story, movement and dialogue, and action takes place around and above the audience. It’s a self-contained, interactive, promenade experience.”



WHY CULTURE MATTERS

When it comes to art and culture, the West Midlands region has plenty to shout about. Peter Knott, the Midlands Area Director for Arts Council England, explains why...



Art, culture and creativity are big business. Without them, the West Midlands would be a much poorer place, culturally, socially and financially.

I spend a lot of my time in Birmingham, where one of the Arts Council's national offices is based. But I'm lucky enough to travel across the region, seeing how our investment is making great things happen in a constantly evolving landscape.

It's a privilege to work in what I consider to be England's most vibrant and interesting sector, and I'm continually impressed by the creative energy and ambition of the West Midlands.

Looking back over the last year, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery was the most visited civic museum in England. Ironbridge Gorge celebrated its 30th year as one of the country's first UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Coventry's Belgrade scooped a UK Theatre Award for its promotion of diversity. And Creative Black Country helped get off the ground more than 32 new artistic and cultural projects produced by local people.

These are just a few of the cultural highlights our region has been - and should be - shouting about. But all this doesn't happen by accident. It's down to the hard work and dedication of the people who work within this thriving sector.

Despite increasing budget pressures - and a very real need to balance the books - our ambition is to see art and culture continue to flourish in the West Midlands. Through our local investments, we want to see more people enjoy opportunities to experience the very best of our nation's creative talent in the places where they live. But we also want to see culture continue to fuel our region's economy.

In Birmingham alone, artistic and cultural

organisations are adding more than £300million to the regional economy. This is a fantastic return on the Arts Council and other major stakeholders' investment. For me, it reinforces why, during times of austerity, investing in arts and culture remains crucial.

I was struck by John Clancy's words as the leader of Birmingham City Council when he talked about the arts as a 'key indicator of a city's success and as important as quality housing to driving investment.'

Since the end of last year, the Arts Council has invested more than £15.7million in arts and culture in the West Midlands, building on the £46.5million already announced for the region in July 2014. It's fantastically exciting to see the impact this is having.

In his autumn statement last year, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer described cutting public funding for the arts as a false economy. I couldn't agree more, and the evolution of the West Midlands Combined Authority is a prime example of why.

More and more people are choosing to relocate to the West Midlands - particularly from London. The cultural offer here and the dynamic this creates, combined with affordable living, is a key reason for this.

Henrietta Brealey of the Greater Birmingham Chamber summed this up when she said: "There's more to England than the North and London, the Midlands has a unique offer."

With three of the region's major cities all vying to be UK City of Culture in 2021, this unique offer is poised to really take off over the next few years. Coventry, Hereford and Stoke each have their own distinctive heritage on which to build their bids. But what is perhaps most exciting, is the energy and pride that putting culture

at the heart of city-wide plans is generating for each place.

The lasting impact of this concerted effort to make art, culture and creativity central to their visions for the future is a reminder that the value of art goes beyond just enjoyment and economics.

As well as making a huge impact on health, wellbeing and crime prevention, arts and culture are at the heart of human expression. They bring people together. They help foster pride in the places we come from. And they provide an opportunity for us to talk about our lives in a unique and continually evolving way.

Creative Black Country's work with the landlords of Desi Pubs is testament to this. In a story of east meets west, these landlords have worked with artists to celebrate and share the heritage of their local community with punters.

From great art enjoyed over a curry and pint to the legacy of the world's greatest playwright, the West Midlands offers something to suit everyone's artistic tastes.

With the New Year before us, now is the time for us to think even harder about what art and culture can do for people in the West Midlands. But we can only do that in conversation with you.

We need more and better partnerships at a local level. It's not only about the Arts Council working with local authorities. It's also about the Arts Council, local authorities and local people working together, brokering partnerships that involve higher education, businesses and development agencies.

So, as a resolution for 2017: Never undervalue the power of arts and culture. It's a mistake we can't afford to make.

Win!

Tickets to Made In India



Closes Thursday 19 January

Tickets to What's In A Name?



Closes Friday 20th January

Tickets to Cirque Beserk



Closes Monday 13 February

Tickets to The Snowman



Closes Friday 6 January

Tickets to The Fizzogs



Closes Friday 6 January

Tickets to Tattoo Freeze



Closes Monday 23 January

Tickets to MCM Comic Con Midlands



Closes Friday 27 January

Tickets to Matthew Bourne's The Red Shoes



Closes Monday 30 January

Tickets to Crufts 2017



Closes Friday 24 February

Tickets to Camper Mart



Closes Monday 23 January

Tickets to The Full Monty



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Film

La La Land CERT 12a (128 mins)

Starring **Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone, John Legend, Rosemarie DeWitt, JK Simmons, Finn Wittrock, Tom Everett Scott**
Directed by **Damien Chazelle (USA)**

At the date of going to press, *La La Land* is the movie to beat at the 2017 Oscars - particularly for best picture, best actor, best actress and best director. It's what insiders say has 'The Artist' vote - an original that has the finesse to out-gun all the portentous, well-meaning dramas.

Chazelle's last film, the suspenseful and distinctive *Whiplash*, won an Oscar for best supporting actor (JK Simmons). But *La La Land* is a musical, and a romantic musical at that.

Emma Stone plays an aspiring actress who meets a jazz pianist (Ryan Gosling) in Los Angeles (hence the title) and they fall in love. It's as simple as that. Well, not quite. The chemistry between the stars was a given as they'd previously played lovers in *Crazy, Stupid, Love* (2011) and *Gangster Squad* (2013).

Released Fri 13 January



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in January...



Silence CERT 15 (161 mins)

Starring **Andrew Garfield, Adam Driver, Liam Neeson, Tadanobu Asano, Ciarán Hinds**
Directed by **Martin Scorsese (USA/Taiwan/Italy/Mexico)**

Before he became a filmmaker, Martin Scorsese wanted to be a priest, and his interest in spiritualism and transcendence kept his interest in an adaptation of Shūsaku Endō's titular novel alive for over 20 years. The story of two Jesuit priests who travel to 17th century Japan to locate their mentor (Liam Neeson) has elicited considerable Oscar buzz. Scorsese describes it as a thriller.

Released Sun 1 January

Assassin's Creed

CERT 12a tbc

Starring **Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons, Brendan Gleeson, Charlotte Rampling, Michael K Williams**
Directed by **Justin Kurzel (UK/France/Hong Kong/USA)**

Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard were previously paired in Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (last year) and obviously got on so well that they've all reunited for this. But far from that blasted heath, *Assassin's Creed* is set in 15th century Spain as well as in the present day. Fassbender plays Callum Lynch, a career criminal who is plugged into the skillset of his ancestor Aguilar de Nerha, a renowned assassin. Based on the video game franchise of the same name. In 3D.

Released Sun 1 January



A Monster Calls

CERT 12a (108 mins)

Starring **Sigourney Weaver, Felicity Jones, Toby Kebbell, Lewis MacDougall, Geraldine Chaplin**, and the voice of **Liam Neeson**
Directed by **JA Bayona (Spain/UK/USA)**

Based on the unusual novel by Patrick Ness, this Spanish co-production with the UK and the USA does not fall easily into any category. It stars Lewis MacDougall as a young boy whose mother (Felicity Jones) is dying of cancer. He then finds unexpected help in the form of a monstrous, story-telling yew tree. Tree-huggers should love it.

Released Sun 1 January

Manchester By The Sea

CERT 15 (137 mins)

Starring **Casey Affleck, Michelle Williams, Kyle Chandler, Lucas Hedges, Gretchen Mol, Matthew Broderick**
Directed by **Kenneth Lonergan (USA)**

Another film trailing Oscar murmurings sees Casey Affleck (a shoo-in for a best actor nomination) as Lee Chandler, a man who returns to his roots. After his brother dies, Lee is made legal guardian of his nephew, which brings him back in touch with his ex-wife (Williams).

The director Kenneth Lonergan may not be a household name, but with films like *You Can Count On Me* (2000) and *Margaret* (2011) to his credit, he is a critics' favourite.

Released Fri 13 January



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Lion

CERT PG (118 mins)

Starring **Dev Patel, Rooney Mara, David Wenham, Nicole Kidman, Sunny Pawar**
Directed by **Garth Davis (Australia/USA/UK)**

At the age of five, Saroo Brierley found himself alone on the teeming streets of Calcutta, 1,500 kilometres from his home and family. He managed to survive and was eventually adopted by an Australian couple in Tasmania. But Saroo never for-

got his real family and many years later he began to search for them on Google Earth...

Saroo's experiences were recorded in his memoir, *A Long Way Home*, from which this international co-production was adapted. The film received rave reviews at the Toronto Film Festival, particularly for the performances of Patel and Kidman.

Released Fri 20 January

Underworld: Blood Wars

CERT tbc

Starring **Kate Beckinsale, Theo James, Tobias Menzies, Charles Dance**
Directed by **Anna Foerster (USA)**

A sequel to *Underworld: Awakening* (2012), this is the fifth instalment in the *Underworld* series. Selene, the so-called vampire 'death dealer,' is now really miffed at being betrayed by the Lycan clan and the Vampire faction and sets out to end the conflict between them. It could cost her dearly, of course.

Released Fri 13 January



The Bye Bye Man

CERT 15 (96 mins)

Starring **Douglas Smith, Lucien Laviscount, Cressida Bonas, Doug Jones, Carrie-Anne Moss, Faye Dunaway**
Directed by **Stacy Title (USA)**

The Bye Bye Man joins the ranks of the Grim Reaper, Freddy Krueger, the Candyman and the Babadook as characters you really wouldn't want to spend time with. So it's bye-bye for three college students who stumble across the identity of this mean-spirited entity. And, yes, it's that Cressida Bonas who plays the hapless Sasha.

Released Fri 13 January

Irreplaceable

CERT 12 (98 mins)

Starring **François Cluzet, Marianne Denicourt, Isabelle Sadoyan**
Directed by **Thomas Lilti (France)**

In his parish, Jean-Pierre Werner (Cluzet) was more than just the local doctor. He helped, comforted and even healed his patients. Then, one day, he discovers that he, himself, is seriously ill...

Released Fri 13 January



xXx: Return Of Xander Cage

CERT tbc

Starring **Vin Diesel, Deepika Padukone, Donnie Yen, Tony Jaa, Samuel L. Jackson, Toni Collette** Directed by **DJ Caruso (USA)**

Just when you think that Vin Diesel couldn't pop out another sequel, along comes one more. Here, he reprises his role as Xander Cage (aka xXx), the government agent who's rather adept at extreme athletic pursuits. When he fears for the future of the world, Xander emerges out of exile in the hope of recovering a horrendous weapon known as 'Pandora's Box.'

Released Thurs 19 January



Jackie

CERT 15 (100 mins)

Starring **Natalie Portman, Peter Sarsgaard, Greta Gerwig, Billy Crudup, John Hurt, Richard E Grant** Directed by **Pablo Larraín (USA/Chile/France)**

After the derided biopics on Princess Diana and Princess Grace, it's a relief to report that this is not a turkey. It's the story of Jackie Kennedy and how she copes after the assassination of her husband, JFK. Natalie Portman would seem destined for an Oscar nomination.

Released Fri 20 January



Split

CERT 15 (117 mins)

Starring **James McAvoy, Anya Taylor-Joy, Jessica Sula, Haley Lu Richardson, Betty Buckley** Directed by **M Night Shyamalan (USA)**

That's split as in split personality. Kevin (James McAvoy), whose pastime is the abduction of teenage girls, has 23 distinct personalities. But there's another, and it's about to be unleashed...

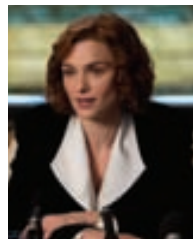
Released Fri 20 January

Denial

CERT 12a (110 mins)

Starring **Rachel Weisz, Tom Wilkinson, Timothy Spall, Andrew Scott, Jack Lowden, Caren Pistorius** Directed by **Mick Jackson (UK/USA)**

It's another of those amazing-but-true stories. The American professor Deborah E Lipstadt (Rachel Weisz) is forced to prove in an English court that the historian David Irving (Timothy Spall) was lying when he said that the Holocaust never happened.



Released Fri 27 January

Hacksaw Ridge

CERT tbc

Starring **Andrew Garfield, Sam Worthington, Luke Bracey, Teresa Palmer, Hugo Weaving, Rachel Griffiths, Vince Vaughn** Directed by **Mel Gibson (USA/Australia)**

Another of those stories too true to be believed: Desmond Doss (Garfield) was a Seventh-day Adventist and conscientious objector who participated in the Pacific conflict in WWII and was awarded the Medal of Honor – even though he refused to pick up a firearm.



Released Fri 27 January

Rules Don't Apply

CERT 12a tbc

Starring **Warren Beatty, Lily Collins, Alden Ehrenreich, Annette Bening, Matthew Broderick, Candice Bergen** Directed by **Warren Beatty (USA)**

Howard Hughes (Beatty) applies strict rules to his staff: nobody in his employ is allowed to dally with an actress. But then Hughes' driver Frank (Ehrenreich) meets the gorgeous Baptist virgin Marla Mabrey (Collins) who is on the brink of appearing in the movies...

Released Fri 27 January



Sing

CERT U (108 mins)

With the voices of **Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane, John C Reilly, Taron Egerton, Scarlett Johansson** Directed by **Garth Jennings (USA)**

It's the X Factor - except with animals. From the company that brought us Despicable Me and The Secret Life Of Pets. In 3D.

Released Fri 27 January



The White King

CERT 12a (88 mins)

Starring **Lorenzo Allchurch, Agyness Deyn, Ross Partridge, Fiona Shaw, Greta Scacchi, Jonathan Pryce** Directed by **Alex Helfrecht and Jörg Tittel (UK/Germany/Sweden/Hungary)**

György Dragomán's titular 2005 Hungarian novel has been translated into 28 languages. It has a whiff of Orwell's 1984 about it and now, in this international co-production directed by the husband-and-wife team Helfrecht and Tittel, joins a long list of recent films set in a dystopian future. The best bit is the opening credits, where the set-up is animated in a stark, monochromatic design that would have thrilled the likes of Lenin and Stalin. What follows, though, is a misjudged interpretation in which a seemingly idyllic, agricultural central European backwater is populated by Americans.

As the 12-year-old Djata (Allchurch) tries to reconcile his father's absence, a ragbag of foreign actors makes his life hell.

It's the tone that ultimately emasculates the film's intentions, being an earnest warning against the ills of Communism that its author suffered first-hand under the regime of Nicolae Ceausescu.

Released Fri 27 January



Visual Arts

Chanda Mama door ke (From Far Away Uncle Moon Calls)

The Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre,
Coventry, Sat 14 January -
Sat 11 March

The widely acclaimed Subodh Gupta works across painting, sculpture and installation, transforming everyday materials of Indian life into pieces of often spectacular art. He seeks not only to reflect upon his country's economic transformation, but also to encourage viewers to question the material, cultural and spiritual values attributed to the objects that he uses. "My themes are universal," explains the 52-year-old Indian artist, "and this is despite the fact that my references may be termed 'Indian village traditions', such as the importance of food and the usage of cow dung. The paradoxes of our life are there for all to see in my art's combination of local and global languages."



The Play's The Thing

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon



The Royal Shakespeare Company's (RSC) first ever permanent exhibition, The Play's The Thing allows visitors to explore the imaginative ways that Shakespeare's stories, settings and characters have been brought to life on stage.

Treasures from the Company's archive, such as rarely seen props, exquisite costumes and original set designs, are much in evidence, as are hands-on digital experiences - visitors can try on virtual costumes and stand on the RSC stage via state-of-the-art technology.

The exhibition also reveals some of the RSC's more gory theatrical secrets. These include how a snapping carrot can replicate the noise of a bone breaking, how crispy cereals and glue are mixed to make scabs, and how actors keep soup in their mouths so that they can 'vomit' on stage.

Spectrum: Colour And Abstraction

Wolverhampton Art Gallery,
Sat 14 January - Sun 26 March

Described as 'a spectacle of pure pigment and form', Spectrum provides visitors with a rare opportunity to enjoy the best of Wolverhampton Art Gallery's collection of 20th century abstract paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures.

Renowned artists whose work is featured in the exhibition include Joan Miro, Patrick Heron, Gillian Ayres, Joe Tilson, Gary Hume and Bridget Riley.

With the expectation that the artwork will inspire the creativity of those who view it, the gallery has set up a space for visitors to create and display cut-paper abstract collages.



Image © The Estate of Patrick Heron.

On Reflection

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham,
Mon 9 January - Sat 4 March

"My most recent work," explains Angela Dooley in talking about her latest exhibition, "has been inspired by the reflections created by the city landscape, distorting old and new buildings in intricate changing patterns, providing an embellishment and view not predicted at the time of construction." A former art teacher, Angela has been able to devote much more time to her love of painting since retiring after 37 years in the classroom.

"I work mainly in watercolour and acrylics, choosing a wide range of subjects for inspiration, initially trying to capture and develop studies of atmospheric light, shade and spatial depth in land and city scapes.

"Images created by trees, water and the modern city landscape have all been a source of inspiration."



Mechanical Things: Adventures And Inventions From The World Of Rowland Emett

Thinktank at Millennium Point, Birmingham,
until Sun 5 March

Known for his quirky paintings and fantastical mechanical contraptions - most famous among which is surely Chitty Chitty Bang Bang - Rowland Emett took a lighthearted and modest approach to his art.

"It's a well-known fact that all inventors get their first ideas on the back of an envelope," he once said. "I take slight exception to this; I use the front, so that I can incorporate the stamp - and then the design is already half done."

This new presentation of work by Emett, who died in 1990 aged 84, features some of his most significant creations, including the aforementioned Chitty and his last and largest machine, A Quiet Afternoon In The Cloud Cuckoo Valley.

Quirky inventions by a number of Emett-inspired artists are also displayed, as are interactive kinetic art and exhibits from Stratford-upon-Avon's MAD (Mechanical Art & Design) Museum.



Roger Hiorns

7 December 2016 – 5 March 2017

Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
www.ikon-gallery.org / 0121 248 0708
Tuesday – Sunday, 11am–5pm – free entry

Roger Hiorns Limited (poor) Military aircraft engine. Fire, youth
Courtesy of the artist and Corvi-Mora, London.
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Exhibition supported by Corvi-Mora, London; Annet Gelink, Amsterdam, Lühring Augustine, New York and the Ikon Investment Fund. Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered charity no. 528994.

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Arts Council Collection

Garth Evans, *Blue No. 30* (1964) observed by Kerry Stewart, *Untitled (Sug)* (1996), Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London.
© the artists 2016. Photo: Anna Arca.

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Events



Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Fri 20 - Sun 22 January

The Strictly Come Dancing Live UK tour will be celebrating 10 years on the road when it waltzes into Birmingham this month.

The 2017 edition of the show sees Len Goodman and Craig Revel Horwood joined on the judging panel by the 2006 winner of the TV series, professional dancer Karen Hardy.

Countryfile's Anita Rani, a semi-finalist in the 2015 series and a con-

testant on last year's live tour, makes her debut as the show's host. "The live tour always has such a great atmosphere," says Len Goodman, "and this 10th tour will definitely be one to remember, especially as it comes as I complete my final year on the TV series as Head Judge. Rest assured, audiences, this tour will be a 10 from Len!" Taking to the dancefloor this year are, among others, presenter and singer Louise Redknapp, model Daisy Lowe, actress Lesley Joseph, sports presenter Ore Oduba, actor Danny Mac and former shadow chancellor Ed Balls.

Wolverhampton Literary Festival

Various venues across Wolverhampton,
Fri 27 - Sun 29 January

Wolverhampton's first ever literary festival features acclaimed authors, musicians, workshops and children's events.

Included among the festival's highlights is a contribution from internet sensation, regional treasure and notorious 'lazy cow' Doreen Tipton.

Ned's Atomic Dustbin singer Jonn Penney (pictured) also features, talking with best-selling author Martin Roach about the common thread between music, books and independence, while former Birmingham Poet Laureate Roy McFarlane gives an hour-long solo performance at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

Budding young authors and poets can take part in weekend workshops and find out about Japanese Haiku poetry, honing their skills at character writing or combining crafts and the written word in a special 'paperverse' session.

Commenting on the new festival, Councillor John Reynolds, cabinet member for City Economy, said: "We've got a diverse literary tradition in Wolverhampton and across the Black Country, and what better way of celebrating it than by hosting our own festival. Already there's a great variety of entertainment during the weekend, with even more authors and events still to be announced."





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Rock Up is the thrilling indoor climbing adventure waiting for you to explore. There are over 26 climbs, towering 25 feet in the air; a soft play area for under 6's and a café for everyone to relax in. There is no better way to get active and get adventurous together. Book online for climbing at rock-up.co.uk or just turn up for soft play.

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A Cassie Jaye film



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 Birmingham Museums



Tattoo Freeze

The International Centre, Telford,
Sun 29 January

Following on from the success of previous shows, this specialist one-day event offers members of the general public the chance to get themselves tattooed by one (or more!) of the 200

talented tattooists who'll be in attendance. Past shows have featured some of the world's greatest graffiti artists, BMX and skateboard champions, shopping stalls, children's activities, national roller derby tournaments and ice sculpture demonstrations and workshops.

Basketball Cup Finals

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Sun 15 January

One of the most eagerly anticipated dates on the British Basketball League (BBL) calendar, this annual event sees stars of the national game go head-to-head in pursuit of coveted silverware. The get-together also features some of Europe's top slam dunkers, giving it their all in a bid to become the BBL Slam Dunk Champion.



Camper Mart

The International Centre, Telford,
Sun 29 January



"The aim of Camper Mart," explain the event's organisers, "is to cater for every conceivable need for people who own, are restoring, maintaining, customising or who just simply display an interest in owning a Volkswagen Camper. Our trade stalls display a plethora of VW goodies, giving our visitors excellent choice.

"And if you're having problems with your bus, want some general advice on tuning, modifications or anything bus related, our resident 'bus doctor' team is on hand to help out."

Lichfield Winter Beer Festival

Lichfield Guildhall,
Fri 27 - Sat 28 January

An annual event on the Guildhall calendar, the Lichfield Winter Beer Festival provides a perfect opportunity to banish those New Year blues by sampling ales from some of the country's finest breweries. In addition to high-quality beer and the promise of a friendly atmosphere, this popular two-day event offers a choice of traditional ciders, a range of wines and a selection of fine foods. Entertainment comes courtesy of two local bands - 3's Company on the Friday evening and Last Orders on the Saturday.



Autosport International

NEC, Birmingham,
Thurs 12 - Sun 15 January

Described as 'the world's greatest four-wheel indoor extravaganza', Autosport International caters for industry professionals and motorsport fans alike. Featuring every level of motor racing - from karting through to Formula One - the event offers visitors the chance to check out the latest performance road cars, chat to club members and watch precision-driving displays in the Live Action Arena.



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the list

Your week to week
listings guide
January 2017



Aladdin at Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton until Sun 22 January

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

What's On

Sun 1 to Sun 8 January



The Snow Queen at New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme
until Sat 28 January

Mon 9 to Sun 15 January



Lee Nelson at Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
Thurs 12 January

Mon 16 to Sun 22 January



Jack Whitehall at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
Thurs 19 - Fri 20 January

Mon 23 to Tues 31 January



Camper Mart at Telford International Centre
Sun 29 January

THROUGHOUT JANUARY

Visual Arts

Bilston Craft Gallery

BLACK AND GOLD: THE IMAGINARY WORLDS OF JAPANNED WARE An imaginary winter world, shown through the gallery's collection of japanned ware, until Sat 14 Jan

New Art Gallery - Walsall

NEW STEVE EVANS Steve's art incorporates the techniques and formal qualities of technical drawing, Tues 10 Jan - Sun 12 Feb

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

THE HISTORY OF ETRURIA; FACTORIES AND FESTIVALS Using objects from across the museum's collections, the display charts the history of Etruria, from its inception by Josiah Wedgwood in the 18th century through to today's business, retail and leisure developments, until Fri 31 Mar

FIRST WORLD WAR REPLICA TRENCH until Sun 11 Nov 2018.

Shire Hall Gallery - Stafford

CHRISTMAS CRAFT & CONTEMPORARY PRINT Christmas crafts ranging from handmade jewellery, Christmas decorations and textiles to metalware and ceramics, on display alongside works by contemporary printmakers, until Sun 8 Jan

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

'HEAVENLY LIGHTS: THE UNTOLD STORY OF STAINED GLASS ARTIST MARGARET AGNES ROPE' Celebrating the life and times of Shrewsbury stained-glass artist Margaret Agnes Rope, until Sun 15 Jan 2017

Weston Park

NEW GRADUATE SHOW Exhibition of work from graduates and students, in a variety of different disciplines, Tues 3 - Tues 31 Jan

The Willow Art Gallery, Oswestry

ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION Showcasing work from, amongst others, Border visual arts group Bijoux and Kay Boyce, until Sat 14 Jan

KAY BOYCE: THE BLACK ON WHITE

COLLECTION A new aspect of Kay's work, following her study and admiration of a beech tree at the foot of her garden, which rekindled her interest in the medium of pen and ink, until Sat 14 Jan

DANIEL YEOMANS Collection of work from Montgomery-based artist Daniel Yeomans, until Sat 14 Jan

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

YOUNG ARTISTS A new display of work by pupils from Heath Park Secondary School, Wolverhampton, until Sun 1 Jan

LARISSA SANSOUR - IN THE FUTURE THEY ATE FROM THE FINEST PORCELAIN Film by Larissa Sansour which focuses on a resistance group that makes underground deposits of elaborate porcelain - suggested to belong to an entirely fictional civilisation, until Sun 8 Jan

FAIRY TALE MAGIC Family-friendly exhibition for under 10s, featuring lots of interactive elements until Sun 8 Jan

VICTORIAN PLAYTIME An exhibition of Victorian toys, including puzzles, dolls, teddies and moving wooden toys, until Fri 20 Jan

ARTIST ROOMS - ROY LICHTENSTEIN

Lichtenstein was one of the most radical and influential artists of the 20th century and a leading figure in the Pop Art movement, until Sun 26 Feb

NEW SPECTRUM: COLOUR AND ABSTRACTION A rare chance to see the best of the art gallery's collection of 20th century abstract paintings. Includes works by Joan Miro, Patrick Heron, Gillian Ayres and Bridget Riley, Sat 14 Jan - Sun 26 Mar

Other VISUAL ARTS

NEW A GRAND HISTORY OF PANTO Exhibition transporting visitors into the world of pantomime, sharing some of the magical stories that have taken place on the Grand Theatre stage. Includes archived pantomime programmes, posters and costumes, as well as a dress-up and activity area for children, Mon 2 - Tues 31 Jan, Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton

NEW SCENES OF WEM Two local art groups present a group exhibition, with Wem and the surrounding areas as their inspiration, Thurs 5 Jan - Thurs 23 Feb, Wem Town Hall

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Gigs

EDWINA HAYES Sun 1 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
THE WEDDING CRASHERS Wed 4 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham
BRIC A BRAC Wed 4 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
CAPITAL GROOVE Thurs 5 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham
STIPE Thurs 5 Jan, The Robin, Bilston
MARCH OF FATE Thurs 5 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham
ROD AND THE FACEZ Fri 6 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham
NEARLY DAN Fri 6 Jan, The Robin, Bilston



DAVE BUSBY Fri 6 Jan, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury
CHERISH + MIZZ PINK Fri 6 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge
BAD PENNY Fri 6 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham
URBAN INTRO Fri 6 - Sat 7 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham
JEAN GENIE - TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE Sat 7 Jan, The Robin, Bilston
OLLIE HUGHES AS ROBBIE WILLIAMS Sat 7 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge
AMELIA CAESAR Sat 7 Jan, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury
THE AC30'S Sat 7 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham
BOWIE NIGHT Sat 7 Jan, The Night Owl, Birmingham
CLASSIC WONDER VETERANS WITH SOLO BANTON & CREW Sat 7 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
THE MIGHTY WRAITH Sun 8 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham
NIK TURNERS NEW SPACE RITUAL Sun 8 Jan, The Robin, Bilston
THE REEL HOT CEILIDH PEPPERS Sun 8 Jan, Lichfield Guildhall, Staffordshire



Classical Music

JOHANN STRAUSS GALA With the Johann Strauss Dancers. Conducted by John Rigby & featuring soprano Corinne Cowling, Sun 1 Jan Symphony Hall, Birmingham
HALLE ORCHESTRA Featuring Stephen Bell (conductor) & Joshua Ellicott (tenor). Programme includes works by Suppe, Josef Strauss, Lehar & Strauss, Fri 6 Jan, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent
JOHN WILSON CONDUCTS THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN Featuring Tamara Stefanovich on piano. Programme includes works by Brett Dean, Szymanowski & Rachmaninov, Fri 6 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
CBSO: THE MAGIC OF VIENNA Featuring Aleksandar Markovic (conductor) & Jack Liebeck (violin). Programme includes works by J. Strauss II, Kreisler & Waldteufel, Sun 8 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

ADAM HESS, ANDY ASKINS, PHIL JERROD & MARK OLVER Fri 6 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham
JACK BARRY, ANDY ASKINS, PHIL JERROD & MARK OLVER Sat 7 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

TREASURE ISLAND Bryony Lavery's modern adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling classic, until Sat 7 Jan, The REP, Birmingham
CINDERELLA Panto favourite Brad Pitt stars as Buttons. With Matt Daines and Ian Smith as the Ugly Sisters, until Sun 8 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS The world-renowned circus presents Xhelanly, an 'awe-inspiring' show based on Russian folklore, until Sun 8 Jan, Star City, Birmingham
ROOM ON THE BROOM Stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson's best-selling book that's sure to provide a magical, musical treat for children and families alike, until Sun 8 Jan, The REP, Birmingham
CINDERELLA Starring Stoke's favourite son, Jonathan Wilkes, as Buttons, alongside Christian Patterson and Simon Nehan as the Ugly Sisters, until Sun 8 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
ALADDIN - THE WOK AND ROLL PANTO Festive show with a difference, fea-



Moscow State Circus

Star City, Birmingham, until Sun 8 January

The Moscow State Circus is very possibly the best-known circus in the world, based on over 200 years of tradition. When animals became an unpopular aspect of circuses, this flexible family favourite adapted to survive by moving the emphasis to astonishing displays of human skill and endurance - many of which are evident in its current production, Miracles.

Highlights of the show include 'aerial displays of grace and beauty' from Anastacia Sarycheva, performances by gyrating contortionists Stikhareva and Drazdova, acrobatics from the Didyk Troupe and gymnastics from the Eftode Perch Gymnasts. The 'whimsical' clown Nicolino is the audience's guide for the evening.

turing classic rock'n'roll hits from Aretha Franklin, The Monkees, James Brown, The Temptations, The Jackson Five and many more... until Sun 8 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

WHAT THE LADYBIRD HEARD Stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Lydia Monks' colourful farmyard adventure, until Wed 11 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

THE TEMPEST Shakespeare's magical exploration of revenge, forgiveness, love and magic, until Sat 21 Jan, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

ALADDIN Magical pantomime adventure starring Joe McElderry, Lisa Riley, Ian Adams, Ben Faulks and 'Lazy Cow' Doreen Tipton, until Sun 22 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE SNOW QUEEN Hans Christian Andersen's classic children's tale of adventure, friendship and bravery, until Sat 28 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

DICK WHITTINGTON Starring John Barrowman as Dick Whittington, EastEnders bad lad Steve McFadden as the evil King Rat, Jodie Prenger as Fairy Bow Bells, legendary double act The Krankies as Councillor & Jimmy Krankie, Matt Slack as Idle Jack, and Andrew Ryan as Sarah the Cook, until Sun 29 Jan, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN Based on Chaucer's The Knight's Tale, The Two

Noble Kinsmen is attributed to John Fletcher & William Shakespeare and is best described as a tragicomedy exploring the intoxication and strangeness of love, until Tue 7 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE SEVEN ACTS OF MERCY Anders Lustgarten's visceral new play, which confronts the dangerous necessity of compassion in a world where it is in short supply.

Directed by RSC Deputy Artistic Director Erica Whyman, until Fri 10 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE ROVER Aphra Behn's anarchic restoration comedy, rich with seduction, intrigue & danger, set in the topsy-turvy world of the carnival. Loveday Ingram returns to the RSC to direct, until Sat 11 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

DICK WHITTINGTON Amateur staging presented by DE Caversmill Theatre Company, Wed 28 Dec - Sun 8 Jan, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SNOW QUEEN Jars Of Clay Theatre Co. present a new version of the Hans Christian Andersen classic, complete with rip-roaring fights, brand new songs and a traditional battle of good versus evil, Wed 4 - Sat 7 Jan, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

GASLIGHT Kara Tointon stars in a brand new staging of Patrick Hamilton's mystery thriller, Fri 6 - Sat

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14 Jan, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

DICK WHITTINGTON Annual family pantomime, Fri 6 - Sat 14 Jan, Oldbury Rep

THE WILL Expedition Arts present Pierre Carlet De Marivaux's sexy comedy about love and money, Sat 7 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Theatre On The Steps present a pantomime version of the popular fairytale, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Jan, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

Dance

SWAN LAKE Performed by Saint Petersburg Classic Ballet, Sat 7 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RHYTHM OF BELLS 2017 An evening of exquisite Indian classical dance performed by Dharshanodiya School of Bharathanatya, Sun 8 Jan, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE EAGLE HUNTRESS (U)

Documentary. Starring Daisy Ridley, Aisholpan. mac, Birmingham, until Thurs 5 Jan

MOANA (U) Adventure/Comedy. With the voices of Dwayne Johnson, Alan Tudyk. mac, Birmingham, until Thurs 5 Jan

FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM (PG) Animation/Action. Starring Eddie Redmayne, Ezra Miller. Wern Town Hall, North Shropshire, until 5 Jan; Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Jan

ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Felicity Jones, Mads Mikkelsen. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 12 Jan; mac, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Mon 15 Jan

SILENCE (15) Drama/History. Starring Adam Driver, Liam Neeson. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 1 Jan

A STREETCAT NAMED BOB (12a)

Biography/Comedy. Starring Bob the Cat, Luke Treadaway. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 2 Jan

FROZEN (PG) Adventure/Comedy. With the voices of Kristen Bell, Idina Menzel. mac, Birmingham, Mon 2 Jan

MUM'S LIST (12a) Drama. Starring Emilia Fox and Rafe Spall. Light House Media Centre, W'hampton, Mon 2 - Thurs 5 Jan

THE UNKNOWN GIRL (12a) Drama. Starring Adèle Haenel, Olivier Bonnaud. Foreign language, subtitled. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury,

Mon 2 - Thurs 5 Jan

NOCTURNAL ANIMALS (PG)

Drama/Thriller. Starring Amy Adams, Jake Gyllenhaal. Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire, Tues 3 Jan

THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS (12a)

Drama/Romance. Starring Michael Fassbender, Alicia Vikander. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 3 - Thurs 5 Jan

THE LESSON (PG)

Drama. Starring Margita Gosheva, Ivan Barnev. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 Jan

A MONSTER CALLS (12A)

Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sigourney Weaver, Felicity Jones. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, from Fri 6 Jan

LONG WAY NORTH (PG)

Animation/Action. With the voices of Christa Théret, Féodor Atkine. mac, Birmingham, Sat 7 Jan

I, DANIEL BLAKE (15) Drama. Starring Dave Johns, Hayley Squires. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 4 - Fri 6 Jan; mac, Birmingham, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Jan



SULLY (12a)

Drama/Biography. Starring Tom Hanks, Laura Linney. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Jan; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Jan

A CAT IN PARIS (PG)

Animation/Family. Starring Dominique Blanc, Bernadette Lafont. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 8 Jan

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Sun 1 Jan, showing at selected cinemas

ASSASSIN'S CREED (tbc)

A MONSTER CALLS (12a)

SILENCE (TBC)

Events

FESTIVE SEASON SERVICE Let the Christmas festivities continue with a leisurely steam train journey along the beautiful Severn Valley, hopefully with a sprinkling of snow, until Mon 2 Jan, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

MAGIC LANTERN FESTIVAL Celebrating over 2,000 years of lantern festivals, this 'illuminating' event sees visitors accessing the venue through a giant lantern entrance before following a lantern-lit trail around the gardens. ntil Mon 2 Jan, Birmingham Botanical Gardens



Ice Skate Birmingham

Centenary Square, Birmingham until Sun 8 January

It's been a long time since Birmingham experienced a white Christmas, but there is at least one place in the city where people can enjoy the delights of a winter wonderland. As in previous years, Ice Skate Birmingham is offering fun-seeking Midlanders the chance to pretend they're Torvill or Dean by taking a yuletide spin across the 'icy wastes' of Centenary Square. For those just wishing to spectate, the Ice Lounge Bar offers a viewing platform where visitors can partake in a hot chocolate & marshmallows or, for those preferring something a little stronger, a glass of mulled wine or cider. Another attraction at the site is the Big Wheel. Take a ride right up to the top and enjoy beautiful views of Birmingham's skyline which are pretty spectacular, whether you're taking a ride in the daytime or at night.

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS (see page 53) until Sun 8 Jan, Star City, Birmingham

ICE SKATE BIRMINGHAM until Sun 8 Jan, Centenary Square, Birmingham

NATIVITY TRAIL Follow the stars and answer the Christmas questions as you go before reaching the live Nativity Scene in the barn buildings; you may even be lucky enough to see an new born baby donkey, until Sun 8 Jan, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

JOG OFF YOUR JUMPER Families are

invited to Attingham for a fun-run to burn off the Christmas indulgences and for a last chance to wear your Christmas jumper as the festive season draws to a close, Mon 2 Jan, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

BACKSTAGE TOUR: FAMILY Discover the rarely seen backstage areas of the theatre the half-term as The REP invites you to be an audience member, set builder, prosthetics maker or even an Assistant Stage Manager, Sat 7 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

Stafford Bingley Hall

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WHAT'S ON AT THEATRE SEVERN

TUE 24 JAN

OMID DJALILI SCHMUCK FOR A NIGHT

Award winning comedian and actor, Omid returns with his captivating comedy masterclass.



THU 26 JAN



All aboard the Ghost Train! The UK's favourite Vampire Baron is back!

FRI 27 JAN

MARTYN JOSEPH

A unique talent, he continues to write, sing and play from the heart.



WED 29 JAN

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA THE SILVER SCREEN

Conductor Richard Laing
Classics from the world of film, including many Oscar winners and nominations, with selections from 1940 to the present day.



FRI 3 FEB

ROB AUTON THE SLEEP SHOW

This show is about sleep. It is suitable for those who have slept. Award-winning writer and performer Rob Auton has been described as 'A genuine original' (Guardian)



SAT 4 FEB

THE TOMMY COOPER SHOW

West End star Daniel Taylor (*Blood Brothers*, *Lennon Through a Glass Onion*) gives a knockout performance in this incredible portrayal of show business legend Tommy Cooper.



CHECK THE [WEBSITE](http://www.theatresevern.co.uk) FOR FULL LISTINGS



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Gigs

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Tues 10 Jan, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE WYZE GUYZ Tues 10 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

MARTIN CARTHY Tues 10 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

MARTIN SIMPSON Wed 11 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Staffordshire

APOLLO SOUL Thurs 12 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

POETS OF THE FALL Thurs 12 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE RED SHOES - OUR KATE BUSH STORY Thurs 12 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

SOUNDS OF THE SIXTIES Fri 13 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

THINK FLOYD Fri 13 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

DEVIL YOU KNOW Fri 13 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

AVENGED SEVENFOLD Fri 13 Jan, Genting Arena, Birmingham

MESHUGGAH Fri 13 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE EVACS Fri 13 Jan, O2 Academy, B'ham

IN2MINDS Fri 13 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

DPC VS THE MOST MISERABLE TIME OF THE YEAR Fri 13 - Sat 14 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ENDORPHINMACHINE: PRINCE TRIBUTE Sat 14 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

SARA COLMAN Sat 14 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WHALEBONE Sat 14 Jan, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, South Shropshire

IVOR & LYN'S CLASSIC ROCK DISCO Sat 14 Jan, Route 44,

Birmingham
MICHAELA WYLDE Sat 14 Jan, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

BORN IN THE EIGHTIES Sat 14 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

WHO'S WHO Sat 14 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

IVORY WAVE Sat 14 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

TIM GARLAND ELECTRIC QUARTET Sat 14 Jan, The Hive, Shrewsbury

NTH CAVE Sat 14 Jan, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

CALORIES & FRIENDS Sat 14 - Sun 15 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BRAVADO - TRIBUTE TO RUSH Sun 15 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

MC HANSEN AND CARLY DOW Sun 15 Jan, The Hive Shrewsbury

Classical Music

THE HEATH QUARTET Featuring Oliver Heath & Cerys Jones (violins), Gary Pomeroy (viola) & Christopher Murray (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven & Dvorak, Tues 10 Jan, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

ANDRIS NELSONS CONDUCTS BRUCKNER Programme includes works by Maxwell Davies & Bruckner, Thurs 12 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



OBOE QUARTETS WITH RAINER GIBBONS Featuring Rainer Gibbons (oboe), Jonathan Martindale (violin), Christopher Yates (viola) & David Powell (cello). Programme includes works by J.C. Bach, Britten & Mozart, Fri 13 Jan, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CASTALIAN STRING QUARTET Featuring Sini Simonen & Daniel Roberts (violins), Charlotte Bonneton (viola) & Christopher Graves (cello). Programme comprises Haydn's String Quartet in G, Op. 76 No.1 & String Quartet in D, Op. 76 No. 5 'Largo', Fri 13 Jan, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

OBOE QUARTETS WITH RAINER GIBBONS Featuring Jonathan Martindale (violin), Christopher Yates (viola) & David Powell (cello). Programme includes works by J.C. Bach, Britten & Mozart, Fri 13 Jan, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

QUINTET ROMANCE AT DUSK Featuring Ben Nabarro & Martin Cropper (violins), Louise Williams (viola), Richard Jenkinson & Richard May (cellos). Programme includes works by Brahms & Schubert, Sun 15 Jan, The Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury

Comedy Gigs

FAT PENGUIN IMPROV Wed 11 Jan, The Patrick Kavanagh, Birmingham

LEE NELSON Thurs 12 Jan, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

ANDREW RYAN, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 12 Jan, The Glee Club, B'ham

GARY DELANEY Fri 13 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LEE HURST Fri 13 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

COMEDY CENTRAL IMPRACTICAL JOKERS Fri 13 Jan, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

ANDREW RYAN, TOM DEACON, ABIGOLIAH SCHAMAUN & COMIC TBC Fri 13 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY Sat 14 Jan, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

MARKUS BIRDMAN, PHIL NICHOL & MARK SIMMONS Sat 14 Jan, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

ANDREW RYAN, TOM DEACON & COMIC TBC Sat 14 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY Sun 15 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

A WAYNE IN A MANGER Stage2 present a staging of Gervase Phinn's funny and touching nativity play anecdotes, Wed 11 - Sat 14 Jan, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE SNOWMAN Stage show based on Raymond Briggs' popular children's book, Wed 11 Jan - Sun 15 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

FIZZOGS 'SUCK IT & SEE' TOUR Brand new comedy sketch show featuring Black Country comedian Jonny Cole, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Jan, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

SLEEPING BEAUTY Theatre On The Steps present a pantomime version of the popular fairytale, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Jan, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

MORGAN AND WEST PARLOUR TRICKS Join the time-travelling duo for an evening of jaw-dropping magic, Fri 13 Jan SpArC, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

MORGAN AND WEST PARLOUR TRICKS Join the time-travelling duo for an evening of jaw-dropping magic, Sun 15 Jan, Wern Town Hall, North Shropshire



Lee Nelson - Henry Tudor House

FEBRUARY HALF TERM

Wrap up warm and join us this February half term for some Winter fun in the gardens.

20th - 24th February 2017

There will be lots of fun activities for all weathers such as: Arts & Crafts, Bug Hunting and Story Trails!

For more information please contact reception or visit us at: birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/whats-on

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What's On

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: THE MOVIE (15)
Comedy. Starring Jennifer Saunders, Joanna Lumley. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 9 Jan



LIFE, ANIMATED (PG)
Documentary/Drama. Starring Jonathan Freeman, Gilbert Gottfried. mac, Birmingham, Mon 9 - Tues 10 Jan

INDIGNATION (15) Drama. Starring Logan Lerman, Sarah Gadon. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 9 & Thurs 12 Jan

SULLY (12a) Drama/Biography. Starring Tom Hanks, Laura Linney. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Mon 9 - Thurs 12 Jan; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 9 - Thurs 12 Jan

THE INNOCENTS (15) Drama. Starring Lou de Laâge, Agata Buzek. Foreign language, subtitled. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 10 Jan

SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS (U) Musical. Starring Jane Powell, Howard Keel. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 10 Jan

ETHEL & ERNEST (PG)
Animation/Drama. With the voices of Jim Broadbent, Pam Ferris. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 10 Jan

CHI-RAQ (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Nick Cannon, Teyonah Parris. mac, Birmingham, Tues 10 - Thurs 12 Jan

THE BIRTH OF A NATION (15)
Biography/History. Starring Nate Parker, Armie Hammer. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 12 Jan

A STREETCAT NAMED BOB (12a)
Biography/Comedy. Starring Bob the Cat, Luke Treadaway. Wem Town Hall, Tues 10 & Thurs 12 Jan; mac, Birmingham, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Jan



A UNITED KINGDOM (12a)
Biography/Drama. Starring David Oyelowo, Rosamund Pike. Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Jan; Stoke Film Theatre,

Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Jan; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sun 15 Jan

ALLIED (15) Action/Drama. Starring Brad Pitt, Marion Cotillard. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Jan

LA LA LAND (12a) Comedy/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Jan; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Jan; Electric Cinema, Birmingham, from Fri 13 Jan

SILENCE (tbc) Drama/History. Starring Liam Neeson, Adam Driver. Light House Media Centre, W'hampton, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Jan

REBECCA (PG) Drama/Film-Noir. Starring Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine. Screening will be preceded by a forty minute lecture from Professor Linda Williams. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 14 Jan

BLUE VELVET (18) Mystery/Thriller. Starring Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hopper. mac, Birmingham, Sun 15 Jan

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 13 Jan, showing at selected cinemas

THE BYE BYE MAN (tbc)

IRREPLACABLE (12)

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA (15)

UNDERWORLD: BLOOD WARS (tbc)

Events

PERFORMANCE CAR SHOW Featuring iconic brands like Lamborghini, Ferrari, McLaren, Aston Martin and Porsche, the show is the ultimate destination for performance car aficionados, Thurs 12 - Sun 15 Jan, NEC, Birmingham



AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL A must-see event for motorsport fans and performance car aficionados, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Jan, NEC, Birmingham

BACKSTAGE TOUR: MEET THE SNOWMAN Meet The Snowman on stage and have your photo taken with him before enjoying a behind-the-scenes guided tour. Visit some of the areas of the theatre usually closed to the public and join in with special activities, Sat 14 Jan, The REP, Birmingham



Fizzogs: Suck It And See

Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 January; Rose Theatre, Kidderminster, Sat 4 February; Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 February; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 18 February; The Place, Oakengates, Fri 10 March

Award-winning Midlands theatre company Fizzog Productions make a welcome return to the stage. Their latest show features all-new material and a cast of colourful comedy characters, including Mags and Barb, Wayne Kerr, The Kids and Mr & Mrs Cadabra. Comprising Sue Hawkins, Jacky Fellows, Deb Nicholls and guest performers - on this particular occasion, Black Country comedian Jonny Cole - the company is best known for stage productions '50 Shades Of Fizzog and Freezin'', and for its creation of internet sensations 'The Dancing Grannies'.

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from 12 noon




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Live bands each evening. For full details and the ales list see our website

Entry is just £2.00 before 6.00pm and £3.00 from 6.00pm on both days.



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THU 5 JAN + THE OCEAN HOUNDS
REM TRIBUTE STIPE

FRI 6 JAN THE SPIRIT OF STEELY DAN
NEARLY DAN

SAT 7 JAN + SUPPORT URBANE
JEAN GENIE TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE

SUN 8 JAN + THE MOTHERS EARTH EOK.
NIK TURNERS NEW SPACE RITUAL

THU 13 JAN ON STAGE 8.30pm
KATE BUSH TRIBUTE THE RED SHOES

FRI 12 JAN
THINK FLOYD THE DEFINITIVE PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE

SAT 14 JAN + JACK FLETCHER
WHO'S WHO

SUN 15 JAN
BRAVADO A TRIBUTE TO RUSH

TUE 17 JAN
ANA POPOVIC AND HER BAND

WED 18 JAN ON STAGE 8.30pm
JAMIE FLANAGHAN AS MICHAEL BUBLE

THU 19 JAN
AYNSLEY LISTER BAND

FRI 20 JAN + SUPPORT LEFTOVERS
SUPERSKAS

SAT 21 JAN
BUSBY BABES CHARITY EVENT

SUN 22 JAN + BLUE DEVILS + PEARL
STRAY FEATURING DEL BROMHAM & PETER DYER

MON 23 JAN + STONE BROKEN
GLENN HUGHES

TUE 24 JAN
LIL' JIMMY REED BAND

WED 25 JAN + GRANT FRITCHAIRD
ERIC SARDINAS & BIG MOTOR

THU 26 JAN + RICKY COOL AND...
KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS

FRI 27 JAN
ATOMIC ROOSTER & SNAFU

SAT 28 JAN SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
BOOTLEG ABBA + BEE GEES FEVER

SUN 29 JAN GENERAL PUBLIC ENTRY 14.30pm
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What's on...



Wednesday 18th January 2017

OMID DJALI

Time: 8.00pm

16+



Friday 20th January 2017

AN EVENING WITH BARRY FRY & RON ATKINSON

Time: 7.30pm



Friday 24th February 2017

CIRCUS OF HORRORS THE NEVER ENDING NIGHTMARE

Time: 7.30pm



Saturday 25th February 2017

JACK FROST

Time: 3.00pm

3+



Wednesday 1st March 2017

CILLA AND THE SHADES OF THE 60'S

Time: 7.30pm



Wednesday 8th March 2017

VIENNA FESTIVAL BALLET'S CINDERELLA

Time: 7.00pm



Friday 10th March 2017

THE SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR

Time: 7.30pm

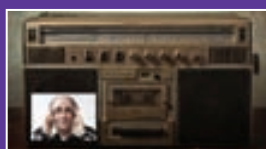
14+



Saturday 11th March 2017

YOU WIN AGAIN - THE STORY OF THE BEE GEES

Time: 7.30pm



Thursday 16th March 2017

DANNY BAKER CRADLE TO THE STAGE

Time: 7.30pm

14+

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FRI 13 JAN, 7.30PM

LEE HURST

One of Britain's most-loved comedians, They Think It's All Over team captain and Have I Got News For You regular, Lee Hurst is back with an all-new show for 2017.

16+

£18.50



FRI 27 JAN, 7.30PM

ACE Dance and Music TEN

TEN will explore humanity's universal stories with an overarching tone that is both epic and poetic.

£12, £10 Students



SAT 28 JAN, 7.30PM

QUILL

Quill's repertoire includes many time-honoured classics, performed with energy and enthusiasm and their original material blends perfectly.

£21



FRI 17 & SAT 18 FEB, 7.30PM

FRANKENSTEIN

A brand new adaptation of Mary Shelley's Gothic horror masterpiece fusing ensemble storytelling, live music, puppetry and stunning theatricality.

£17, £12.50 Students



SAT 25 FEB, 7.30PM

THE JUNGLE BOOK

Enjoy the comical adventures of Mowgli the man cub as he battles to survive and become the leader of the pack.

£16.50, £11 Students



TUE 21 - SAT 25 MARCH, 7.30PM, SAT MAT 2.30PM

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Gigs

MC HANSEN AND CARLY DOW Mon 16 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

HALFNOISE Mon 16 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

POSITIVELY FOURTH STREET Tues 17 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

ANA POPOVIC AND HER BAND Tues 17 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

BUTTERNUT Tues 17 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

SARAH GAIL BRAND Tues 17 Jan, mac, Birmingham

THE BOOGIE BAPTISTES Wed 18 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

DINOSAUR Wed 18 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BETH ROWLEY Wed 18 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SNFU Wed 18 Jan, O2 Academy, B'ham

JAMIE FLANAGAN AS MICHAEL BUBLÉ Wed 18 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

SARA COLMAN Wed 18 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AYNSLEY LISTER BAND Thurs 19 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY Thurs 19 Jan, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

THE BLUE AEROPLANES Thurs 19 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

UNFATHOMABLE RUINATION, THE ATROCITY EXHIBIT & SPAWNED FROM HATE Thurs 19 Jan, The Flapper, Birmingham

TOMMY EMMANUEL Fri 20 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

THE PRETTY RECKLESS Fri 20 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ENCHANTE Fri 20 Jan, Lichfield Guildhall

THE SUPERSKAS Fri 20 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

MC HANSEN AND CARLY DOW Fri 20 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

TRUE GOLD - SPANDAU BALLET TRIBUTE Fri 20 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

CAMERON FORREST Fri 20 Jan, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

FR3 SPIRIT PRESENTS SUBLIME MUSIC Fri 20 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GO WEST Fri 20 Jan, Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

LOS PACAMINOS FEAT PAUL YOUNG Fri 20 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 20 Jan, Route 44, Birmingham

KING CREOSOTE Sat 21 Jan, Symphony Hall,

Birmingham
ULTRA 90'S Sat 21 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE SENSATIONAL FRANCIS DUNNERY BAND Sat 21 Jan, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

THE BUSBY BABES Sat 21 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

FALLEN Sat 21 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

THE WHITE BUFFALO Sat 21 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALIVE AND BREL Sat 21 Jan, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

BOLLYWOOD BRASS BAND Sat 21 Jan, mac, Birmingham

REAL TO REEL - MARILLION TRIBUTE Sat 21 Jan, Route 44, Birmingham

THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW Sat 21 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

BLACK DYKE BAND Sun 22 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

STRAY Sun 22 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

GIRL BAND Sun 22 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN Sun 22 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE CARRIVICK SISTERS Sun 22 Jan, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT - THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by J.S Bach, Handel, Gounod, Widor & E. Bonnal, Mon 16 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

BERGEN PHILHARMONIC FEAT. EDWARD GARDNER Programme includes works by Grieg, Elgar & Walton, Tues 17 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



CELIA CRAIG OBOE RECITAL Programme comprises Poulenc's Sonata, followed by public masterclass at 5.45pm, Tues 17 Jan, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Vassily Sinaisky (conductor) & Benjamin Beilman (violin). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev & Dvorak, Wed 18 - Sat 21 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE WIND & BRASS ENSEMBLES: EASTERN PROMISE Featuring Chun-Chieh Yen (cello) & Craig Hughes (euphonium). Programme includes works by Janacek, Ricardo Lorenz, Seiber & Gulda, Fri 20 Jan, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CHINESE NEW YEAR CONCERT Featuring Di Xiao (piano), Jiaxin Lloyd Webber (cello) & Eleanor Turner (harp), Fri 20 Jan, The Bramall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM HARP DAY An exhilarating and inspiring day packed full of harp performances and workshops for all ages and abilities, Sat 21 Jan, The Bramall, Birmingham University

SWEENEY TODD IN CONCERT Featuring Amy Churchman (director) & Geddy Stringer (Musical Director), Sat 21 Jan, The Barber Institute, B'ham

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Richard Laing (conductor) & Richard Jenkinson (cello). Programme includes works by Korngold, Herrmann, Shostakovich & Arnold, Sun 22 Jan, The Bramall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

TOADALLY FREE COMEDY! Mon 16 Jan, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

JETHRO Mon 16 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

OMID DJALILI Wed 18 Jan, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

GARY DELANEY Thurs 19 Jan, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

PAUL SINHA, LARRY DEAN & BARRY DODDS Thurs 19 Jan, The Bramall, Birmingham

GLENN WOOL, MIKE GUNN & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 19 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RH COMEDY WITH LAURA MONMOTH Thurs 19 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

JACK WHITEHALL Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

GLENN WOOL, JARLATH REGAN, TOM ALLEN & MIKE GUNN Fri 20 - Sat 21 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PATRICK MONAHAN, DAMION LARKIN & COMIC TBC Sat 21 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

DUNCAN OAKLEY, JAY HANDLEY, STEVE DAY & JAMES DOWDESWELL Sat 21 Jan, Couture Stafford

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 21 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DUNCAN OAKLEY, STEVE DAY, JAMES DOWDESWELL & JAY HANDLEY Sat 21 Jan, Religion, Wolverhampton

RHYS JAMES, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE & COMIC TBC Sat 21 Jan, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

Theatre

BACKSTAGE IN BISCUIT LAND Jess Thom intertwines comedy, puppetry, singing and incredible tics to explore spontaneity, creativity, disability, and things you never knew could make you laugh. No two shows can ever be the same, Tue 17 - Sat 21 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

GILBERT NO SULLIVAN The Foundry Group bring to life tall tales and bonkers ballads, Thurs 19 Jan, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

CATHY Cardboard Citizens present a powerful and emotive Forum Theatre show exploring the way in which Ken Loach's 1966 film, Cathy Come Home, still resonates today Thurs 19 - Fri 20 Jan, mac, Birmingham

SLEEPING BEAUTY Theatre On The Steps present a pantomime version of the popular fairytale, Fri 20 Jan - Sun 22 Jan, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

SONGS FOR A NEW YEAR Join the Old Joint Stock Musical Theatre Company for an intimate concert featuring the music of composer Jason Robert Brown, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Jan, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



The Carrivick Sisters - Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury & Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham



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THEATRE

JAN/FEB HIGHLIGHTS

THURS 12 JAN, 7.00PM
£13.00 / £10.50 concs

NT LIVE: NO MAN'S LAND

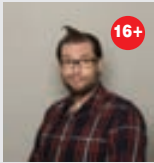
★★★★★
"McKellen and Patrick Stewart are unmissable"
Daily Telegraph



FRI 13 JAN, 8.00PM
£15.50

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JANUARY

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Friday 20th January
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FEBRUARY

LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY

Wednesday 1st February
7.30pm • £19.50



FORBIDDEN NIGHTS

Friday 10th February
8pm • £20



DEFINITIVE ELVIS

Friday 24th February
7.30pm • £19 • Conc. £18



KEN DODD

Sunday 26th February
5pm • £22



MARCH

TONY STOCKWELL

Wednesday 8th March
7.30pm • £19.50



BEYOND THE BARRICADE

Saturday 11th March
7.30pm • £20.50



GILBERT O'SULLIVAN

Tuesday 14th March
7.30pm • £32



DUBLIN LEGENDS

Tuesday 28th March
7.30pm • £21



THE BIG BAND

Thursday 30th March
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Dance

ROMEO & JULIET Ballet UK's innovative recreation of the world's greatest love story, Thurs 19 Jan, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Talks

AN EVENING WITH NADIYA HUSSAIN The British Bake Off winner talks about her debut book *The Secret Lives Of The Amir Sisters* which is available to buy from 12 January, Mon 16 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall



Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

SULLY (12a) Drama/Biography. Starring Tom Hanks, Laura Linney. Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire, Mon 16 Jan

HALF WAY (15) Documentary. Directed by Daisy-May Hudson. mac, Birmingham, Mon 16 - Tues 17 Jan

A UNITED KINGDOM (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring David Oyelowo, Rosamund Pike. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 16, Wed 18 & Thurs 19 Jan

LA LA LAND (12a) Comedy/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Mon 16 - Thurs 19 Jan; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 16 - Sun 22 Jan; mac, Birmingham, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Jan

SNOWDON (PG) Biography/Drama. Starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Shailene Woodley. mac, Birmingham, Mon 16 - Thurs 19 Jan

SILENCE (tbc) Drama/History. Starring Liam Neeson, Adam Driver. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Mon 16 - Thurs 19 Jan

CATHY COME HOME (PG) Drama. Starring Carol White, Adrienne Frame. mac, Birmingham, Tues 17 Jan

THE RED BARON (12) Adventure/Biography. Starring Matthias Schweighöfer, Lena Headey.

Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 17 Jan

THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS (12a) Drama/Romance. Starring Michael Fassbender, Alicia Vikander. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 17 & Thurs 19 Jan

PATERSON (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Adam Driver, Golshifteh Farahani. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 17 & Thurs 19 Jan

THE UNKNOWN GIRL (15) Drama/Thriller. Starring Adèle Haenel, Olivier Bonnaud. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 17 Jan; mac, Birmingham, Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Jan

UNITED STATES OF LOVE (18) Drama. Starring Julia Kijowska, Magdalena Cielecka. Foreign language, subtitled. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 19 Jan

THE GOLD RUSH (PG) Comedy/Drama. Starring Charlie Chaplin. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 Jan

MIA MADRE (PG) Drama. Starring Margherita Buy, John Turturro. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 Jan

ARRIVAL (12a) Mystery/Sci-Fi. Starring Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 20 Jan

ALLIED (15) Action/Drama. Starring Brad Pitt, Marion Cotillard. Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Jan

THE BLACK HEN (12a) Drama. Starring Khadka Raj Nepali, Sukra Raj Rokaya. Foreign language, subtitled. mac, Birmingham, Sat 21 Jan

ANTHROPOID (15) Biography/History. Starring Cillian Murphy, Jamie Dornan. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Jan

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 20 Jan, showing at selected cinemas

xXx 3: THE RETURN OF XANDER CAGE (tbc)

JACKIE (15)

LION (tbc)

SPLIT (15)

Events

STRICTLY COME DANCING THE LIVE TOUR Fri 20 - Sun 22 Jan, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

THE MONSTER ENERGY ARENACROSS TOUR Sat 21 Jan, Genting Arena, Birmingham

ASIAN BRIDE LIVE The bridal show makes a welcome return to Birmingham, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Jan, NEC, Birmingham



Arenacross

Genting Arena, Birmingham, Sat 21 January

An absolute must for extreme sports fans, the 2017 Arenacross Tour brings indoors all the spectacular elements of Motorcross for a 'non-stop white-knuckle ride'.

Set to a pumping soundtrack and laser show, the event sees some of the world's top freestylers taking to the track to present what organisers describe as 'some truly awe-inspiring entertainment'. The show also features racing gladiators from as young as seven taking to the circuit in search of Arenacross glory...

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Gigs

THE HUNNA Mon 23 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GLENN HUGHES Mon 23 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

THE CARRIVICK SISTERS Mon 23 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

LIL' JIMMY REED BAND Tues 24 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

TWO DOOR CINEMA CLUB Tues 24 Jan, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE HOTELIER Tues 24 Jan, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SYMON WITH LEE BENSON Tues 24 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

PROPER ORNAMENTS Tues 24 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CANDLEBOX Tues 24 Jan, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

ERIC SARDINAS & BIG MOTOR Wed 25 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

A DAY TO REMEMBER Wed 25 Jan, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

DECLAN MCKENNA Wed 25 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EXMAGICIAN Wed 25 Jan, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

OATHBREAKER Wed 25 Jan, The Flapper, Birmingham

KING PLEASURE AND THE BISCUIT BOYS Thurs 26 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

THE PITMEN POETS Thurs 26 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE BOWIE EXPERIENCE Thurs 26 Jan, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

DEL CAMINO Thurs 26 Jan, The Jam House, Birmingham

HOME FREE Thurs 26 Jan, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FOLK & ROOTS CLUB Thurs 26 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

JACKSON LIVE IN CONCERT Fri 27 Jan, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

MARTYN JOSEPH Fri 27 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NIBBS & EDDY Fri 27 Jan, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

THE BEE GEES STORY - NIGHTS ON BROADWAY Fri 27 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LEGEND - LEGENDS OF ROCK Fri 27 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SSEX PISTOLSS Fri 27 Jan, Route 44, Birmingham

SOMEONE LIKE YOU - THE ADELE SONGBOOK Fri 27 Jan, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

STANLEY DEE - STEELY DAN TRIBUTE Fri 27 Jan, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

VEX RED Fri 27 Jan, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE SULTANA BROS Fri 27 Jan, Ludlow Brewery, South Shropshire

ATOMIC ROOSTER & SNAFU Fri 27 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

EMULSION FESTIVAL Fri 27 Jan, mac, Birmingham

INDEPENDENT VENUE WEEK SHOWCASE FEAT: RINSE, FEARS CHELLA & ALMA Fri 27 Jan, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

MILES HUNT - THE WONDER STUFF Fri 27 Jan, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

SHAKE THE BASS Fri 27 Jan, O2 Institute,

Birmingham
MIKE SKINNER & MURKAGE PRESENT TONGA Fri 27- Sat 28 Jan, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

QUILL Sat 28 Jan, Lichfield Garrick, Staffordshire

THE CARPENTERS STORY Sat 28 Jan, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

KILLERSTREAM Sat 28 Jan, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

BOOTLEG ABBA & BEE GEES FEVER Sat 28 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

THE SENSATIONAL 60'S EXPERIENCE Sat 28 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR Sat 28 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

THE PITMEN POETS Sat 28 Jan, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC Sat 28 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PAUL JONES & DAVE KELLY ACOUSTIC DUO Sat 28 Jan, Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire

THE UB40 EXPERIENCE Sat 28 Jan, The Roadhouse, B'ham

SYNERGY Sat 28 Jan, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

JOJO Sat 28 Jan, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE QUIREBOYS Sun 29 Jan, The Robin, Bilston

MEXRRISSEY - MEXICO GOES MORRISSEY Sun 29 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

THE BLACKHEART ORCHESTRA Sun 29 Jan, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

TYKETTO 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR Mon 30 Jan, The Robin, Bilston Hall

THE HEAD AND THE HEART Mon 30 Jan, O2 Institute, B'ham

MARTHA WAINWRIGHT Mon 30 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

DARLINGSIDE Tues 31 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Classical Music

BRASS FACULTY RECITAL Featuring Alan Thomas (trumpet), Chris Houlding (trombone) & Joanne Sealey (piano), Tues 24 Jan, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO: HANDEL'S SEMELE Featuring Richard Egarr (conductor), Mhairi Lawson (Semele); Louise Alder (Iris) & Tim Mead (Athamas). Wed 25 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MARIA CAMAHORT QUINTET Featuring traditional music of the Iberian peninsula, Wed 25 Jan, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

CBSO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE Programme includes works by Handel, Pepusch, Cervetto, JC Bach & Loeillet, Thurs 26 Jan, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

ST PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC PERFORMS PROKOFIEV Featuring Yuri Temirkanov (conductor) & Nikolai Lugansky (piano). Programme includes works by Rimsky-Korsakov & Prokofiev, Thurs 26 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE TYBURN TRIO Featuring Milly Forrest (soprano), Henry Kennedy (clarinet) & Andrei Iliushkin (piano), Fri 27 Jan, Maidment Hall, Shrewsbury School

KENNETH HAMILTON LECTURE RECITAL: ON TOUR WITH LISZT Programme includes works by Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg, Pixis, Herz & Czerny, Fri 27 Jan, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

JUNIOR CONSERVATOIRE ORCHESTRAL CONCERT Featuring Daniele Rosina, Jeffrey Snowdon & Timothy English (conductors). Programme includes works by Saint-Saens & Dvorak, Sat 28 Jan, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

ENDYMION Programme includes works by Beethoven, Ligeti & Brahms, Sat 28 Jan, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Richard Laing (conductor). Programme includes works by Korngold, Arnold, Shostakovich, Herrmann, Bernstein, Williams, Sun 29 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

CBSO: BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH Featuring Mirga Grazinyte-Tyla (conductor) & Francesco Piemontesi (piano). Programme includes works by Haydn, Mozart & Beethoven, Sun 29 Jan - Thurs 2 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT - THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by C.M Widor, J.S Bach, Mozart, L. Anderson, W. Russell & G. Bizet, Mon 30 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

FUMIKO MIYACHI PIANO RECITAL Programme includes new works by Peter Bell, Rob Crehan, Patrick Ellis, Robin Morton & Roche van Tiddens, Tues 31 Jan, Recital Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

Comedy Gigs

OMID DJALILI Tues 24 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



FAT PENGUIN COMEDY Wed 25 Jan, The Patrick Kavanagh, Birmingham

RUBY WAX Thurs 26 Jan, Palace Theatre, Redditch

TIFF STEVENSON Thurs 26 Jan, mac, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 26 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUTH GRAHAM Fri 27 Jan, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

JIMMY MCGHIE, ED GAMBLE, MARLON DAVIS & COMIC TBC Fri 27 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ELLIE TAYLOR, BEN NORRIS & PHIL ELLIS Sat 28 Jan, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

JIMMY MCGHIE, MARLON DAVIS, ED GAMBLE & COMIC TBC Sat 28 Jan, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

MURDERED TO DEATH The Nonentities present an amateur staging of Peter Gordon's tongue-in-cheek take on the Agatha Christie genre, Mon 23 - Sat 28 Jan, Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

ONE MAN TWO GUVNORS One Off Productions present an amateur staging of Richard Bean's comedy, which is based on Carlo Goldoni's *The Servant Of Two Masters*, Tues 24 - Sat 28 Jan, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

TONY STOCKWELL Tues 24 Jan, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

PSYCHIC SALLY: CALL ME PSYCHIC Wed 25 Jan, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

VAMPIRES ROCK: GHOST TRAIN Classic



The Pitmen Poets - Theatre Severn & Stafford Gatehouse



rock spectacular, a sequel to the phenomenally successful Vampires Rock Musical Concert, Thurs 26 Jan, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SLEEPING BEAUTY Theatre On The Steps present a pantomime version of the popular fairytale, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Jan, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

THE PSYCHIC PROJECT A mind-reading show based on the true story of the Cold War's psychic spies, Thurs 26 Jan, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

LOVE New play by Alexander Zeldin, written through a devising process in which the audience are invited to bear witness to an intimate story of family love, Thurs 26 Jan - Sat 11 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

EUROHOUSE Two performers - one Greek, one French - dance and shout, cry and sing, agree and disagree, about life in the Eurohouse. A darkly comic look at the EU's founding ideals and what got lost along the way, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER New staging of DH Lawrence's most famous novel, Thurs 26 Jan - Fri 3 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

WHAT'S IN A NAME? Premiere of Jeremy Sams' adaptation of the French film and stage sensation, Le Prenom. Starring Nigel Harman and Sarah Hadland, Fri 27 Jan - Sat 11 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

AND THERE WAS WAR Biblical narrative deeply entrenched in the concepts of the immense controversy between good and evil, Sat 28 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE SINGULAR EXPLOITS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES Don't Go Into The Cellar Theatre Company present the story of the greatest fictional sleuth of all time. A 'high-energy' one-man show featuring a plethora of dashing heroes, villainous rogues and vintage thrills, Sat 28 Jan, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

FRANKENSTEIN The Crescent Theatre Company presents a staging of Mary Shelley's thrilling and deeply disturbing gothic tale, Sat 28 & Tues 31 Jan, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LITTLE HOWARD AND THE MAGIC PENCIL OF LIFE AND DEATH Family comedy show, as seen on BBC's The Slammer and ITV's Comedy Cuts. Suitable for children aged five-plus... Sun 29 Jan, mac, Birmingham

MARY SHELLEY The Crescent Theatre Company presents Helen Edmundson's compelling drama about the early life of one of the world's most famous writers of gothic fiction, Sun 29 Jan - Sat 11 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER Amateur staging of DH Lawrence's most famous novel, Mon 30 Jan, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW A menagerie of 75 lovable puppets faithfully adapt four of Eric Carle's stories for children, Mon 30 - Tues 31 Jan, New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham

ALYSIA HARRIS & SPECIAL GUESTS An evening of 'mindblowing poetry & live music', Tue 31 Jan, The REP, Birmingham

EVITA Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice's 1970s musical returns to the Midlands. Tue 31 Jan - Sat 4 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

BRENDAN COLE: ALL NIGHT LONG A brand new show for 2017, Brendan hosts another spectacular production featuring his guest dancers, a new leading lady and a 14 piece band and singers live on stage. Thurs 26 Jan, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ANTON & ERIN... SWING TIME Brand new show from the nation's favourite ballroom couple, Sat 28 Jan, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TEN Ace dance use choreography to explore humanity's urge to reach for the power of 10 - the universal symbol of completion, Fri 27 Jan, Lichfield Garrick

SONIA SABRI COMPANY: AKAAR Birmingham-based Sonia Sabri Company here showcase the talents of guest artists from across the region, together with students from local groups and communities who have been nurtured through the company's dedicated teaching, Sat 28 Jan, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

SCATTERED Motionhouse Dance Theatre fuse physical dance theatre, mesmerising aerial imagery and film graphics to explore our relationship with water in all its forms, Tue 31 Jan - Fri 3 Feb The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

Talks

TOM KERRIDGE'S DOPAMINE DIET One of the UK's top chefs shares how his ground-breaking diet worked for him, and how it can be used to transform health, Mon 23 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall



DEAN STRANG AND JERRY BUTING An evening of conversation with two compelling figures who featured in the Netflix docuseries Making A Murderer, Tues 24 Jan, Birmingham Town Hall

BLACK COUNTRY VOICES An evening of spoken word with David Reeves, an itinerant performance poet and musician, Sat 28 Jan, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

LIT FEST SLAM Join MC's Steve Pottinger, Dave Pitt and Emma Purshouse as 15 poets battle it out in a live poetry competition to become the Wolverhampton Literature Festival Slam Champion for 2017, Sun 29 Jan, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE (12a) Adventure/Comedy. Starring Sam Neill, Julian Dennison. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 23 Jan

ANTHROPOID (15) Biography/History. Starring Cillian Murphy, Jamie Dornan. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, Mon 23 & Wed 25 Jan

LA LA LAND (12a) Comedy/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 23 - Thurs 26 Jan; mac, Birmingham, Mon 23 - Tues 31 Jan

SULLY (12a) Drama/Biography. Starring Tom Hanks, Laura Linney. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 23 Jan; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 31 Jan

THE WAILING (15) Fantasy/Horror. Starring Jun Kunimura, Jung-min Hwang. Foreign language, subtitled. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 24 Jan

A UNITED KINGDOM (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring David Oyelowo, Rosamund Pike. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 24 & Thurs 26 Jan

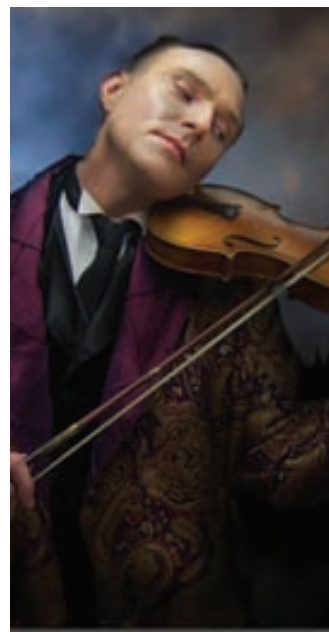
THE SON OF JOSEPH (12a) Drama. Starring Victor Ezenfio, Natacha Régnier. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 24 & Thurs 26 Jan

GHOST IN THE SHELL (12a) Animation/Action. With the voices of Atsuko Tanaka, Iemasa Kayumi. Foreign language, subtitled. Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Wed 25 Jan

CHI-RAQ (15) Crime/Drama. Starring Nick Cannon, Teyonah Parris. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 26 Jan

PATERSON (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Adam Driver, Golshifteh Farahani. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Jan

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA (15) Drama. Starring Casey Affleck, Michelle Williams. mac, Birmingham, Fri 27 - Tues 31 Jan



The Singular Exploits Of Sherlock Holmes

ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Felicity Jones, Mads Mikkelsen. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 27 - Tues 31 Jan

THE BIRTH OF A NATION (15) Biography/History. Starring Nate Parker, Armie Hammer. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 27 - Tues 31 Jan

STORKS (U) Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Andy Samberg, Jennifer Aniston. mac, Birmingham, Sat 28 Jan

THE EAGLE HUNTRESS (U) Documentary. Starring Daisy Ridley, Aisholpan. Stoke Film theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 31 Jan; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 31 Jan

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 27 Jan, showing at selected cinemas

HACKSAW RIDGE (tbc)

DENIAL (12a)

RULES DON'T APPLY (tbc)

SING (U)

THE WHITE KING (12a)

Events

SLIDE - ACTION SPORT TRADESHOW Tues 24 Jan - Wed 25 Jan, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

WILFRED OWEN DAY Sat 28 Jan, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

FEATHER & FLIGHT Sat 28 Jan, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms

CAMPER MART Sun 29 Jan, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

TATTOO FREEZE Sun 29 Jan, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

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