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by week listings guide



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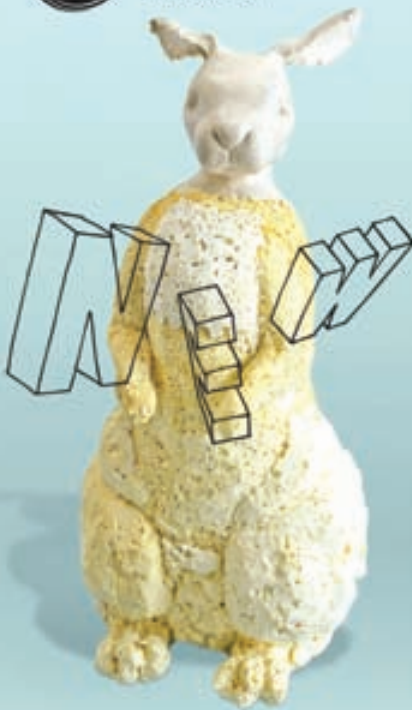
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Image: The Circle of Nature, (2016) by Lisa Nash
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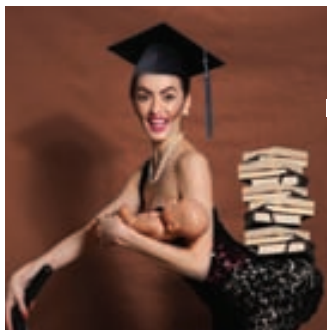
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Emeli Sandé



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Natalie Cutler



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First Word

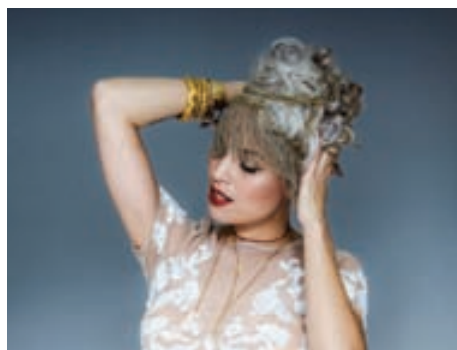
Top female artists set to star at Cheltenham Jazz Festival 2017

This year's Cheltenham Jazz Festival will feature star turns from top female vocalists Laura Mvula, Mica Paris, Earl, Camilla George and Meshell Ndegeocello, to name but a few.

The well-established annual event returns next month to present a programme that brings together classic and contemporary jazz, blues, soul and pop with a range of world premieres, festival commissions and unique collaborations.

Other performers making a welcome contribution to the event include Gregory Porter, Ben Folds, Jamie Cullum, Rick Wakeman, Jack Savoretti, Will Young and Paul Carrack. The festival is hosted in a tented village in Cheltenham's Montpellier Gardens and takes place from 26 April to 1 May.

For more information and to book tickets, visit cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz



Birmingham Legoland given the green light

Birmingham's council has given the go-ahead to a planning application to establish a Legoland Discovery Centre at the city's Barclaycard Arena.

The new venue will include a 4D cinema, numerous rides and several interactive Lego-themed attractions. City council planning officers believe the discovery centre will 'reinforce and promote Birmingham's role as a centre for tourism, culture and events'.

Lichfield blues festival gets its very own Wizzard

Midlands music legend Roy Wood has expressed his delight at becoming the new patron of the Lichfield Blues & Jazz Festival. "My career as a writer, musician and performer since the 1960s has provided me with many of the highlights of my life," said the one-time Wizzard star, "and it's great that festivals like this one continue to help and develop local talent, as well as giving local audiences the chance to see performers from the national circuit on their doorstep."

The festival is this year taking place from 2 to 4 June.

For more information, visit lichfieldarts.org.uk



Birmingham hospice to host its first ever Dance-athon

Birmingham's St Mary's Hospice is hosting its first ever dance-athon this month - and is looking for people who'd like to take part. The dance-athon will last for six hours, with participants encouraged to dress in the hospice's colours of pink and purple.

"Dancing is a fantastic way of keeping active and enjoying yourself," says Lucy Watkins, Events Manager at St Mary's, "and by signing up to take part, you'll also be supporting a great local cause. Whether you're a dancing amateur or a dancing queen, we hope to see you on the dancefloor!"

The dance-athon takes place at St Mary's Parish Centre, Harborne, on Saturday 4 March from 4pm.

For more information or to sign up to participate, visit birminghamhospice.org.uk

A day out for Thomas the Tank Engine fans

Fans of Thomas the Tank Engine can enjoy a day out with their hero this month (4 & 5 March).

Vintage Trains is celebrating its 50th anniversary by running a steam-hauled rail tour from Birmingham Snow Hill Station to Oxfordshire's Railway Centre, where an action-packed programme of family-friendly

fun with Thomas and his friends awaits. The day's entertainment includes the chance to meet Sir Topham's mischievous sidekicks Rusty & Dusty, balloon modelling with Twistina and Twistopher, and the opportunity to enjoy Thomas story readings in the Imagination Station.

Slamdunk favourites back for a record fourth year

Slam Dunk Festival favourites Zebrahead are making a record-breaking return to the event. The American punk-rap party outfit's 2017 appearance will mean they've performed at the festival for more consecutive years than any other band.

"We're damn excited to be coming back for the fourth straight year," says Zebrahead's Ben Osmundson. "It's the one festival where everyone feels like family and friends, and we can't wait to have a drink with all of you!"

Slam Dunk Festival takes place at the Genting Arena and NEC on 27 May. For tickets, visit theticketfactory.com or call 0844 33 88 222.



Boost for CBSO's educational programme



A philanthropic couple from Herefordshire have gifted £250,000 to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in order to support its extensive educational programme over the next five years. Clive and Sylvia Richards' gift has been made in celebration of the appointment of the orchestra's new Music Director, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla.

The money will contribute to the cost of around 30 concerts per year for young people, an extensive programme of musical activities in schools, and the orchestra's work with talented young musicians. Commenting on the gift, Clive Richards - who works as a serial entrepreneur in the City of London - said: "My wife and I are delighted to support Mirga in the music education of young people in the greater Birmingham area. Undoubtedly Mirga will captivate and inspire all the young people who come into orbit as she already does with her older admirers."

Brum gig for university lecturer

A Birmingham University lecturer is this month performing at a popular city centre eatery with his newly formed band.

Ashley Allen has amassed more than 15 years of experience in the performing arts industry, working, recording and playing with big-name musicians including Gregory Porter, Aynsley Lister, Julie Dexter and Omar.

His Ashley Allen Quintet performs at Bar Opus on Saturday 4 March.



Hit musical Sunset Boulevard returns to Birmingham

Andrew Lloyd Webber's award-winning musical Sunset Boulevard is returning to the Birmingham Hippodrome in the autumn. The Tony Award winner, based on Billy Wilder's legendary film, is being presented by Leicester's Curve theatre and will star Ria Jones (pictured) as faded silent-screen goddess Norma Desmond.

Welsh singer Ria was Glenn Close's West End understudy in the role last year, receiving rave reviews and standing ovations when she took over the part after the Hollywood star had fallen ill.

Sunset Boulevard runs at the Hippodrome from Monday 13 to Saturday 18 November.



Young Birmingham actor bags role in Indo-British Shakespearean epic



A young Birmingham actor is to appear in an international movie inspired by Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus.

Twenty-one-year-old Antonio Aakeel is the only British actor in the Indo-British co-production The Hungry, a film that was given the green light last year as part of the 400th anniversary commemorations of Shakespeare's death.

"The film is every bit a Shakespearean epic," says Antonio, "and what a great way to commemorate his legacy. We're all very proud of the movie, and India has been the perfect setting to translate this story for a contemporary audience."

Arts Council's £120,000 grant keeps Ikon local community initiative afloat

Ikon Gallery's canal boat is to be transformed into a floating arts centre, thanks to a £120,000 grant from Arts Council England. The money will fund the Birmingham venue's Looping The Loop tour. An artistic and creative programme shaped by local people, the initiative is designed to create better access to art and culture in the Ladywood district where the gallery is located.

Commenting on the investment, Ikon's Deputy Director, Ian Hyde, said: "The funding will enable us to build on our reputation for taking contemporary art to communities via the canals and waterways of the West Midlands. We believe that working with residents in our local community, which is one of the most diverse districts in Birmingham, will help support our mission to engage a wide audience with all that we do."

Cirque's tales of the forest, told in the city...

The world famous Cirque du Soleil make a welcome return to Birmingham this month.

The Québec-based entertainment company are visiting the city's Genting Arena with their signature production, Varekai: Tales Of The Forest.

The spectacular show reimagines the Greek myth of Icarus, who perished after flying too close to the sun.

The production shows at the Genting Arena from Wednesday 1 to Sunday 5 March.



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THE CHANGING FACE OF BRUM

With the introduction of Grand Central and the demolition of Central Library and Paradise Forum, Birmingham's skyline has seen plenty of changes in the past couple of years. Now plans have been put in place to rejuvenate the Southside area of the city. Lauren Cox finds out more...

A multi-million pound project will see a 40ft traditional Chinese arch and dragon-embellished plinths installed in a new public square in the south side of Birmingham city centre. The vibrant space will be fit for outdoor performances, festivals and markets, and will unite Chinatown for the first time.

Championed by the Southside Business Improvement District (BID), the Chinese community, the Hippodrome theatre and Birmingham City Council, the pedestrianised Southside Square is intended to transform the area around Hurst Street, Ladywell Walk and Thorp Street.

Paul Garry, chairman of Southside BID, said: "We anticipate the square will provide a safe and welcoming environment for all visitors and residents to enjoy, and we're working hard with our partners to make this project a reality."

Funding for the development of Southside Square will be sought from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership's Enterprise Zone, recent nearby residential schemes and local businesses.

James Wong, chairman of the Chinese Festival Committee and director of Chung Ying Group, said: "This new space enables us to showcase the fantastic arts and culture we have here. The Chinese arch is something we have been working to achieve for a long time, creating a permanent celebration of

Chinese culture in Birmingham and an icon that will be celebrated for years to come."

Earlier this year, Mr Wong and the Chinese Festival Committee celebrated a record-breaking year for Chinese New Year celebrations in Birmingham. With a new and improved public space hopefully on its way, celebrations in years to come are surely set to grow even more.

Chief executive of Birmingham Hippodrome, Fiona Allan, said: "This will be an exciting and new creative space where local communities can gather for cultural experiences as performers, participants and audiences. We look forward to enhancing our performance programme in this space as we grow our festivals and our community projects for increasingly diverse audiences."

The Chinatown improvements from the Southside Link Project are the latest potential developments to be announced in the district. The Commercial Estates Group (CEG) is looking to regenerate Smallbrook Queensway, with plans in place for one of Birmingham's tallest residential buildings and the demolition of the Ringway Centre.

Birmingham City Council leader John Clancy said: "This square is an important stage in ongoing plans to transform the south side of the city centre, delivering better public spaces and an improved quality of life for residents and visitors.

"Together with the recent announcement of a £70million plan to redevelop Smallbrook Queensway, Southside Square will give a new heart and stronger identity to Chinatown, as well as extending the benefits of the New Street Station redevelopment with improved pedestrian and cycle links."

The council's planning committee has approved plans to demolish the section from Holloway Circus to Hurst Street, including the concrete bridge link, and replace it with a nine-storey block with shops and offices and a 26-storey apartment block.

While Snobs nightclub on the corner of Hurst Street will be unaffected, the remaining section up to Debenhams will be renovated with an additional two storeys and reclad in glass.

Iain MacSween, development manager at CEG, said: "The decision to approve these applications will enable the delivery of a vibrant, attractive development which will regenerate this prominent location, creating new job opportunities, homes, retail and leisure space close to the city centre. It will also open up Hurst Street views and provide a new, iconic, landmark building."

An estimated 500 jobs will be created during the construction phase, and once the offices, bars and shops open, a further 1,100 permanent jobs.

Going Greek

Jodie Prenger talks about playing Shirley Valentine in a new version of Willy Russell's iconic play...



Ever fallen so in love with a foreign country that you've been tempted to stay forever? In Willy Russell's much-loved story, Shirley Valentine, a middle-aged housewife swaps her humdrum life in Liverpool for paradise on the sunny shores of Greece after a friend unexpectedly invites her out on holiday.

The 1989 film version starring Pauline Collins has firmly established a place in the nation's hearts, but slightly less well known and widely seen is the original stage version that inspired it. Unusually for Russell, the stage show takes the form of a long monologue, where a solo performer recounts Shirley's entire journey in character. Thirty years after the show made its stage debut, I'd Do Anything star Jodie Prenger brings it back to life at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre this month.

"As a character, I'd put Shirley Valentine right up there with icons," says Prenger. "When Willy Russell created her, I think she became the heart of every woman around the UK, so it's an absolute joy to play a role like this. And also she's so brave - I think it's extraordinary to have the strength to leave everything she knows behind. It sounds like a bit of a cliché, but she really does 'discover herself'. I think it's quite an endearing quality for someone to question what their life has been and what they've done with it, and she really does that."

Like many, Prenger had her first encounter with Shirley through the film adaptation. Though the character and story are much the same in either medium, the way it's told makes a huge difference, especially for the actor leading the production.

"I've never seen it on stage before, which I think is a good thing, but of course I've seen the film, and I'm always quite shocked when people say they haven't. On stage, the vision and the story and the premise is all taken up by one person, so you have to really be there in the moment. You can't just sit on a chair and tell the story - you have to make sure the audience can see all these scenes and the parts of Shirley's journey playing out."

Luckily, Prenger has plenty of experience to draw on here, having previously appeared in *Tell Me On A Sunday*, which showed at the New Alex in April 2016. But in this particular case, she says, it's the nature of the character and the scale of her journey of self-discovery that allows the show to easily fill the space in larger venues, despite its one-woman cast.

"I think it goes back to Shirley Valentine being this big, iconic role. She's got a huge, epic story to tell and goes on a real adventure, and that makes you want to listen to her. She's a great explorer who gets to live out her dream. She says herself that she's a mother, she's a wife, she's Shirley Valentine, and the way that she says it makes you feel like Shirley Valentine could be Super Woman."

Of course, although she takes the limelight up on stage, Prenger isn't going to be entirely unsupported. There's also plenty of help to be had from the crew and creative team, including designer Amy Yardley.

"I don't want to give too much away but the set really is extraordinary. It's got a kind of nostalgic quality, especially when she ventures out to Greece - it's really beautiful and picturesque."

Creator Willy Russell (*Blood Brothers*,

Educating Rita) also remains a hands-on member of the team, and director Glen Walford has the benefit of just as much experience with the show as does the writer, having both commissioned and directed the original stage production.

"It was originally written as a play. Glen Walford commissioned Willy to write a musical, and he turned up with this one-woman play which has become really embedded in the history of theatre - so no pressure for me! Willy's been really involved in this production, but then the show is his baby. And it's the same with Glen. They're both very proud of it, and I'm very proud to get to hold it - I feel like I'm holding it with my mittens on, protecting it. I think it's so admirable when the people who've created these shows stay part of them for so long, and I think that's what keeps them special and keeps the strength in them year after year."

Decades after the story was written, attitudes to marriage, relationships and women generally have changed a great deal, and Shirley's pre-holiday life spent talking to the walls and cooking egg and chips for an unappreciative husband are probably far less typical today than they once were. Nevertheless, thinks Prenger, she's still as easy to identify with as ever.

"The thing is, when you watch it, she never actually hates Joe. I think they do still love each other, and that's why they've stayed together for so long, even if they don't always say it. They've just started drifting apart, haven't they? I think we've all experienced relationships like that - where someone does things that get on your bloody nerves and sometimes they drive you mad, but deep down you love 'em and you just get on with it. You see echoes of that throughout history - it's just something that goes on and on."

And it's not just relationships either; there are plenty of other ways of getting stuck in a rut. Anyone who's ever found themselves in any sort of dead-end situation, whether in love or simply in an

unsatisfying job, will be able to understand Shirley's gnawing frustrations and desire for an escape. Not wanting to return from a favourite holiday is probably also something that most of us can identify with.

"I think we've also all had jobs where we go in nine-to-five and we'd all much rather be sat on the beach drinking wine by the sea. I remember when we went to the Maldives - we were on a private island, which was lovely, and it was definitely hard to drag me back then. So I think there's a bit of Shirley Valentine in every single person out there. Or at least I hope there is, because she's just glorious, she really is."

As well as starring in *Tell Me On A Sunday*, *Spamalot* and *Calamity Jane* at the New Alex, Prenger also recently appeared as *Fairy Bow Bells* in Birmingham Hippodrome's Christmas panto, *Dick Whittington*. And she's looking forward to returning to the city. Coming back to a familiar place with a few friendly faces to call on helps break up the loneliness of touring solo.

"I always love going to Birmingham - the shopping's great and it's got a real kind of buzz about it, which is always nice, especially when you're going somewhere on your own. I've done quite a lot of shows in the city, and it was lovely to hear the reaction about Shirley Valentine while I was doing the panto at the Hippodrome over Christmas. And it'll be nice to meet up with some people I know there because I do sometimes get lonely doing a one-woman show, so I'm more than grateful to anyone who pops over for a chat."

.....
Shirley Valentine shows at the New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 6 - Sat 11 March; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 6 - Sat 10 June; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 10 - Sat 15 July



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Owners of iconic London restaurant on the lookout for premises in Birmingham

A company which owns a popular celebrity haunt in London has confirmed that it plans to open a new restaurant in Birmingham.

Located in the West End, the Ivy Collection group's flagship venue, The Ivy, is celebrating its centenary this year. The restaurant's long list of modern-day celebrity diners includes Madonna, Tom

Cruise, Angelina Jolie, Simon Cowell, and David and Victoria Beckham.

The Ivy Collection group also has four other restaurants in the capital and one in Bristol.

The company is known to be looking for a suitable premises in Birmingham, with the intention of bringing 'the familiar luxury of The Ivy' to the second city.



REVIEW: The Loft, Birmingham Relaxed dining in Southside...

Located in the heart of Birmingham's Southside district and having recently undergone a huge refurbishment and rebrand, The Loft (formerly The Loft Lounge) prides itself on bringing traditional British fare - accompanied with speciality spirits, cocktails and craft beers - to the bustling city centre.

On arrival at the venue, we were politely greeted and shown over to our table - a cosy little alcove in the dimly lit bar area.

The venue's friendly and welcoming atmosphere, allied to its impressively stylish look, made for a positive first impression. So far, so good!

Whilst perusing the menu, and upon recommendation from our friendly and attentive waiter, I

enjoyed one of The Loft's intriguing cocktails. I opted for a Molly Cavalli - a pornstar martini with a salted caramel twist. Served in a takeaway coffee cup with half a passion fruit, it was extremely tasty. The bartender clearly knows his stuff.

From the Nibbles section of the menu, we chose the satay-glazed chicken wings and the chipotle, garlic and honey-glazed beef ribs. The ribs were some of the nicest I've ever tasted. The meat was cooked to absolute perfection and fell off the bone. The sauce had a slight kick and boasted a sticky, strong and delicious flavour. The wings were also cooked really nicely, with a generous coating of satay sauce.

Being greedy, we also ordered the smoked salmon served with oyster mayonnaise and pickled veg off the Valentine's menu. It proved to be another tasty dish made with top-quality ingredients, with all the flavours working well together.

Next up, the mains. We were spoilt for choice! From land plates, sea plates and field plates to flat bread pizzas, the menu had it all. After much deliberation we opted for the grilled lamb fillets served with courgette, stuffed slow-roasted tomatoes and caper butter, and the braised pork served with celeriac, roasted apple sauce and crackling bites.

Both dishes were fantastic. The pork was cooked to perfection, providing a melt-in-the-mouth sensation, and was beautifully complemented by the dish's other elements. We particularly welcomed the addition of the crackling bites. Every meat-eater loves crackling, right? Similarly, the lamb was cooked well and seasoned nicely. The caper butter was a really tasty addition to the dish, providing small, salty bursts of flavour.

Following a delicious and comically named Suck And Swallow cocktail (presented in a plastic bag with a chupa chups lolly), we managed to squeeze in dessert, despite being suitably full. From their Valentine's menu, I opted for the dark chocolate and fig tart, served with ice cream. My partner chose the ever-so-naughty double chocolate brownie sundae with whipped cream, salted caramel sauce, vanilla ice cream and pecans. Both were very filling,

very tasty and a great end to the evening.

In addition to its everyday menu, The Loft serves a wide range of Saturday and Sunday brunch options, including pastries, ciabattas and a full English, all of which are available till 5pm. Bottomless brunch is also available upon request. They also have beef, chicken, pork belly and vegetarian Sunday lunches available for £19.50 for two people - a reasonable price tag for the quality of the food.

The Loft is perfect for groups of friends and couples alike. With DJs and live music to enjoy, as well as a stunning outdoor space, it's somewhere I'll certainly be returning to in the future.

If you're a lover of relaxed dining, reasonably priced dishes and high-quality ingredients, this place is for you. The service was fantastic, and that, alongside the tasty food, chilled-out atmosphere and stylish surroundings, certainly made for a very enjoyable evening.

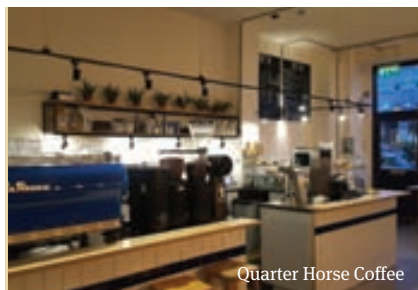
Lauren Foster

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall value:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■
OVERALL	■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The Loft
143 Bromsgrove Street
Southside
Birmingham
B5 6RG
Tel: 0121 622 2444

Fancy a coffee?

Coffee culture in Birmingham is positively booming. From artisan roasteries to quirky cafes, the city is full of hidden gems catering with passion and skill to the increasing demand and desire for high-quality coffee. What's On has handpicked some of Brum's best independent coffee shops for you to try out.



Quarter Horse Coffee

Quarter Horse Coffee

The delicious aroma of roasting coffee beans completely fills the air in this stylish and minimalistic cafe and roastery. You can listen to the gentle hum of the roaster and see the process in action while you sip on the great-tasting coffee. Recently named as one of Britain's best coffee shops by the editor of Caffeine magazine, Chloe Callow, Quarter Horse distributes their freshly roasted coffee to a variety of venues all around Birmingham.

88-90 Bristol St, B5 7AH



200 Degrees

200 Degrees

Located in the heart of Birmingham's commercial district, the new coffee shop from 200 Degrees - small batch coffee roasters based in Nottingham - is already proving to be extremely popular.

The coffee gurus at the cafe share their expertise at the in-store Barista School. Learn how to be a barista, how to brew the perfect coffee at home or how to create the best eye-catching latte art.

21 Colmore Row, B3 2BH



Yorks Bakery Cafe

Yorks Bakery Cafe

At Yorks Cafe and Coffee Roasters, great quality Birmingham coffee is roasted on site. This beautifully decorated gem of a cafe hosts live jazz nights every Monday and serves up a variety of craft beers, wine and cocktails. Yorks also has an Espresso Bar on Colmore Row and is getting ready to open more cafes and expand its coffee-roasting business.

29/30 Stephenson St, B2 4BH & 16a Colmore Row, B2 5HU

Six Eight Kafé

Back in 2011, this cafe was opened by four passionate coffee lovers who have since set the bar high for other independent coffee shops in Birmingham. Six Eight is now a legendary cafe firmly established within the city's coffee scene. Regular live music, art and poetry events take place at the Temple Row site, accompanied by craft beer and award-winning coffee.

6/8 Temple Row, B2 5HG & Floor 2, Millennium Point, Curzon St, B4 7XG

Madcup

This new and trendy cafe is bringing some Australian coffee culture to Birmingham. The all-white modern cafe, complete with quirky finishing touches, offers something a little different alongside its regular coffee. With rose-infused matcha lattes, golden turmeric lattes and pink

velvet hot chocolates made with raw cacao, beets and maple syrup on the menu, Madcup is the place to be if you're after a perfect health kick.

20 Alcester Rd S, Kings Heath, B14 7PU

Tilt

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The new kid on the block...

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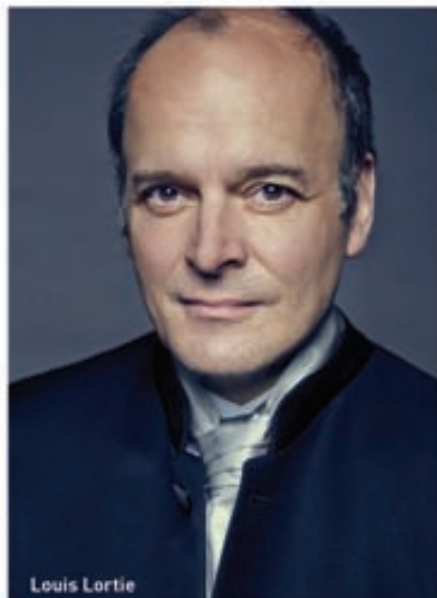
Anthony Hewitt

Highlights

TUE 7 MAR

LOUIS LORTIE

1.05pm Birmingham Conservatoire



Louis Lortie

THU 9 MAR - SAT 11 MAR

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Thu 7pm, Fri 7pm, Sat 2pm & 7pm
The Crescent Theatre

TUE 14 MAR

JENNIFER PIKE

1.05pm Birmingham Conservatoire



Jennifer Pike
© Tom Barnes

FRI 17 MAR

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

1pm Town Hall, Birmingham

Featuring music by **Poulenc**
and **Schubert**

TUE 25 APR

ESTHER YOO

1.05pm Birmingham Conservatoire



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FRI 5 MAY

SHEKU KANNEH MASON

1.05pm Birmingham Conservatoire



Sheku Kanneh Mason

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food, glorious food...



Food festivals are becoming as much a staple of the British summer as Pimms, strawberries and Wimbledon. We all love eating alfresco (don't we?), so what better way to sample locally grown produce and freshly made dishes than by attending one or more of the many food festivals taking place across the Midlands in the coming months...

BIRMINGHAM VIVA! VEGAN FESTIVAL With over 150 stalls, talks throughout the day, cookery demos and lots of other activities, Sat 15 April, Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Birmingham

BRUM'S BIG FAT PIZZA FESTIVAL The annual festival dedicated entirely to pizza makes a welcome return, Sat 29 April, No.21 Digbeth, Birmingham

EASTNOR CHILLI FESTIVAL Now in its 6th year, with all things chilli to try and buy, Sun 30 April - Mon 1 May, Eastnor Castle

LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL (SPRING) Proving that Ludlow doesn't do things by halves, the Spring Festival is a celebration of all things British, packing a slightly different punch to its older counterpart, Sat 13 - Sun 14 May, Ludlow Castle

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL Artisan food market, food challenges and competitions, live music, children's entertainment, foodie demonstrations and so much more, Sat 27 - Mon 29 May, Weston Park, Staffordshire

WARWICK FOOD FESTIVAL Back for the third year and celebrating all things local to Warwick, Sun 28 May, Market Square, Warwick

THE GREAT MALVERN FOOD FESTIVAL Over 60 stalls of locally produced food, drink and crafts. The BBC's Cooking Food Theatre features demonstrations, talks and displays, Mon 29 May, Great Malvern Priory

ASPARAFEST Celebrating all things asparagus and featuring a winning combination of music, food, fun activities and attractions, Fri 2 - Sun 4 June, Ashdown Farm, Evesham

BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW SUMMER Bringing the best food, drink and culinary experts from the BBC to Birmingham, Thurs 15 - Sun 18 June, NEC, Birmingham

DROITWICH SPA FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL With approximately 100 producers hailing from Droitwich and within a 30-mile radius, Sat 17 June, The Lido Park, Droitwich Spa

ELLESMERE FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL Showcasing impressive varieties of top-quality produce from local and regional producers, suppliers and restaurants, Sat 17 - Sun 18 June, Ellesmere, Shropshire

SHREWSBURY FOOD FESTIVAL Returning for another year, Shrewsbury Food Festival features hundreds of artisan food, drink and craft producers showcasing Shropshire's fine food and drink, Sat 24 - Sun 25 June, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

COLMORE FOOD FESTIVAL Bringing the finest hospitality venues of the Colmore Business District together for one weekend, Fri 30 June - Sat 1 July, Colmore Row, Birmingham

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL Artisan food market, food challenges and competitions, live music, children's entertainment, foodie demonstrations and so much more, Sat 8 - Sun 9 July, Kelmarsh Hall, Northampton

COSFORD FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring a tasty line-up of over 80 local producers and serving up 'the very best food and drink the Midlands has to offer', Sat 22 - Sun 23 July, RAF Museum Cosford

KENILWORTH FOOD FESTIVAL Hosting the region's very best food and drink vendors, with over 40 stalls selling tasty goodies to savour on-site or to take home, Sun 30 July, Abbey Fields, Kenilworth

WORCESTER FOODIE FESTIVAL Following the great success of last year's event, the festival returns 'bigger and better', with over 70 stalls offering delicious food and drink from local businesses, Sat 5 - Sun 6 August, Worcester

LICHFIELD FOOD FESTIVAL Following the roaring success of last year's edition, the Three Spires Shopping Centre once again plays host to 'a fantastic weekend of edible delights', Sat 26 - Mon 28 August, Lichfield Town Centre

NANTWICH FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL Boasting over 200 traders spread between two indoor gourmet market halls, and street food vendors from across the globe, Fri 1 - Sun 3 September, Nantwich Town Centre

TELFORD FEASTIVAL More than 130 of the region's best food, drink and craft producers descend on Telford's Southwater development for a second year, Sat 2 - Sun 3 September, QEII Arena, Telford, Shropshire

ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL Now in its 10th year, the festival yet again features an action-packed programme, Sat 9 - Sun 10 September, Royal Pump Rooms, Leamington

MOLD FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL Recognised as one of the best and most successful festivals in Wales, Mold attracts more than 13,000 visitors and 120 food and drink producers every year, Sat 16 - Sun 17 September, Mold, Wales

STONE FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL The festival has grown from humble beginnings in the town's Geor-

gian High Street to become one of the Midlands' biggest and busiest food festivals, Fri 6 - Sun 8 October, Westbridge Park, Stone, Staffordshire

HAMPER LLANGOLLEN 2017 Voted by the Telegraph national newspaper as one of the top 10 food festivals in the UK, Sat 14 - Sun 15 October, Llangollen Pavilion

Don't forget the Street Food...

DIGBETH DINING CLUB Now open on both Friday and Saturday nights, the award-winning food event showcases the very best of street food vendors, Every Friday and Saturday night, Mama Roux's and Spotlight, Digbeth, Birmingham

HAWKER YARD Inspired by the hawker culture of Asia, Hawker Yard is a unique space where the stars of Birmingham's food and drink scene come together and collaborate, Every Friday evening and Saturday, Pershore Street, Birmingham

KINGS HEATH STREETFOOD MARKET Bringing together 15 of the country's hottest streetfood traders, live music and a craft ale bar to create a truly unique dining experience, Village Square, Kingsheath, Birmingham

MAC FOOD MARKET A host of Birmingham's street food favourites take over mac with freshly made treats, Last Sunday of every month, mac, Birmingham

NO. 21 DIGBETH Launched this very year, No. 21 offers street food, arts, pop-ups, music and a boutique market, Every Friday night, 21 Milk Street, Birmingham



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Emeli Sandé

O2 Academy, Birmingham,
Sun 19 March



Recording artist and songwriter Emeli Sandé first came to prominence when she featured on rapper Chipmunk's 2009 track, Diamond Rings. Having since established herself as one of the UK's most revered artists, she returns to the stage this month in support of the critically acclaimed Long Live The Angels, an album described as 'a mesmerising journey' through the last four years of Sandé's extraordinary life.

Amy Macdonald

Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
Thurs 30 March



Twenty-nine-year-old singer-songwriter Amy Macdonald has released three albums and sold over five million records worldwide - including 1.5 million here in the UK. She's performed to over three million people across the world and spent last summer splitting her time between recording in the studio and headlining festivals across Europe. Macdonald rose to fame back in 2007 with the release of her debut album, This Is The Life, and has since won plenty of silverware, including the 2011 Echo Award for Best International Rock/Pop Female. See her at Symphony Hall as she embarks on her first tour in four years.



Laura Marling

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Tues 14 March

Singer-songwriter Laura is one of the most talented and prolific young musicians of her generation. She came to prominence back in 2008 with the release of her debut offering, Alas, I Cannot Swim. The album was nomi-

nated for a Mercury Music Prize - as was second album I Speak Because I Can in 2010 and fourth album Once I Was An Eagle in 2013. Voted Best British Female Solo Artist at the 2011 Brit Awards, she's now back on the road in support of her highly anticipated sixth album, Semper Femina.

Ten Fé

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Sun 12 March

Ben Moorhouse and Leo Duncan met at a party and shortly afterwards became busking partners on the London Underground, performing classic covers on District line trains.

"It was early rock 'n' roll, early Beatles - the bootleg stuff, when they were at the Cavern. Some people now are ashamed of playing covers, but our sets were full of them."

The pair visit Birmingham following the release of their debut album, Hit The Light, which fuses intricate contemporary electronics and the band's signature mix of Americana, Manchester baggy and soulful vocals.



Slaves

The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham,
Mon 27 March

Featuring Laurie Vincent on guitar, bass and vocals and Isaac Holman on drums and vocals, English punk duo Slaves peaked at number eight in the charts with their Mercury Music Prize-nominated debut album, Are You Satisfied. Their second offering, Take Control, fared even better, reaching number six in the charts in its first week.

The Weeknd

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,
Mon 13 March

Grammy Award-winning and multi-platinum-selling music artist The Weeknd released three nine-track mixtapes to great acclaim in 2011 - House Of Balloons, Thursday and Echoes Of Silence. A compilation album, Trilogy, followed in 2012, released under both Republic Records and his own label, OX. He's visiting Birmingham as part of his first ever world tour, Starboy: Legend Of The Fall.



Nigel Kennedy And Friends

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 11 March

Perhaps in an attempt to distract himself from the frustrations that are part and parcel of supporting Aston Villa Football Club, maverick violinist Nigel Kennedy has headed out on tour with this special gala celebration show. The concert sees him performing a wide-ranging repertoire that features new works and greatest hits, world music, jazz, classical and a selection of music from composers as diverse as Bach and Jimi Hendrix.

Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra

The Bramall, Birmingham University, Sun 26 March

Birmingham Phil's latest concert sees soprano Alison Roddy joining the orchestra for a programme of three works conducted by music director Michael Lloyd.

Mozart's Exsultate, jubilate, written in 1773, is a religious solo motet which, although produced for a famous castrato whom the composer greatly admired, is really a concerto for soprano voice... Brahms' Variations On A Theme By Haydn is commonly referred to as the 'St Anthony' variations. It's based on a theme from the first of a set of six divertimenti which, at the time of composition, were thought to be by Haydn but are now credited to his pupil, Ignace Pleyel... The programme is completed by Mahler's Symphony No 4 in G major, a work written at the end of the 19th century that finds its inspiration in folk poetry.

BCMG: Oliver Knussen Conducts Grime

CBSO Centre, Birmingham, Sun 5 March

"I've worked with Oliver Knussen quite a bit," explains Helen Grime in an interview with compositiontoday.com. "He's such a fantastic musician and, apart from the fact that he's a great composer, he's got a brilliant ear. He's also very clever but not intellectually intimidating. His music has been an important influence on me."

One of the UK's leading young composers, Grime is here once again seeing her work conducted by the talented Knussen and performed by Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

The ensemble first performed one of her works - the three-movement A Cold Spring - eight years ago.

Her Sound Investment Piano Concerto is receiving its world premiere in this concert, which also includes tributes to composers who've had a significant influence on her music.

Gala Piano All-Nighter

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 3 - Sat 4 March

Comprising 12 hours of piano music, this Birmingham Conservatoire event features contributions from, among others, Simon Callow, Alistair McGowan, Peter Donohoe, Dr Anna Scott, Antony Hewitt and 'a mystery special guest'.

The evening kicks off with Hungarian virtuoso pianist Gergely Bogányi performing Chopin's Nocturnes. Proceedings are brought to a close on the Saturday morning with a performance of Messiaen's Dieu Parmi Nous on the famous Town Hall Organ.

The event begins at 7.30pm on Friday the 3rd and finishes at 7.30am on the morning of the 4th.



I Fagiolini

The Barber Institute, Birmingham, Wed 22 March

British vocal ensemble I Fagiolini present about 50 concerts each year, from the BBC Proms and major European festivals to further-afield performances in the US, the Far East and Africa.

Since forming over 30 years ago, the group have earned themselves a reputation for presenting music in unusual ways, their joyfully anarchic approach helping to break down barriers between contemporary audiences and early music. This latest presentation sees them celebrating the 450th anniversary of the birth of Monteverdi, in whose works they specialise. The concert features what the ensemble describe as 'a ravishing selection' of the 17th century Italian composer's music.



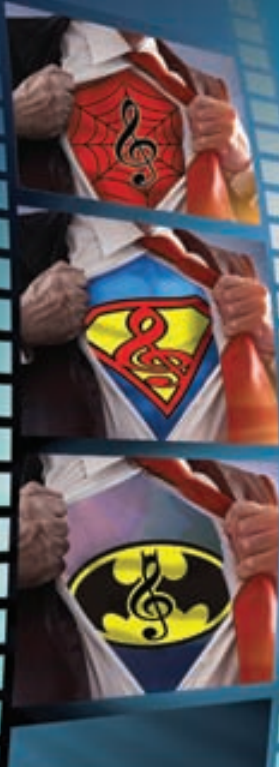
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Natalie Cutler: Not Yet Suffragette

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 19 March; mac, Birmingham, Thurs 23 March

The tampon tax, public breast-feeding, marriage, child birth and the gender pay gap are among the subjects being given a thorough airing by Natalie Cutler in her one-woman show - an hour's-worth of performance that brings together comedy, music, dance and political incorrectness. "It's a show about how far we've not come and the reasons why," explains Natalie. "Women are still being asked the same questions and told the same things - 'How come you're not married? How come you don't have a baby? You should dress like this, don't dress like that'. They're all the same issues that were there 100 years ago. But there are plenty of people in the world trying to address inequality - my show doesn't pretend to have any answers, it simply takes a look at where we've travelled over the last century.

"I'm very much a satirical comedian and believe in the old adage of 'first make an audience laugh, then make them think'. With this show, it was very important to me that I included material on subjects that weren't commonly known about. For instance, I have a whole section based around the fact that there are currently 17 women serving life sentences in El Salvador because of miscarriage. Abortion is illegal in the country, and miscarriage is considered to be abortion and the woman's fault." So is Natalie welcoming of men in her audience?

"Absolutely. It's feminist comedy, but I don't spend the hour bashing men. A lot of guys who see the show don't get it. And why would they? They don't have the issues. The ones who do respond to it tend to be younger, and a lot of them absolutely see where I'm coming from."

Six of the best...

Russell Howard

Genting Arena, Birmingham, Fri 17 - Sat 18 March

According to his mother, reveals Russell Howard, his comic style calls to mind a child telling people about his day at the zoo.

And in fairness, Mrs H's assessment is a pretty accurate one.

Well known for the BBC Three TV series Russell Howard's Good News, the Bristol-born funnyman is here making a return to the live stage for the first time in three years, taking on the challenge of his biggest global tour to date.

Gags include: "Have people always been this angry? I've got a funny idea that before the internet, people were just writing 'f*** you' and attaching it to pigeons," and "I lost my virginity under a bridge. I was having sex with this poor girl and I was trying my best, but I was like Scotland at a World Cup - just pleased to be there."



Stuart Goldsmith

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Thurs 9 March

"Whether cheering up a distressed child, helping prevent a riot, or genuinely saving another human's actual life, I'm excellent in a crisis," says Stuart Goldsmith. "When the chips aren't down, however, it's a very different story."

Goldsmith says this sixth solo show is about 'embracing anxiety, conquering indecision and getting tasered'. It focuses on the always-rich subject matter of being middle-aged, the experience of parenting and the challenges of leaving the city for a life in the countryside.

His jokes include: "My friend Kim is on every single dating website. She refers to them all as the 'husband directory', but behind her back we call it the Screwfix catalogue."



Tom Allen & Suzi Ruffell

Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, Fri 17 March; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-on-Trent, Sat 18 March

Two talented comedians for the price of one is the deal on offer here, with Tom and Suzi each taking an hour of the show and performing their Edinburgh Fringe routines.

Allen is a master of camp comedy. Often likened in style to legendary raconteurs Kenneth Williams and Frankie Howard, he also dons his comedian's cap in the direction of McIntyre and Izzard. This latest show is his eighth solo offering and derives much of its material from experiences which happened in his childhood...

Ruffell looks back to her own formative years for her inspiration too. Gay, quirky and delightfully self-deprecating, she's certainly making good progress in the world of stand-up comedy, presenting an unquestionably likeable persona as she waxes lyrical about her mother's fashion sense and her father's 'dodgy' jobs.



Count Arthur Strong: The Sound Of Mucus

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 8 March;
Malvern Theatres, Fri 24 March

After years of success on BBC Radio Four and at the Edinburgh Fringe, Count Arthur Strong - or 'the Count', as he's otherwise known - finally made it onto the nation's television screens in 2013, starring in a sitcom that was co-written by the character's creator, Steve Delaney, and the man behind Father Ted, Graham Linehan.

A third series of the show is due to be screened this month.

"Isn't it wonderful," says Arthur, "that you can just turn on the telly after a hard day at the abattoir and there I am, smiling back at you, in my own programme again and again."

If you've not yet enjoyed a live performance by the Doncaster-born doyen of light entertainment, this tour is an excellent opportunity to do so. Entitled *The Sound Of Mucus*, the new show pays tribute to one of the best musicals Arthur can remember. Not that the former variety star is blessed with much of a memory, mind you. And as for his battery of befuddlements and propensity for mirthful malapropisms - well let's just say that they provide exceptionally effective starting points for some truly top-grade comedy.

"With each live show I've done, I've found out a little bit more about Arthur," explains Steve Delaney in talking about the character he created. "If I watch footage from the early days, he looks like the bones of something, but he's definitely continued to develop, and that's very important. Simply reproducing what I've done before would neither be as much fun nor as interesting."



Tony Law:

Royal Spa Centre,
Leamington Spa,
Thurs 16 March

Zany alternative comedy is Canadian funnyman Tony Law's stock-in-trade, a fact which means his audience is guaranteed an evening of truly off-the-wall, boundary-defying stand-up. So if you like your comedians to be touched with genius while at the same time prone to meander off-topic with gag-laden dialogues, Tony is definitely the fella for you. If, on the other hand, surreal comedy really isn't your thing, you may well be hard-pressed to get into the spirit of the evening. Previous shows have seen Tony chat to his audience about a lizard-moose who can see the future, and channel the spirit of a late and little-known comedian whose act involved him impersonating RAF fly-pasts. Quite what Mr Law will choose to focus on during his Leamington show is anyone's guess.



Jasper Carrott and Alistair McGowan

Belgrade Theatre, Mon 13 - Thurs 16 March;
The Place, Oakengates, Telford, 25 - 27 March

Midlands laughter legends Jasper and Alistair are stopping off at plenty of the region's theatres and comedy venues during the course of their long-running tour. Jasper's been plying his trade for many a decade now, with career highs including numerous television series and a chartbusting mid-'70s hit with hugely amusing song *Funky Moped*.

Worcestershire-born Alistair has followed in the footsteps of Mike Yarwood and Phil Cool to become one of the country's most revered impressionists. He's also worked extensively in the theatre, appearing in shows including *Little Shop Of Horrors*, for which he received an Olivier Award nomination.



Hal Cruttenden

The Bramall,
Birmingham,
Thurs 16 March

Given that he's so much more than 'just another stand-up', Hal Cruttenden must've been delighted when the Daily Telegraph wrote of him: 'He's naturally funny, but he's evolving into something more challenging and provocative than some jolly-faced follower in the footsteps of Michael McIntyre'.

Alongside his comedy, Hal's also an oft-seen actor, having appeared in TV shows including *EastEnders* and *Kavanagh QC*, and on film in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Madness Of King George*.

As a comic, he places great emphasis on cleverly constructed punchlines, and is always happy to ridicule himself in the name of comedy.

Hal is here joined by fellow funnyman Alan Hudson and compere-for-the-evening Paddy Lennox. He's appearing at the Bramall as part of the venue's monthly comedy night.





Billy Elliot

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 7 March - Sat 29 April

Based on the hit movie of the same name, Billy Elliot is set in the north east of England against the backdrop of the historic 1980s miners' strike.

Billy wants to be a dancer but feels that he must keep his ambition secret, to avoid the disapproval of his struggling family...

The award-winning show - it's bagged 10 Tonys and five Olivier Awards - features the iconic music of Sir Elton John and is here visit-

ing the Midlands as part of its first ever UK tour.

"Billy Elliot tells two different stories about trying to overcome adversity," says Scott Garnham, who plays Billy's older brother and local strike ringleader, Tony. "One is about a little boy trying to escape his environment, the other is about the strike. And where one succeeds, the other fails spectacularly.

"When we take the show to places near mining communities, I feel like they really get what we're trying to say with our story. In Sunderland, you could see fully-grown men crying in the audience when we talked about how there'd be no pits left in 10 years' time."

The Commitments

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 13 - Sat 18 March

Roddy Doyle's smash-hit musical adaptation of his own bestselling novel follows on from the Bafta-bagging movie version that chalked up a huge international success way back in the early 1990s.

As with book and film, the stage show finds working-class music fan Jimmy Rabbitte inspiring an unlikely bunch of amateur musicians and friends to become the finest soul band Dublin has ever produced. Along the way, the band treats the audience to more than 20 gold-star soul classics, including: Night Train; Try A Little Tenderness; River Deep, Mountain High; In The Midnight Hour; Papa Was A Rolling Stone; Mustang Sally; and I Heard It Through The Grapevine.

The cast is headed by Kevin Kennedy, best known for playing the character of Curly Watts in Coronation Street.

Pink Mist

The REP, Birmingham, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 March

Pink Mist is a military term for the blood spray that hangs in the air following an attack by a sniper or the explosion of a roadside bomb. It's a dramatic title for an equally dramatic work of theatre, originally written by Owen Sheers for radio broadcast. Arthur, Hads and Taff played at war with a youthful enthusiasm when in the school playground - but now, barely out of their teens and posted to Afghanistan, they find that the realities of conflict are an altogether different experience...

Inspired by 30 interviews with returned servicemen, Pink Mist reflects on the physical and psychological aftershocks of war - and the price paid not only by the soldiers themselves but also by the families they leave behind.

The production visits Birmingham following an acclaimed run at Bristol Old Vic.

Oyster Boy

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 12 March; The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 24 March

All-female physical-theatre company Haste are the award-winning creatives behind this bittersweet tale about the trials of love. Blending physical storytelling, clowning, live singing, dancing and puppetry, the show tells the story of Italian ice-cream seller Jim, his whirlwind 1950s romance with Alice, and the way in which their lives are turned upside-down by the arrival of their first child, a boy born with a head that's shaped like an oyster shell.

Running for approximately 60 minutes, the show is suitable for audience members aged eight-plus.



The Road To Huntsville

Stephanie Ridings' one-woman show explores the subject of finding love on Death Row...

How far would you go to find the man of your dreams? Coming to Warwick Arts Centre this month, Stephanie Ridings' *The Road to Huntsville* explores the fascinating phenomenon of women falling in love with the men they write to on death row. You might think a whirlwind romance based purely on letters to a prisoner sounds a little far-fetched, but according to Ridings, at least, it's more common than you might think...

"There are a lot of websites where you can find someone to write to," she says, "and you can be very specific - about sexuality, gender, what they're in prison for, how long they're gonna be in prison - it's all catered for. Some of them actually get married, though there's no actual physical contact - it's all done by proxy or through the bulletproof glass."

West Midlands-based writer and performer Ridings first took interest in the subject after coming across a television documentary. Instantly hooked, she was drawn to look deeper into the lives and experiences of these women, and what it was that might lead them to pursue such unconventional relationships - particularly the British women writing to men in American prisons.

"The thing that really interested me was the fact that they're three or four thousand miles away, and that question of whether you can actually be in love with someone just through letters. Also, it isn't so much about writing to a man who's

been incarcerated as it is writing to someone who's going to be executed, which doesn't happen in this country."

Ridings set about researching - digging around in blogs and internet forums, watching films and reading books to find out more. What she discovered surprised her; once these women found their prison pen pals, it wasn't all that hard to understand how quickly they might fall, even if they hadn't initially set out looking for love. For all the modern wonders of instant communication, these are lonely times for many people. In a world of constant distraction, the appeal of "an old-fashioned courtship with pen and paper" is easy to see, particularly when you're corresponding with someone offering you their absolute and undivided attention.

The wealth of information available both online and elsewhere meant that Ridings was able to start work on her show without ever making contact with any of these long-distance lovers. Of course, there were ethical considerations to factor in as well.

"It didn't feel right to just crash into somebody's life and then disappear once I'd made the show. There are real concerns about exploiting people for things like this. And there was nothing that I couldn't find out from what was already in the public domain, so I didn't see what the purpose of that would be. Also, I didn't want to end up actually

going to Texas to be with someone!"

But despite not joining the ranks of the women who find love through letter-writing, Ridings did eventually find the funding to travel out to Texas and visit the Huntsville prison after which the show is named. Opened in 1849, Huntsville is both the oldest state prison in Texas and home to America's busiest execution chamber. She and her videographer weren't able to get too close to the facility (you can see them skirting around the perimeter in a series of video blogs on her YouTube channel), but they did get the chance to speak to former prison warden Jim Willett, who oversaw 89 executions over the course of his career.

"He was a really great guy - really funny and lovely, and you couldn't have asked for a nicer person. But, I don't know, something about him just made you feel like he was damaged by his experience. It wasn't just doing all those executions and having to take that home with him, but as the warden, he also lived right outside the walls of the prison, and his house was on the other side of the death house, so he'd brought his kids up that close to it."

The pair also made some time to take a look around the town more generally, and get a feel for the attitudes of local people towards what happens in their neighbourhood. Huntsville is a small city in the east of Texas with a population of just under 40,000. A quarter of that population is made up of people behind



bars, and the majority of the other residents are employed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, leading to Huntsville being labelled as a 'company town'.

"People in that part of Texas are very conservative in their beliefs. We were quite cautious about telling people why we were there, so we only referred to the prison quite generically, but even the receptionist at our hotel was like, 'If you behave like a dog, you get put down like a dog'. And that was very much the sort of attitude among the people we spoke to. We were having dinner on the last night and there was a man there who thought that the UK was overrun by the Taliban and that we were all living in constant fear. Of course, we were very typically British and polite about telling him that it was nothing like that, but there's a real sort of narrow-mindedness there. It was pretty strange, but it was a really great experience."

Presented as a confessional-style solo performance, the show blends detail of Ridings' real experiences with a fictionalised narrative. Since the dividing line between the two is never made explicit, the show has elicited a variety of responses from critics and audiences based on what they assume to be true and invented.

"I speak directly to the audience, and it's almost like I'm sort of reliving it in that moment, so it goes through how I get

interested and what happens after each incident, and how my other half responds. In Edinburgh, people really wanted to know how much of it was true, but we like to leave audiences to make their own minds up."

It's not the first time Ridings has created and performed a solo show - her previous piece, *Me, Mum & Dusty Springfield*, toured to rave reviews - but in recent years she's focused more on writing plays for other people to perform. This medium seemed to suit the story better, but wasn't without its perils. Such an intense and soul-searching show is bound to make huge demands on any performer, particularly when they're up on stage alone.

"It just felt like this was a more interesting way to present the story - it wasn't enough just to write a play about a woman who falls in love with a man on death row. In the early days it was difficult, and I took measures to make sure it wasn't affecting me in my life - I suppose that's just about how you warm up and warm down at the beginning and end of the show. I think the rest of the team were quite worried that it would affect me a lot, because there's a lot of my real life in there, and there are some quite tricky things that I talk about which did actually happen. But at the same time, I think there's something quite liberating about it. You just have to be mindful to take care of yourself."

Experience probably helps. It's also not

the only time she's taken on hard-hitting subject matter. Her last play at The REP, *Unknown Male*, explored the effects of a train-track suicide on the driver. More recently, she's been working on a project called *Dylan's Parents*, which deals with the aftermath of a horrific crime from the perspective of the perpetrator's family.

Originally from Liverpool, Ridings has now lived in the West Midlands for six years, having first moved in when her partner started work at Warwick Arts Centre. Since then, she's quickly made a name for herself in the local arts and theatre scene, being accepted onto The REP's inaugural Foundry programme, as well as Writing West Midlands' Room 204 scheme.

"Moving here was one of the best things I've ever done for my career. After we came to the area I felt like things progressed much better, and I've been meeting really great friends and colleagues in the arts. Everyone's very welcoming and there's a really nice feel. Also there's always something going on somewhere, and there's something for everyone, whether it's big commercial theatre or something more tailored, so I can't champion the West Midlands enough."

.....

The Road To Huntsville shows at Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, on Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 March



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One Love: The Bob Marley Musical

The REP, Birmingham,
Fri 10 March - Sat 15 April

This new musical about the legendary Bob Marley is here receiving its UK premiere. Focusing on the period of the musician's life that saw him propelled from rising reggae star to global icon, the show features Marley's greatest hits, including No Woman No Cry, Exodus and Jamming, all of which are performed live by the cast.

"Birmingham is a natural place for the show's UK premiere," says Marley's daughter, Cedella. "With its mix of cultures, it's a city where my father performed to audiences that were captivated by his presence.

"I have no doubt that telling the story through music to a new generation in Birmingham will be part of his continuing legacy."



The Virgin Marias

The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham,
Sat 4 March

Birmingham School of Acting graduate Nathalie Bazán's revenge play is inspired by the true story of sisters Delfina and Maria de Jesús González, brothel owners who, in murdering the prostitutes they recruited, became the most infamous sibling serial killers in history. The production is presented by Lying Lips, a theatre company which Nathalie established in 2014. Suitable for audience members aged 14-plus, the show contains full nudity, smoking of herbal or e-cigarettes, stroboscopic lighting effects and violent scenes. Quite a night out, then...

Wonderwoman: The Naked Truth

mac, Birmingham, Fri 17 March

"How do we discuss sex in front of the sandpit, write a thriller inside a playpen and arrange a hot date whilst playing Lego?" ask Croatian artists and long-term Birmingham residents Tina Hofman and Kristina Gavran. "To work or not to work? That is the question. Our ambition didn't disappear when we had kids. It is ever-present, and often in conflict. Can we soothe our babies and our ambition?..."

Tina and Kristina present Wonderwoman via Notnow Collective, a company they co-founded in order to contemplate the subjects of family, parenthood and work-home balance in a 'challenging, highly visual and immersive way'.

The Hypocrite

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Fri 31 March - Sat 29 April



Award-winning playwright Richard Bean - he of One Man, Two Guvnors fame - is the impressive talent behind this 'riotous new comedy', here being co-produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company and Hull Truck Theatre. Set in the spring of 1842, its central character is the governor of Hull, Sir John Hotham, a man charged by Parliament with the task of denying King Charles I entry into the city.

"The reason the play is called The Hypocrite," explains Richard, "is that Sir John told some people that he was for Parliament, and others that he supported the king. He was tasked by Parliament with securing Hull's arsenal but later turned to the king's side, refusing to supply the Parliamentarian Thomas Fairfax with powder and munitions."

The production stars Game Of Thrones' Mark Addy (pictured) as Sir John and longtime television favourite Caroline Quentin as his wife, Lady Sarah Hotham.

Not Dead Enough

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Mon 27 March - Sat 1 April

EastEnders' Shane Richie and Strictly Come Dancing's Laura Whitmore (pictured) spearhead this new stage adaptation of Peter James's ingenious novel. With more than 17 million copies of his books sold worldwide, James's reputation as a talented crime-fiction author was further enhanced last year when he received the coveted Diamond Dagger, crime writing's highest honour.

This latest stage adaptation of the novelist's work sees Detective Superintendent Roy Grace digging deep into a chilling murder case - and quickly finding out that not everything is quite as it seems to be...

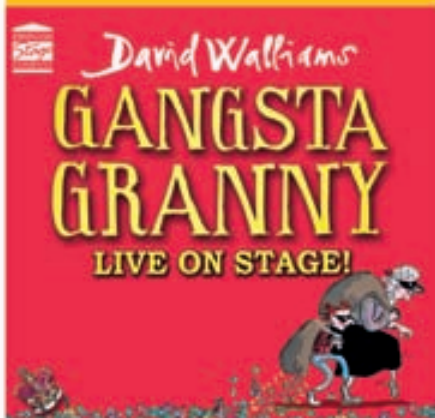
Olivier Award winner Ian Talbot directs.



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SAT 15 APRIL

REAL DIAMOND
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**THE SOLID SILVER
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“Nobody is gonna rain on my parade”

Natasha J Barnes talks about starring in *Funny Girl* on tour



What's the use of being a sensation if you never get the opportunity to show it? In Jule Styne and Isobel Lennart's iconic 1963 musical, *Funny Girl*, the unconventional Fanny Brice makes it big against the odds, thanks to a winning combination of hard work, determination and a lucky break.

She's not the only one. When leading lady Sheridan Smith was forced to take time out from performing in the show's West End run last year, understudy Natasha Barnes was called upon at short notice to step up to the plate. Audiences who'd booked tickets in the hope of seeing Smith went in sceptical - Sheridan's shoes are undeniably hard to fill - but almost every one of them came out converted. As Fanny Brice would have it, Barnes was just an untried bagel on a plate full of onion rolls - all it took for people to be blown away by her was for someone to give her a chance.

“I've understudied for a few things before, and for whatever reason you don't always get to play the part,” says Barnes. “So just having the opportunity to go on is amazing, but even though I'd done all the work in the rehearsals, I'm not sure how prepared I actually was. On the first night, I was just surprised I got through it, and then when everyone stood at the end, it was one of the best moments of my life. It was what I've wanted ever since I was little, and to see that people were really enjoying it was really special. I'm still grateful for it now.”

The reviews were gushing, declaring her in no uncertain terms as good as Smith, and heralding her as a bright new star in the musical theatre firmament. So well did her performances go down that as the production embarks on a UK-wide tour in

2017, Smith and Barnes will share the role between them, alternating performances at different venues. To some extent, the pair each make the role their own, but whomever they see leading the show, audiences are guaranteed a real treat.

“I think my take really came out of the West End run. When I first started out, I did quite a close representation of what Sheridan did, until over time the character sort of became mine. The tour is just a chance for both of us to bring what we did in London to the rest of the country, while still keeping it fresh and making sure it's just as special as the first time round.”

Of course, Smith's isn't the only performance Barnes has had to live up to. For many, the show will be forever associated with Barbra Streisand, who originally played the part both on stage and screen. It's partly this, thinks Barnes, that's kept directors from taking it up again for decades - prior to last year's run, it had been an incredible 50 years since *Funny Girl* last showed in the West End.

“When you have somebody as iconic as Streisand, you really have to find the right person to follow them. I think Sheridan is one of the greatest female comedians of our generation, so it was very much her work that was the starting point for this production. But it's interesting that it's made a comeback now, because it's being referenced in a lot of things, and also it's a time when you have all sorts of people, like Amy Schumer, really getting their moment to celebrate the funny in being female. I think it's great that as actresses we have more opportunities now to take centre stage and play roles that are a bit silly.”

Then there's the fact that the story is semi-biographical, inspired by the true story of the real-life theatrical gamechanger Fanny Brice who, in the early 20th century, had to fight against preconceptions of what a female performer should and shouldn't be.

“She's a funny old character to play because she was a real person. You don't want to do an impression but there are certain things you have to honour in the performance - like she was known for really big facial expressions and for being

larger than life. She's a very strong woman, a real fireball and quite ahead of her time. She's also very funny and really wears her heart on her sleeve. She doesn't hide anything. So it's all about trying to be as open and as full of light as you can be.”

That aside, in many ways the part might have been tailor-made for Barnes. The parallels between her own and Fanny's journeys to success have not escaped comment so far. It's also a fantastic part for an emerging talent in terms of showcasing great range, with Fanny growing steadily older and wiser as the play progresses. The story covers several years of Brice's life, from her teens through to her thirties, with Barnes falling right in the middle of the range.

“I did worry about it a bit at first, whether or not I could play someone older than me. But it's a really well-fleshed-out part, and you do get a sense of moving through time with her - it's something that happens very naturally with each song. The show picks up with the older Fanny sitting at her dressing table, and then shoots back to show her at age 15. And luckily, from that point on, it's straight through until the end of the show, so there's not too much jumping around in time. I have to say that the first 20 minutes of the show are a bit of a sprint because when she's younger, you have to be much more energetic and use your body a lot.”

For Barnes, who can remember singing songs from the show at the age of six or seven, *Funny Girl* has been the opportunity of a lifetime, and something for which she feels she's been preparing for almost as long as she can remember.

“I think I first watched the film with my nan on a Sunday afternoon. At the time, I was really young, and all I thought then was, 'God, that lady's got a good voice'. The film and the show do have some differences, though - a lot of the book was rewritten, and they've worked quite closely with the estate of Fanny Brice and the original writers. I think it feels a lot more modern now - it snaps along at quite a fast pace, whereas the film was quite long.”

Naturally, being lauded as the next big thing in musicals has taken some getting used to, and it's not just the publicity

that's been a shock. There's the enormously demanding schedule, too. Fortunately, the West End run has left Barnes much better prepared for this year's tour, furnishing her with the wisdom and experience to ensure she doesn't burn out when she hits the road.

“It's a bit like driving a car, when you're learning how to make the engine run as smoothly as possible so that you don't stall it or blow it out or overheat it by putting it through too much. After the first night, when I woke up the next morning, I felt like I'd been hit by a bus! I was so tired and couldn't imagine how I was going to do it for eight shows a week - that's something you have to learn to manage quite quickly. But I think you have to do a few shows, get it wrong a few times, maybe work a bit too hard or be a bit under-energised until you can get to that sweet spot where you can give it 110% but not exhaust yourself so much that you can't do it the next day. I mean, on a matinee day you're singing nearly 28 songs, which is huge for anybody, so it's just about pacing yourself and treating it like a marathon rather than a sprint.”

This will be the young performer's first time touring, and she's certainly looking forward to the fresh sights and new experiences her visits to the Midlands and elsewhere will bring.

“I've never done the living-out-of-a-suitcase thing before. I'm actually really looking forward to being on the road because I get very into my work. I think it's a lot easier to get fully inside a show or a role when you don't have the distractions of everyday life around you. But also I'm looking forward to seeing a bit of my country, especially Scotland and all the places I haven't been to, including Stoke. I keep looking up things to do - it feels a little bit like being Alice in Wonderland.”

.....
Funny Girl - starring Natasha J Barnes - shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from 28 March to 1 April, and at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from 24 to 29 July.

It visits Birmingham Hippodrome from 8 to 13 May, with Sheridan Smith in the lead role of Fanny Brice



Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Tues 28 March - Sat 1 April

X Factor winner Joe McElderry takes the title role in a show that marked Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's arrival in the world of musical theatre. Fun, frothy and offering great entertainment for anybody who fancies the kind of night out that lets you leave your brain at home, it tells the story of a young man (Joseph) who sees the future in dreams. When he tells his 11 brothers that he's had a dream in which he's seen them all bowing down to him, his siblings are far from impressed - and they're even less happy with Joseph when their dad gives him a coat of many colours...

Terrific energy from an ensemble cast, spectacular sets and excellent music make for a great night out.

Ghost

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
Mon 20 - Sat 25 March

This is a new stage version of the award-winning film starring Patrick Swayzee, Demi Moore and Whoopi Goldberg. For those not in the know, it tells the story of a ghost named Sam who, caught between this world and the next, desperately attempts to communicate with his girlfriend Molly and warn her that she's in mortal danger from his murderer.

A timeless tale about the power of love that beautifully blends the genres of romance and comedy, Ghost features The Righteous Brothers' Unchained Melody and numerous songs co-written by Eurythmics' Dave Stewart.

The show stars Carolyn Maitland as Molly, Jacqui Dubois as Oda Mai Brown, Sam Ferriday as Carl and Andy Moss as Sam.



The Thing That Came From Over There

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Fri 17 March

Visual gags, verbal wit, giant puppetry, slimy fungus and parasitic space worms are all present and correct in a show that features three actors in 15 roles and takes its inspiration from numerous 1950s horror movies.

As legendary adventurers Scott and Amundsen begin their 1912 race across Antarctica, hapless explorer Captain Reginald Cranston accidentally lands on the wrong side of the continent. To add to his troubles, he soon finds himself investigating the crash-site of a meteor - unaware of the danger that awaits not just himself and his team but the whole of the planet...

This 75-minute show is presented by the critically acclaimed Gonzo Moose, a company which specialises in producing 'rip-roaring comedy adventures'.

Invincible

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 21 - Sat 25 March

This Alan Ayckbourn-style comedy from the highly rated Torben Betts presents a sharp-edged take on one of British theatre's most well-trodden yet rewarding driving forces - the country's long-established class system. With the recession biting hard, Emily and Oliver decide to downsize, relocating themselves and their bourgeois London lifestyle to a small town in the north of England.

When the newly arrived couple invite their working-class neighbours Dawn and Alan round for a drink, an evening of extreme social awkwardness ensues...

Beryl

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Fri 3 - Sat 18 March

Five times world pursuit champion, 13 times national pursuit champion and twice road-racing world champion, unsung sporting legend Beryl Burton was a truly remarkable woman, bagging cycling title after cycling title while at the same time managing to be both a wife and a mother.

Maxine Peake's critically acclaimed play celebrates the achievements of this record-breaking performer, a woman who, during her all-too-short lifetime, was awarded both an OBE and an MBE.

Happy Hour

The Old Rep, Birmingham, Wed 1 March

Tmesis Theatre's impressively choreographed stagework explores the modern-day obsession with being happy, contemplating the question of whether people's emotions can be bought and sold like commodities. On Level Three of the Happiness Corporation, the workers must achieve their quota of smiley faces before lunchtime. Failure to do so will see floor supervisor Adam taking a one-way trip to Level 20...

A commission from Liverpool's Unity

Theatre, Tmesis's new production combines the company's trademark physicality with comedy, music and text.



theatre for younger audiences...



Mr Bloom's Nursery Live!

Mr Bloom's Nursery Live!

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 20 - Tues 21 March; Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 22 March; New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 19 April

This first ever live touring show reflects the growing popularity of CBeebies' hit television series.

Ben Faulks takes the role of the title character, a friendly gardener who invites young children to visit his allotment, feed his trusty machine - the Compostarium - and get to know the Veggies, his puppet vegetables. There are plenty of songs to enjoy too, including This Is My Allotment, Meet The Veggies and The Compo Song, as well as the chance to help Mr Bloom prepare his allotment for a royal visit.

WOW! Said The Owl

mac, Birmingham, Sat 11 - Sun 12 March

The long-in-the-tooth Little Angel Theatre company is the ensemble behind this stage adaptation of the acclaimed children's book by award-winning author Tim Hopgood. Little Angel have been delighting and exciting children's imaginations since 1961, so are extremely well-versed in the business of captivating young audiences with inspiring stories and innovative theatre. They place puppetry at the heart of pretty much everything they do, and Wow! Said The Owl is certainly no exception to that rarely broken rule. For anybody not in the know, Hopgood's story focuses on the efforts of a little owl to stay awake and see what daylight brings. But will the warm pink glow of dawn and the myriad colours of a stunning rainbow be able to match the beauty of the nighttime stars?... The show is suitable for children aged two to five.

Jurassic Adventures

The Place, Oakengates, Shropshire, Sun 19 March

It's fair to say that World On Stage, the company behind this lively production for children aged three and older, will be hoping for



The First Hippo On The Moon

a seriously, er, raptor-ous response from its young audience. After all, they've branded Jurassic Adventures 'the most exciting family show since time began', so the weight of expectation is already as heavy as a tyrannosaurus.

Set on a magical island where anything might happen, the show features a 'fun script', impressively sized dinosaurs aplenty and the occasional moment of mild peril.

Chicken Licken

Lichfield Garrick, Sat 11 March

Dynamic New Animation (DNA) have been touring this show for more than a decade - evidence, were any needed, of its enduring popularity with generations of children. The one-person production uses shadow and rod puppetry to present a trilogy of classic tales from Ladybird books - Chicken Licken, The Little Red Hen and The Fox And The Hen. Starting out as a baking demonstration, the show rapidly evolves into the story of a growing chick and her encounters with a hungry fox.

"We present visually stimulating, accessible and entertaining performances," explain DNA. "We want to encourage audiences of all ages to live happier, healthier and more productive lives, to do so with a strong sense of wellbeing and empowerment, and to actively participate in all aspects of society."

The First Hippo On The Moon

Malvern Theatre, Mon 6 - Tues 7 March; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 25 - Sun 26 March; mac, Birmingham, Tues 18 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 June

David Walliams is fast developing a Roald Dahl-style reputation for the quality of his children's stories. Indeed, the Britain's Got Talent judge has had his books translated into 40-plus languages, selling more than four million copies in the UK alone. This new adaptation of his explosively funny space adventure for children aged three and older is being presented by the award-winning Les



White

Petits theatre company, whose previous stage successes have included Captain Flinn And The Pirate Dinosaurs and Adventures In Wonderland. Expect a 'fantastical' adventure featuring puppetry, music, mayhem and a giant space race to the moon...

Gangsta Granny

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 22 - Sun 26 March

The ever-popular Birmingham Stage Company make a welcome return with their critically acclaimed adaptation of David Walliams' best-selling book. Ben's no lover of Friday nights - and why would he be? After all, Friday night means having to stay at Granny's house, where he's not only bored senseless but also has to eat an unholy trinity of cabbage dishes - cabbage soup, cabbage pie and cabbage cake. But experiences can sometimes be deceptive, and Ben soon finds out that there's way more to his boring old Granny than ever he'd imagined...

White

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 11 - Mon 13 March

Scottish theatre company Catherine Wheels have garnered an impressive reputation for the innovative quality of their children's shows - and this seven-year-old offering makes it easy to see why. Cotton and Wrinkle are two friends whose relationship tugs its forelock in the direction of Estragon and Vladimir, the famous tramps from Samuel Beckett's Waiting For Godot. And also in keeping with Godot, the play has an absurdist quality that makes it both absorbing and memorable. The friends live in an orderly world full of birdsong and birdhouses, where everything is white. But when the colour red makes an unexpected appearance, Cotton and Wrinkle are faced with the very real prospect of needing to embrace change... A quirky introduction to the magic of colour and the concept of transformation, White is suitable for children aged two to four.



GETTING INTO THE SWING OF THINGS

The Midlands' most distinctive music festival returns to Digbeth next month, bringing a contemporary twist to the sounds of the 1920s...

Once a year for one day only, a spectacular celebration of vintage culture descends onto the streets of Digbeth in a riot of sound and colour. Set against the fading Victorian grandeur of Birmingham's industrial heartland, Swingamajig may well be the Midlands' most distinctive music festival, where the fin de siècle collides head-on with the fabulous '50s and futuristic electronic sounds. Amid old factories, warehouses and railway arches, you'll find swing bands and strobe lights, burlesque and drum'n'bass, frock coats and funky beats, gypsy jazz and jungle DJs, spread out across seven different stages all decked out in deliciously decadent style.

From the outside, this curious fusion of musical sounds and styles might seem mysterious - it's not immediately obvious how all these different ingredients ended up in a pot together. So how can Swingamajig best be described? With seven wildly contrasting stages and more than seventy acts from across the spectrum of music and performance, it's not easy - even for founders, curators and Birmingham-based music sensation Electric Swing Circus.

"It's something we've been talking about quite a lot as a team," says ESC's effusive guitarist Tom Hyland. "There isn't really a single word that can link a 16-piece swing band to a jungle DJ, yet the people that go to Swingamajig definitely get the connection. The festival is a mixture of vintage and remix, but it's also cabaret - I think that's the important thing. It's the big colours and the performance and the extravagance that are really important to us."

This unique showbiz aesthetic and attitude of hedonistic decadence define Swingamajig, and thanks in part to the physical accessibility of its central location, the variety, eclecticism and eccentricity of the event is mirrored in the composition of its audience.

"It's a very broad demographic," he



continues. "Maybe on first glance you might think you have to be part of a 'scene' to come, but you don't at all - you just have to enjoy doing something a little bit different. I think of all the events we play, Swingamajig has got the friendliest crowd, and I'm not just saying that because it's our event! Everyone's so lovely that if you lose your friends you'll have five more within seconds. My parents come and have a great time and they're well into their 60s, but you'll also get 18-year-olds coming straight out of college. It's inclusive - as long as you come to have a good time, you're in safe hands."

Launched in 2013, the festival was originally born out of ESC's speakeasy-inspired Hot Club de Swing nights at The Hare & Hounds in King's Heath. As those regular events increasingly sold out, Hyland and his handmates soon realised there was scope to scale the idea up considerably.

"It started as an electro-swing street party, but it's much broader than that now. It's a chance for people to dress up, go wild and do all sorts of things, whether it's music or dance classes or cabaret."

Four years after making its debut, Swingamajig continues to expand, with

the latest changes including the relocation and rather intriguing transformation of the 'rough and ready' Arch Stage into the Cave Of Curiosities (at the moment, details of this transformation are still 'top secret'). There's also the brand new Swingamajig Bazaar, an eclectic 'market meets funfair' which is accessible separately from the festival site, meaning you won't need to buy a ticket to pop down and do some shopping before the show begins mid-afternoon.

"The Swingamajig Bazaar is a combined craft vintage market, and that will open in the morning. We've also got Digbeth Dining Club doing the food. I'm a bit of a foodie myself, so we do take food very seriously - it's all locally sourced, ethically produced, pretty top-notch quality. In the afternoon, we've got Circus MASH coming down to do some aerial games, there'll be balloon modelling for the kids, and we may even be organising a Scalextric race. I think often when I've had the most fun at events, it's been thanks to the stuff in between the main performances, so we like to have treasure hunts and lots of little silly things and extras to help to animate the space."





It's amazing, it really is - I get to run a festival, and when you see three or four thousand people all having fun and exploring, that's brilliant!



There's also the addition of an afterparty in the nearby Spotlight Venues to keep things moving until the early hours.

"Swingamajig has stayed open until 6am in the past, but this year we've decided to change things up a bit and instead host an afterparty from 2am down the road at Spotlight. If you're the type who likes to party till the sun comes up, that's definitely gonna be the place to be! Birmingham's own City Of Colours will be curating one of the stages, we'll be curating another and we might even have a third."

The music is just another reason to want to experience the event in all its off-the-wall, colourfully chaotic glory. This year's headline acts include genre-blending dance duo and returning Swingamajig favourites The Correspondents, as well as festival newcomers Sam And The Womp, whose single Bom Bom topped the UK charts in 2012.

"We've only just announced the first part of the line-up. The Correspondents are one of my favourite acts - they put on a great stage show with fantastic energy. It's also a really big thing for us to have an act like Sam And The Womp, who've had a

UK Number One. And then there's loads of very strong cabaret this year - we've got Joe Black, Betsy Rose, Vicky Butterfly, Missy Malone. These are all top-level, international performers."

Other music acts confirmed so far include electronic DJ duo The Freestylers, 'cheeky gypsy party' group Mr Tea And The Minions, jazz-bass fusion act C@ in the H@, rockabilly band Sharna Mae And The Mayhems, the Jim Wynn Swing Orchestra, and of course Electric Swing Circus themselves.

"It helps being in a live touring band when programming the festival because as a starting point we often pick the acts that we've seen out and about on the road. There's a strong community of musicians, DJs and performers, and it's great to be able to get together every year for Swingamajig Festival. We also get sent tons of demos and videos throughout the year; we listen to them all - we're always on the lookout for fresh new talent."

Tempted yet? If you're planning on heading over to enjoy some music and soak up the atmosphere, you're advised to book ahead. The festival often sells out, with its continued success being a

testament to the commitment of Hyland and his team.

Swingamajig isn't the only thing Hyland has kept busy with - Electric Swing Circus are known for their hectic live schedule and are just coming off the heels of their sophomore release, *It Flew By*.

"We've spent two years writing and recording it, so it's been a bit of a labour of love. We're predominantly a live band, but when you take the same songs you've been performing and record them in a studio, they can often sound a bit lifeless. That's the problem we've been up against, so we've been experimenting with lots of different techniques to try to work out how to translate that energy we have on stage onto a recording. I think we recorded our single *Empires* about four times in the end, but we're really happy with the results now. I think it's been a big step forward for us, and it's been very well received so far."

In addition to managing the festival, writing their own material and touring as a band, the group also somehow find time to produce music on their own Ragtime record label.

"It's really difficult, but we keep working very hard. I don't take time off - I'm in the office during the week and then out on the road at the weekend, and there are rehearsals as well. But if you're doing what you love, you don't mind. And it's amazing, it really is - I get to run a festival, and when you see three or four thousand people all having fun and exploring, that's brilliant!"

.....

Swingamajig takes place in Digbeth Triangle, Birmingham, on Sunday 30 April from 2pm

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IMPERICON

Rosie Kay Dance Company: MK Ultra

The REP, Birmingham, Fri 17 - Sat 18 March

A world premiere, this DanceXchange-presented work is the latest offering from Rosie Kay's highly regarded local ensemble.

The piece has been inspired by 'the bizarre realm of pop culture, mind-control conspiracies and Illuminati imagery'. Commenting on the show, artistic director Rosie 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 now in.

"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's having on us, whether we know it or not."



Sonia Sabri Company: Virago

mac, Birmingham, Sat 11 March; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Wed 29 March

"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 dance-digital solo production, an exploration of the perceptions and misconceptions surrounding the subject of female body image. The dancer's unique 'urban kathak' language is here brought together with motion-triggered digital art and a sound score combining spoken word and music, creating a show which Sabri describes as "uncompromising, thought-provoking and humorous".



Vienna Festival Ballet: Cinderella

Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 7 March; The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Wed 8 March; Bedworth Civic Hall, Thurs 30 March; Evesham Arts Centre, Mon 17 April; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sun 23 April



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 fairytales. Its rich subject matter certainly proved to be fertile ground for the brilliance of Gioachino Rossini, whose early 19th century take on the story is widely considered to be one of his greatest operatic achievements. This particular celebration of the piece is brought to the stage by Vienna Festival Ballet, for whom the music has been specially arranged. Featuring a talented array of young dancers, the company typically spends eight months of the year performing works from its extensive repertoire in venues across the UK.

Material Men: Redux

Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 27 - Tues 28 March

Innovative choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh here combines powerful dance and potent imagery to explore the shared history and personal stories of virtuoso dancers Sooraj Subramaniam and Shailesh Bahoran.

"Material Men has two stories which connect," explains Shobana to londondance.com. "One is the story of indentured labour, whereby well over a million Indians were transported to replace the emancipated slaves and generally supply cheap labour for the colonial planters of tea, rubber and sugar. The other is the story of two young men whose history lies in colonial migration but who journey towards each other despite differing techniques of hip-hop and Bharatha Natyam."

The work features a commissioned score by acclaimed Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin, performed live on stage by the long-established Smith Quartet. It also includes an evocative film featuring historic texts and archive photographic material.





DANCE: SAMPLED

Birmingham Hippodrome Chief Executive Fiona Allan talks about introducing dance to new audiences

Think dance isn't for you? Think again. If you've shaken off your curiosity and shied away from physical performance in the past, Birmingham Hippodrome's Dance: Sampled programme offers you the chance to discover everything you ever wanted to know about live dance shows but were too afraid to find out first hand.

Originally developed by Sadler's Wells as a kind of appetiser for the season ahead, the project has now been rolled out to partner-venues Birmingham Hippodrome and the Lowry in Salford as a way of developing new audiences for dance across the country. Hippodrome Chief Executive and self-professed dance evangelist Fiona Allan told us more about what to expect when the show tangos,

stomps, pirouettes, shimmies, shuffles and waltzes into Birmingham this month.

"The idea is for people to have a really great-value first-time encounter with dance," she explains. "It's only £15 for adults and even less for children, so it's probably the best-value show you can see at the Hippodrome all year. If you don't think you like dance, or if you've not come across much dance before, you get the chance to see a whole range of different styles all at once."

It's no accident that the trio of theatres who have partnered up are probably the leading exponents of live dance in the UK. Unusually for a largely commercial theatre like the Hippodrome, the project

has received some Arts Council money to help get things off the ground, commissioning, experimenting with new ideas and paying for artists to tour. What's on offer at the Hippodrome, however, won't be identical to versions of the show elsewhere. Teaming up with other venues and sharing international acts helps to limit the cost of bringing them into the country, but other aspects of the programme will be specially tailored to Birmingham audiences.

"It has some common elements with what's going on at Sadler's Wells and at the Lowry, like the tango artists and also Iron Skulls, who are a sort of crazy Catalan hip-hop crew from Barcelona. I've seen a bit of their show already, and they

are completely anarchic - they have such an amazing energy that I think they're going to be a fantastic finale to the programme. But then the British acts are more specific to the venue. So obviously here we've got Birmingham Royal Ballet, and then the other big name that we have exclusively in Birmingham is the Aakash Odedra Company. Aakash is a really brilliant kathak choreographer who was born in Birmingham and is best known as a solo artist, but we've actually commissioned him to do some work for other dancers because we want to see how we can help him develop as a choreographer. So he's going to be creating a new piece with some dancers from Istanbul, and I'm really interested to see how that turns out."

In addition to this, an extra pre-performance showcase will see a huge array of local groups and dancers fill the foyers with short excerpts and interactive sessions. Better still, this part of the event is completely free and open to anyone, with or without a ticket for the main event.

"It's going to be like a sort of dance festival that takes over the building, with lots going on all at once, and we're hoping that it will work on two levels: it's great added value for the people who've already bought a ticket, but it's also a chance for anyone who isn't seeing the show to come in, explore and try things out. Up in the restaurant on Level Three we'll be having hip-hop battles, on Level One there'll be a stick dance demonstration, and the foyer on Level Two is going to be set up with Xbox dance games.

"It's also a chance for us to work with local companies and young people that we're partners with or that we want to work with, and to showcase them to a broader audience. So for example, we've worked with Break Mission, a local street-dance outfit, on the B-Side Festival, and they'll be doing a hip-hop show on the stalls level. We've also got Aced Up, which is a national portfolio company, doing an excerpt, and Adam Rutherford will be bringing his youth dance company."

If you've found the idea of watching a dance show daunting in the past, don't

worry - you're not alone. Even ardent enthusiasts like Allan had to start somewhere. But as Dance: Sampled aims to demonstrate, taking the initial plunge can change your perception of the medium forever.

"I grew up loving theatre because I liked having a story, and I felt safer with that. That's probably why the most popular dance shows are the big ballets like Swan Lake and Cinderella, which have a fairytale story that everyone can follow quite easily. I think people get a bit put off by dance where there's no narrative because they're worried that they won't understand it. But quite often, it doesn't need to mean anything or to be any more than a celebration of the human body and music and the wonderful things that these athletes can do. There are other art forms like circus where you don't need it to have a beginning, a middle and an end, so I think it's just a case of getting people to relax into it a bit and to have the courage and the confidence to just enjoy it for what it is."

Changing attitudes towards dance is just part of Allan's wider goals to improve diversity and develop new audiences, an ambition that she's made a focus since taking up her position at the theatre in October 2015. And while demonstrable successes so far are something the Hippodrome should be proud of, as far as she's concerned, there's still some way to go.

"I think we're only really at the start of the journey, and we've got so much more to do in that regard. One of the big challenges is that our theatre programme is booked years in advance, so when I arrived here the bulk of the shows had already been programmed up to 2019, which means it's very hard to find the room in our main programme to be putting on things that might have a broader or different audience appeal. But we are trying to find every slot that we can to experiment a bit.

"Last year, we had Dan TDM, who is a YouTuber who specialises in Minecraft. He came in one day and did some demonstrations, and it sold out almost instantly. I'm not his demographic so this

was a person I'd never heard of, but the place was just filled with teenagers when he arrived. We also did our first hip-hop festival with Break Mission last year. I think we had about 5,000 people coming in for that, and that audience looked completely different to a typical panto audience. Or even just recently, we had some children's craft activities in the Patrick Centre for Chinese New Year, and the people who came through on that day really looked like the people of Birmingham, and particularly of this neighbourhood."

This isn't the first time the Hippodrome has hosted a Dance: Sampled show. Last year, the event made its Birmingham debut as part of IDFB 2016. The show was well-received, if a little overshadowed by the huge number of events taking place throughout the festival. As such, this year, there are high hopes it will prove bigger, better and more popular than before.

"The response from the audience that came was incredible! We had people saying that they'd never realised dance was so cool - and for me, that's all you need really. But because we had five or six other dance performances taking place here for the festival, I think perhaps it was difficult for us to give it our singular attention and to attract as big an audience as we'd have liked. This year, we've been able to put a lot more of our energy and resources into it."

It's not just audiences who've been enthusiastic either - the response from dancers looking to participate has been fantastic. Allan hopes that in the future there'll be more opportunities for local companies to join the main-stage programme. But above all else, Dance: Sampled is a chance to highlight the huge diversity of styles and shows available at the theatre throughout the year. And with such a wide array of acts appearing (not to mention things to join in with yourself), you're virtually guaranteed to find something here to suit your tastes.

.....
Dance: Sampled takes place at Birmingham Hippodrome on Friday 3 and Saturday 4 March

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Tickets to ICHF events



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Tickets to Superheroes at the Symphony



Closes Monday 6 March

Tickets to The Ugly Duckling & Other Stories



Closes Wednesday 22 March

Tickets to The Diary of a Hounslow Girl



Closes Friday 17 March

Tickets to One Love



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Closes Friday 24 March

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Film

Beauty And The Beast

CERT PG tbc

Starring **Emma Watson, Dan Stevens, Luke Evans, Kevin Kline, Josh Gad, Ewan McGregor, Stanley Tucci, Ian McKellen, Emma Thompson, Gugu Mbatha-Raw**
Directed by **Bill Condon (USA)**

In the tradition of Maleficent and Cinderella, Disney have turned another of their cartoon classics into a live-action showpiece. This one will feature songs from the 1991 film (including Be Our Guest and the title number), as well as new material penned by Tim Rice and the original composer Alan Menken. The story, in case you've forgotten, is of a beautiful young woman (Watson) who is taken prisoner by a Beast (Stevens) who can only shed his grotesque appearance when he is loved for who he is. Not to be confused with the French film of the same name (starring Léa Seydoux) that was released in the UK last November. In 3D.

Released Fri 17 March



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in March...



Fist Fight CERT 15 (91 mins)

Starring **Ice Cube, Charlie Day, Tracy Morgan, Jillian Bell, Christina Hendricks, Dennis Haysbert** Directed by **Richie Keen (USA)**

Boys will be boys - or in this case, school teachers. When one teacher gets a colleague fired, the latter challenges him to an after-school fisticuffs. A loose remake of the little-known teen comedy Three O'Clock High (1987).

Released Fri 3 March

Logan CERT 15 - tbc

Starring **Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Richard E Grant, Boyd Holbrook, Stephen Merchant**
Directed by **James Mangold (USA)**

This could be interesting: a film set on the Mexican border in the near future. Hugh Jackman is back as Wolverine and is nursing an ailing Professor X (Patrick Stewart) when a young mutant turns up with dark forces in pursuit.

Released Fri 3 March



Trespass Against Us

CERT 15 (100 mins)

Starring **Michael Fassbender, Brendan Gleeson, Lyndsey Marshal, Killian Scott, Rory Kinnear, Sean Harris**
Directed by **Adam Smith (UK/USA)**

Michael Fassbender is Chad Cutler, an Irish ne'er-do-well trapped in a cycle of crime that is a way of life for his extended family. Then, against his father's wishes, Chad looks for a way out... Adam Smith previously directed the concert film Don't Think (2012) featuring The Chemical Brothers, the electronica duo who supply the music here.

Released Fri 3 March

Film

Viceroy's House

CERT 12a (106 mins)

Starring **Hugh Bonneville, Gillian Anderson, Manish Dayal, Huma Qureshi, Michael Gambon, Om Puri**
Directed by **Gurinder Chadha (UK/India)**

With Hugh Bonneville top-billed as Lord Mountbatten, this is a sort of Upstairs, Downstairs set during the Partition of India. Beneath him, in the Viceroy's House, a multitude of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh servants toil away as the storm clouds gather.

Released Fri 3 March



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Elle

CERT 18 (131 mins)

Starring **Isabelle Huppert, Laurent Lafitte, Anne Consigny, Charles Berling, Virginie Efira** Directed by **Paul Verhoeven (France/Germany/Belgium)**

For her role as the head of a successful video game company, Isabelle Huppert was nominated for her first Oscar, after a total of 120 films. She is Michèle Leblanc, who feels detached from her son and is resentful of her mother, while in the workplace her colleagues either fear her

or are in awe. All this changes when Michèle is raped in her own home by an unknown assailant in a ski mask. She refuses to report the incident to the police and sets about planning her own unique brand of retribution.

Winner of the Golden Globe for best foreign language film, Elle is directed by Paul Verhoeven, best known for the controversial Basic Instinct and Showgirls.

Released Fri 10 March

Kong: Skull Island

CERT 12a tbc

Starring **Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L Jackson, John Goodman, Brie Larson, Jing Tian, Toby Kebbell**
Directed by **Jordan Vogt-Roberts (USA)**

A sequel to Peter Jackson's reboot of the King Kong story, Skull Island follows a 1970s' expedition into the uncharted terrain of a Pacific island. There resides our favourite giant gorilla as well as creatures never seen on the big screen before... In 3D.

Released Fri 10 March



The Time Of Their Lives

CERT tbc

Starring **Joan Collins, Pauline Collins, Franco Nero, Ronald Pickup, Siân Reeves, Joely Richardson** Directed by **Roger Goldby (UK)**

Another comedy aimed at the grey pound with a cast sprung fighting from their mothballs. Joan Collins plays a former movie star who decides to break out of her London retirement home in order to attend the funeral of her ex-husband on the French island of Île de Ré. Incidentally, Ms Collins is now 83.

Released Fri 10 March

Rules Don't Apply

CERT 12a (127 mins)

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 10 March



The Salesman

CERT 12a (124 mins)

Starring **Shahab Hosseini, Taraneh Alikoosti** Directed by **Asghar Farhadi** (Iran/France)



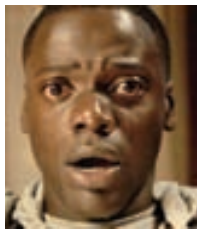
Nominated for an Oscar for best foreign language film, *The Salesman* is the story of a couple whose lives take a downturn when they move into a new apartment. An unexpected visitor to the flat turns out to be looking for a prostitute... From the director of the highly acclaimed *About Elly*, *A Separation* and *The Past*.

Released Fri 17 March

Get Out

CERT 12a tbc

Starring **Daniel Kaluuya, Allison Williams, Catherine Keener, Bradley Whitford, Caleb Landry Jones** Directed by **Jordan Peele** (USA)



Time to get out, indeed. When a black man visits his white girlfriend's family estate in Alabama, he discovers that a number of black residents there have gone missing. Strangely, this violent horror film marks the directorial debut of the comedian Jordan Peele.

Released Fri 17 March

CHiPs

CERT 15 (101 mins)

Starring **Dax Shepard, Michael Peña, Vincent D'Onofrio, Adam Brody, Kristen Bell** Directed by **Dax Shepard** (USA)

Here's a novel idea: a movie based on a TV series. 'ChiPs' are California Highway patrol officers and Jon Baker (Shepard) and Ponch Poncherello (Peña) find their paths muddled when they come across a brutal ex-cop who's moved into large-scale car theft. The original series starred Larry Wilcox and Erik Estrada and ran from 1977 to 1983.

Released Fri 24 March



Power Rangers

CERT tbc

Starring **Dacre Montgomery, Naomi Scott, RJ Cyler, Becky G, Bryan Cranston, Elizabeth Banks** Directed by **Dean Israelite** (USA)

A reboot of the *Power Rangers* franchise (which began as a TV series), the film follows a group of high school students that, imbued with superhuman powers, sets off to save the world. It all sounds terribly original.

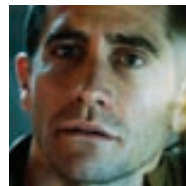
Released Fri 24 March



Life

CERT tbc

Starring **Jake Gyllenhaal, Rebecca Ferguson, Ryan Reynolds, Hiroyuki Sanada** Directed by **Daniel Espinosa** (USA/UK)



Not to be confused with the Robert Pattinson film of 2015 or the Eddie Murphy comedy of 1999 of the same name, this is a thriller that looks at the discovery of life on Mars. A crew aboard the International Space Station encounter an alien organism from a space probe and are alarmed by its capacity to grow...

Released Fri 24 March

The Lost City Of Z

CERT 15 (141 mins)

Starring **Charlie Hunnam, Robert Pattinson, Sienna Miller, Tom Holland, Angus Macfadyen** Directed by **James Gray** (USA)



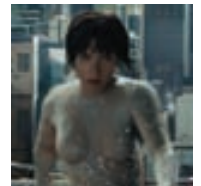
Based on the eponymous book by James Grann, this historical drama follows the quest of Colonel Percy Fawcett (Hunnam) to find a lost civilisation in the Amazon. Set during 1925, the film was shot in Santa Marta, Colombia, and received very favourable reviews from the critics.

Released Fri 24 March

Ghost In The Shell

CERT tbc

Starring **Scarlett Johansson, Michael Pitt, Pilou Asbæk, Chin Han, Juliette Binoche, Takeshi Kitano** Directed by **Rupert Sanders** (USA)



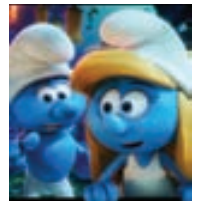
Like *Cinderella* and *Beauty And The Beast*, *Ghost In The Shell* is a live-action adaptation of a cartoon, itself based on the manga comic. Here, Scarlett Johansson plays a counter-cyberterrorist known as The Major, who happens to be a cyborg. It's her job to pinpoint and bring down a diabolical computer hacker. Great cast.

Released Fri 31 March

Smurfs: The Lost Village

CERT PG

With the voices of **Demi Lovato, Mandy Patinkin, Jack McBrayer, Julia Roberts** Directed by **Kelly Asbury** (USA)



The Smurfs are back, you'll be glad to hear. This time Smurfette and her friends embark on a journey through the Forbidden Forest to find the biggest secret in Smurf history. Wow. From the director of *Shrek 2* and *Gnomeo & Juliet*. Expect some saucy humour. In 3D.

Released Fri 31 March

Free Fire

CERT 15 (91 mins)

Starring **Brie Larson, Cillian Murphy, Jack Reynor, Armie Hammer, Sharlto Copley, Sam Riley** Directed by **Ben Wheatley** (UK)

It's 1978 in Boston and two rival gangs arrive in a warehouse for an arms transaction and all hell breaks loose. The name to note here is that of the film's writer-director Ben Wheatley, who's going from strength to strength with such titles as *Kill List*, *Sightseers* and *High Rise*. Expect some pretty strong violence.

Released Fri 31 March



Visual Arts

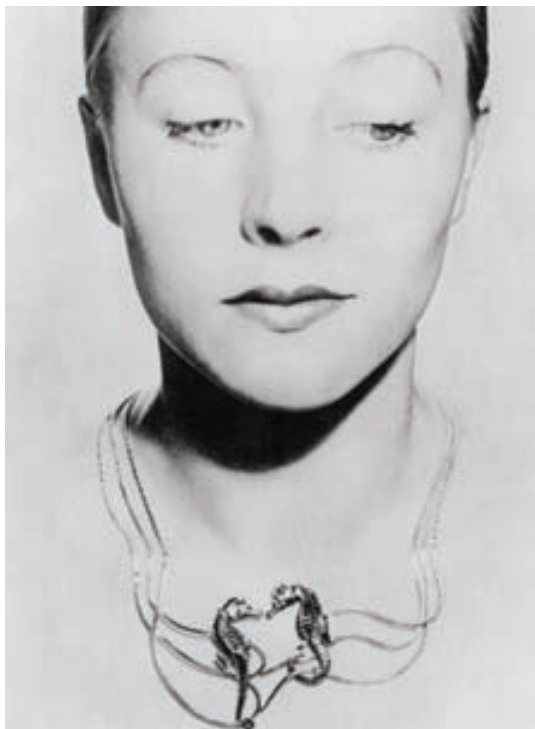
Jean Painlevé

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham,
Wed 15 March - Sun 4 June

Twentieth century French filmmaker, scientist and inventor Jean Painlevé was a man with a fiercely burning desire to be creative. Having studied biology at the Sorbonne, he embarked on a career producing a body of film work that would become known as 'scientific-poetic cinema'.

His movies, focusing on subjects as diverse as astronomy and pigeons, not only explored science in a serious way but also boasted a surrealist-inspired quality that rendered them unclassifiable. Painlevé was best known for his marine-life movies, endowing ocean-based creatures such as sea horses and skeleton shrimps with a selection of human traits.

This first ever solo exhibition of the filmmaker's work, presenting a number of seminal movies alongside a selection of photographs and jewellery, effectively exemplifies Painlevé's lifelong desire to make science accessible.



David Cox And His Contemporaries

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum,
until Sat 3 June

The contribution of Birmingham-born landscape artist David Cox to the great age of British water-colour painting is explored in this brand new show.



Bringing together the painter's work with pieces by better-known contemporaries Turner and Constable, the exhibition draws heavily on the museum's extensive collection of Cox paintings.

New work by recent graduates is presented alongside the exhibition as part of New Art West Midlands 2017 (see opposite page). The pieces are accompanied by a selection of works from the Worcester City collection which have been acquired through the Contemporary Art Society.

Michael Brennand-Wood: Seeds Of Memory

Wolverhampton Art Gallery,
Sat 11 March - Sun 7 May

Eye-catching, wall-hung, part-sculpture, part-textile pieces are the speciality of internationally renowned textile artist Michael

Brennand-Wood, whose 40-year career is celebrated in this new exhibition.

Michael's recent work boasts what he describes as "an almost hallucinogenic quality", drawing the viewer into a different world. The pieces perfectly evidence the artist's interest in abstraction. "I like to see what can be done optically with rhythm and colour," explains Michael. "But it's important that the abstraction isn't just about playing with pattern. It has to have a meaning." Alongside a number of retrospective pieces, the exhibition also features nine new, specially commissioned works, via which Michael explores the 'seeds' of his own creativity.

A short film featuring the artist in his studio documents his making of some of the new pieces.

Tumbleweed

The Barber Institute, Birmingham,
until Sun 4 June

New Art West Midlands 2016 entrant Hannah Honeywill here presents a work in response to the Barber's collection.

Her new sculpture takes as its starting point the intricately ornamented and gilded historic picture frames that surround many of the venue's paintings.

A rising star on the UK art scene whose work has been heavily influenced by ideas and concepts within queer theory, Honeywill takes objects that already exist and alters

their form. In so doing, she prompts the viewer to respond in a new and perhaps surprising way to everyday items with which they're already familiar.

Magnum Photos: Evolution Explored

The Square & St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury,
until Sun 23 April

Shrewsbury's most famous son, the 19th century naturalist and geologist Charles Darwin, is the inspiration behind this special exhibition, which has been curated by world-famous photography agency Magnum Photos.

"The exhibition looks at Magnum's archive through the prism of evolution," says the agency's Emily Graham. "As Magnum moves into its 70th year, the exhibition will display powerful historic and contemporary photographs exploring Darwin's legacy in modern society."



New Art West Midlands 2017

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, mac, Birmingham, Worcester City Art Gallery & Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 14 May

Thirty-one artists from six regional art schools are currently exhibiting new work at four leading galleries as part of New Art West Midlands 2017.

A launch vehicle for emerging artists, New Art West Midlands is using Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, mac Birmingham, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Coventry's Herbert Gallery & Museum to display the new work, which includes painting, installation, sculpture, photography, video, animation and digital artworks. Highlights of the show include Yazmin Boyle's three-metre-long metal sculptures. The sculptures are made of industrial steel strap overlaid with a feminine lace print and formed into three-dimensional funnels and circles.

Amy Inston's film, meanwhile, brings together images of Hollywood glamour and the American Dream with footage of the real domestic life of her working-class Birmingham family.

Many of the works on show take themes connected to science and biology, while numerous other pieces focus on the subjects of globalisation, migration and belonging.

The exhibition is the first initiative of the rebranded New Art West Midlands network, formerly known as Turning Point West Midlands.



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Francis Bacon, Two Figures in a Room, 1956
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Jean Painlevé, film stills from *The Seahorse* (1931)
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Jean Painlevé

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International Craft & Hobby Fair shows

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 March (except for Cake International, Fri 17 - Sun 19 March)

Cake International is this year once again linking up with three other well-established NEC shows.

The popular sugarcraft, cake decorating and baking show joins forces with Fashion & Embroidery, Sewing For Pleasure and Hobbycrafts. Highlights of the 2017 Cake International event include a display of entries from the world's biggest cake competition, industry experts revealing the newest 'cake art' trends, and a selection of stalls selling must-have baking and sugarcraft essentials.

Fashion & Embroidery enthusiasts, meanwhile, can enjoy a special

catwalk show, meet a multitude of fabrics, threads and textile groups, societies and artists - all on hand to share their expertise - and brush up on their techniques via numerous free workshops and demonstrations.

Sewing For Pleasure is another show promising visitors the opportunity to refine their craft by attending hands-on workshops. The popular event is this year being marketed as 'the ultimate stitchers' paradise' and also includes a collection of costumes from Tom Hooper's four-time Oscar-winning film, *The King's Speech*.

And be sure to visit the Hobbycrafts element of the show too. The event features the Birmingham heat of the Nation's Fastest Knitter competition, a dedicated miniatures and dollhouse area, and a chance for children to have a go at making some sand art.

MCM Comic Con Birmingham

NEC, Birmingham, Sat 18 - Sun 19 March

Cult-television fans attending this month's MCM (Movies, Comics & Media) Comic Con event can get their collars felt by 1970s TV tecs Starsky & Hutch, otherwise known as actors Paul Michael Glaser and David Soul. The crimefighting duo are joined by Antonio Fargas, who played streetwise informant Huggy Bear in the iconic cop series, and will be signing autographs and posing for pictures with fans. Soul, Michael Glaser and Fargas will be in attendance on both days of the show. In addition to this holy trinity of guests and numerous other well-known names, the show's line-up features indie writers and artists filling the Comic Village, robot wars, a Steampunk Emporium with workshops and talks, a KidsZone, eSports competitions, panel discussions, a costume-repair desk and the Cosplay Masquerade finale.

"The Midlands holds a special place in our hearts," says MCM Expo Group CEO Bryan Cooney. "Our company is based here, and we plan on providing an awesome show for the region's enthusiastic audience of sci-fi, comic book and film fans."



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YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Tues 7 - Sun 12 March

A host of badminton's Rio Olympics stars descend on Birmingham this month to compete for the coveted Yonex title. Now in its 107th year, Yonex is one of the sport's five 'majors', as well as being its oldest and most prestigious competition. Players to watch out for at the 2017 competi-

tion include reigning and six-time champion Lin Dan and world number one Lee Chong Wei. The pair's last Birmingham encounter took place in the 2012 final, from which Chong Wei was forced to withdraw with a shoulder injury.

Celebrate Mothers' Day at Blists Hill Victorian Town

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire, Sun 26 March

Mum is definitely the word at Blists Hill on the last Sunday of the month, when the popular Shropshire visitor attraction hosts a Victorian-style Mother's Day event.

Admission to the venue is free throughout the day for all mums who're accompanied by another full-paying adult.

The Blists Hill line-up of Mothering Sunday attractions includes a family trail around the town and two 'make your own floral rosette' drop-in workshops. Visitors can also explore the venue's shops and cottages, buy a slice of traditional Simnel Cake from the bakery or colour-in a Victorian-style Mother's Day card.

A decadent Victorian High Tea is also available at an extra cost but needs to be pre-booked.



Amazing Brain

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry
Wed 8 March

The wonders of the human brain are explained and celebrated by scientists from the University of Warwick during this fascinating four-hour event.

Amazing Brain is taking place as part of the second annual Museums & Wellbeing Week, an initiative set up by a consortium of museums to raise awareness of the work they do in the area of health.

Commenting on the project, Helen Chatterjee, chair and co-founder of the consortium, the National Alliance For Museums, Health & Wellbeing, said: "The museums sector is making an important contribution to public health through new programmes targeting a host of health & social care service users. It's important to convey this to commissioners and other health & social care professionals, as well as more widely to policy makers, so that we can ensure museums are recognised as a vital community asset."

Crufts

NEC, Birmingham,
Thurs 9 - Sun 12 March



The highlight of the events calendar for dog lovers everywhere, Crufts offers the opportunity to partake in the world's greatest canine get-together. With more than 22,000 dogs competing for the Best In Show title, a packed arena programme, celebrations of dog heroes who've made a difference and more than 400 trade stands around which to browse, this is an event that the whole family can enjoy. In fact, it's fair to say that dog lovers would have to be, er, barking mad not to attend...

Wenlock Olympian Live Arts Festival

The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, Sat 11 - Sun 12 and Sat 18 - Sun 19 March



An event that will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in a couple of years' time, this popular arts festival features competitive classes in dance, music and speech & drama for children and young people aged 18 and under.

It was inspired by the Wenlock Olympian Games, an event first held in 1850 and a forerunner of the modern Olympics. The Games are still held in Much Wenlock every summer.

The winners of each arts festival category will receive a Wenlock Olympian medal as a reward for their success.

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Shakespeare Week

Shakespeare's Family Homes, Stratford-upon-Avon, Mon 20 - Sun 26 March

A weekend of special events on Saturday the 25th and Sunday the 26th rounds off this seven-day national celebration of Stratford's legendary bard. Taking place annually and designed to give primary school children 'a great first encounter' with Shakespeare, the event includes plenty of hands-on family activities to enjoy. Highlights include mask-making and pop-up puppet-making workshops, the chance for kids to make their own Tudor instrument, and performances by a number of visiting dance troupes.



Arts & Science Festival 2017

Various Birmingham locations, Mon 13 - Sun 19 March

Comprising a diverse array of concerts, screenings, performances, exhibitions, workshops, talks and lectures, the University of Birmingham's annual festival offers something to excite the curiosity of just about anyone.

Highlights for 2017 include Dr Alice Roberts explaining how trees can help scientists to unpick the secrets of archaeological sites, a programme of screenings and talks devoted to Homer's Odyssey,



an investigation into how music helps people make sense of the world around them, and a celebration of mechanical engineer James Watt, a key figure in the Industrial Revolution who lived in Birmingham for a significant part of his life. Commenting on the event, the festival's Laura Milner said: "This is our biggest year yet, and we're venturing off campus and into the city for many of our events. We're delighted to be working with the likes of mac Birmingham, Grand Union, Birmingham Open Media, Ikon Gallery and the Electric Cinema as we celebrate research and collaboration in Birmingham."

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AN OASIS OF CALM IN THE CITY

Heather Kincaid explores the delights of Birmingham Botanical Gardens



Nestled away behind steel, concrete and roaring traffic in the busy heart of Birmingham, there's a lush oasis of calm that you might well have never noticed. Featuring four large glasshouses with an air of Victorian grandeur, lively animal inhabitants and interactive children's areas set in 15 acres of landscaped greenery, Birmingham Botanical Gardens is the perfect place to escape the noise and bustle of the city without the need to trek out to the countryside.

Going straight into the glasshouses, you'll instantly find yourself in the hot, humid climate of plants from the South American and Indonesian rainforests - perfect for warming up from Britain's chilly winter weather. In this Tropical habitat, you'll discover a dazzlingly diverse array of species, ranging from the tasty to the toxic, from the Giant Reed and the big-based Elephant's Foot to the small but mighty Dwarf Cavendish banana. Moving on through the equally rich Sub-Tropical house will lead you into the temperate Mediterranean area, a real feast for the senses. Upon entering, you'll be immediately hit by a heady floral fragrance in a room awash with the vivid colours of bright, beautiful blooms. Finally, in the Arid section, you'll encounter huge, prickly cacti and sturdy succulents, tough enough to withstand the harsh conditions of the Central American desert.

Along the way, there are opportunities to learn about how plants are used in our day-to-day lives. Ever wondered where the ingredients for your snacks, soaps or even stationery come from? Information signs

and tables chart plants' journeys from tropics to tabletops, forests to fridges and far-off soils to spice racks and supermarket shelves. Elsewhere, you can follow the evolutionary timeline of plants, from early single-celled bacteria through algae, moss and lichen to curling ferns and finally the complex species that we see today.

Look out for special Easter-themed events coming up over the school holidays, when kids will not only have the chance to take part in craft activities and an Easter bonnet parade, but also to find out all about the cocoa plants used to make the tasty chocolate for their Easter eggs.

As you leave the glasshouses, you can stop off at the café for a refreshing drink or a bite to eat, but if the weather's good outside, why not pack a picnic and enjoy it on the rolling lawns, surrounded by proud pines, leafy shrubs and spectacular giant redwoods.

Over the summer, you'll also be able to step back in time with classic Austen and Brönte stories, brought to life through open-air performances in the Garden's natural amphitheatre. And on fine days, you might even get to catch an outdoor film screening.

Don't forget to stop and say hello to Casper the friendly cockatoo, and to look in on his lovebird neighbours near the glasshouses and café. But these can't quite claim the title of the Garden's most spectacular birds. Over at the Lawn Aviary, you'll see brilliant flashes of blue in the fabulous feathers of azure-winged magpies, spreo starlings and tragopan, be

amazed by the rainbow colours of the Himalayan monal and magnificent macaw, and follow the quick, darting movements of chattering finches. Near the educational Growing Schools Garden, meanwhile, you can get up close and personal with strutting peacocks and noisy chickens. Keep an eye out and you might even be lucky enough to spot some amazing native wildlife, ranging from beautiful butterflies to woodpeckers.

Kids need to burn off some steam? The Children's Playground's got you covered. You'll find it right near the picturesque Teulon Cottage gardens and a trio of historical gardens, laid out in Roman, Medieval and Tudor styles.

On the other hand, if you're looking for some chill-out time for yourself, you can take a moment to relax to the soothing sounds of running waterfalls at the Memory Pool, or disappear down sheltered paths to find secluded, tranquil seating at the heart of the Bamboo Maze.

Whether you're looking for a breath of fresh air, a quick getaway from the daily grind, or a fun family day out with activities for the kids, Birmingham Botanical Gardens has plenty for everyone to discover.

The Gardens are open every day (excluding Christmas Day and Boxing Day) from 10am to 5pm, extending to 6pm or 7pm in the summer. Tickets cost £7.50 for adults, £5.25 for children and concessions, and £22 for a family of two adults and up to three concessions.

Coming soon! Birmingham Botanical Gardens is to host Jurassic Kingdom: Where Dinosaurs Come To Life from 20 May to 4 June. This event will feature more than 30 animatronic life-sized dinosaurs - including an 18 metre-long Tryannosaurus Rex - lurking across the gardens.

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Your week to week
listings guide
March 2017

the list



Cirque du Soleil: Varekai at Genting Arena, Birmingham - Wed 1 - Sun 5 March

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

What's On

Wed 1 to Sun 5 March



Lady Leshurr at O2 Institute, Birmingham

Thurs 2 March

Mon 6 to Sun 12 March



Billy Elliot at Birmingham Hippodrome

Tues 7 March - Sat 29 April

Mon 13 to Sun 19 March



Russell Howard at Genting Arena, Birmingham

Fri 17 - Sat 18 March

Mon 20 to Fri 31 March



Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story at New Alexandra Theatre

Tues 28 March - Sat 1 April

THROUGHOUT MARCH

Visual Arts

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

BIRMINGHAM PEOPLE AND CHANGE IN THE INNER-CITY Birmingham People explores the ways in which ordinary Brummie folk have been represented in art during the 20th and 21st centuries. Change In The Inner-City focuses on four inner-city wards - Nechells, Soho, Aston and Ladywood, until Fri 31 Mar

BIRMINGHAM BIG ART PROJECT Birmingham Big Art Project is commissioning a major new work of public art for the city. The exhibition of shortlisted artists' proposals is here on the final leg of its tour. This is the last chance to see the models and have your say, until Sun 23 Apr

FAITH IN BIRMINGHAM, Exploring how different faiths have influenced and shaped the city, until Sun 3 Feb 2019

Centrala Gallery, Digbeth

SEVENTEEN A group exhibition of work by Russian female artists Olga Grotova, Nika Neelova and Yelena Popova, until Sat 25 Mar

Ikon Gallery

NEW OLIVER BEER New work from British artist Oliver Beer. A number of recent works have involved a selection of vessels, to create unique musical instruments as installations, Wed 15 Mar - Sun 4 June

RBSA Gallery

NEW LOVE ART, BUY ART, MAKE ART Postcards screen-printed in Karoline Rerrie Summer 2016 Workshop, Thurs 2 - Sat 11 Mar

NEW THOMAS ASHBY RBSA An exhibition of paintings contrasting the dramatic shoreline of South West Cork (Sherkin Island) with the gentle and lush landscape around the village of Tysoe, Warwickshire, Mon 6 Mar - Sat 6 May

NEW OPEN ALL MEDIA Popular open exhibition which attracts entries from across the UK. Works include jewellery, ceramics, textiles, drawing, painting and printmaking, Thurs 16 Mar - Sat 8 Apr

NEW DEREK WILLIAMS RBSA FRSA (1932 - 2009) Derek was a highly gifted and skilled painter who captured the spirit of the moment and brought his subjects to life, Mon 20 Mar - Sat 6 May

NEW PETER WAREING RBSA Colourful pottery illustrated with images based on found objects, Mon 27 Mar - Sat 6 May

The Barber Institute

COPYING THE MASTERS Display exploring the reasons for the popularity of printed and drawn copies, bringing together works by Dürer, Hogarth

and Ingres, until Sun 7 May

TWO FIGURES IN A ROOM One of Bacon's finest works, on loan to the gallery from the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, until Sun 26 Mar

NEW GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE IN BYZANTIUM Discover Byzantium - the once-great empire whose glittering capital was the city of Constantinople (today's Istanbul) - through this intriguing exploration of its coinage and economy, Thurs 16 - Sun 18 Mar

mac, Birmingham

BEYOND THE DOOR: THE KOESTLER EXHIBITION FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS An exhibition of artwork, writing and music from prisons, secure hospitals and by people on community sentences in the West Midlands. Curated by young people from Walsall Youth Service, until Sun 26 Mar

BOM (B'ham Open Media)

GENECRAFT: ART IN THE BIOGENETIC AGE A collaborative artwork by artist Gina Czarnecki and professor of clinical sciences John Hunt, using Czarnecki's daughters' skin cells, until Sat 13 May

Other VISUAL ARTS

TIM PEAKE'S PHOTOS FROM SPACE Celebrating Tim Peake's mission to the International Space Station, the images in this exhibition show remarkable landscapes on Earth taken from space, and life on board the space station, until Sun 5 Mar, Thinktank at Millennium Point, Birmingham

TURNING POINT New exhibition by students from Tudor Grange Academy Sixth Form, until Mon 6 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

HAND AND MIND An exhibition and series of performances testing connections between the realms of speech and gesture, until Sat 25 Mar, Grand Union, Birmingham

KRISTINA CRANFELD: IN THIS PERFECT BRITISH LANDSCAPE... A solo exhibition by Uzbekistan-born, London-based artist and filmmaker Kristina Cranfeld. Kristina's work is presented through films, installations and photographs, until Sat 8 Apr, Ort Gallery, Balsall Heath

PRODUCTION SHOW: BUILDING/DEVELOPING/TESTING AND NIGHTMARE ON BAME STREET Includes - solo exhibitions, generative performances, artists' tests for a major public art commission, a new production display system, a set of useful editions and proposals, concepts and prototypes as events and workshops, until Sat 22 Apr, Eastside Projects, Birmingham

NEW DISTRACTED ANECDOTE Exhibition comprising a mass of small hand-made and urban-discovered components, Fri 3 - Sat 11 Mar, Stryx Gallery, Digbeth

Gigs

BLUE OCTOBER Wed 1 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SCORPZ Wed 1 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TALL SHIPS Wed 1 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HANNAH JOHNSON AND THE BROKEN HEARTS Wed 1 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

ANNISOKAY, GRIEVER & A PROMISE TO FORGET Wed 1 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

CHRIS WOOD Wed 1 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

JIM CAUSLEY Wed 1 Mar, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

STEVIE NIMMO TRIO Wed 1 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

COSMO PYKE Wed 1 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ELBOW Wed 1 - Thurs 2 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LADY LESHURR Thurs 2 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

POLAR, GIANTS, TO THE WIND & MY ONLY Thurs 2 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

LOOSE ENDS Thurs 2 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

LAUREL ARNELL-CULLEN Thurs 2 Mar, Ort Cafe, Birmingham

TRAGEDY: A METAL TRIBUTE TO THE BEE GEES & BEYOND Thurs 2 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THE JIVE ACES Thurs 2 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE ORWELLS Thurs 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TWIN WILD Thurs 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE ELO EXPERIENCE Thurs 2 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

GOLDSANDS Fri 3 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

PROPAGANDA Fri 3 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

VANT Fri 3 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HEAVY BEAT BRASS BAND Fri 3 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BOB DRAKE, NATURE CENTRE & KATEGOES Fri 3 Mar, Ort Cafe, B'ham

TRANSMISSION (JOY DIVISION TRIBUTE) & RAMONED Fri 3 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

TRASH TALK Fri 3 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham

DECADE Fri 3 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

DE LA SOUL Fri 3 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

TRU GROOVE Fri 3 - Sat 4 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

MIKE STEWART LAWRENCE Fri 3 Mar, Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull

THE SENSATIONAL 60'S EXPERIENCE Fri 3 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE BARRON KNIGHTS Fri 3 Mar, Lichfield Garrick, Staffordshire

LET'S TWIST AGAIN Fri 3 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

LOS PACAMINOS FEAT PAUL YOUNG Fri 3 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

FRAN THE MAN Fri 3 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

MAGIC DOOR Fri 3 Mar, Lab 11, Birmingham

WHITNEY HOUSTON LIVE EXPERIENCE FT. NYA KING Fri 3 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

WOOD AND NAILS Fri 3 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

IDA NIELSEN Fri 3 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

DEEKLINE Fri 3 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

HOSTILE Sat 4 Mar, O2

Institute, B'ham

LASHARVU Sat 4 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

KING KING Sat 4 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

ELO AGAIN Sat 4 Mar, Lichfield Garrick, Staffordshire

THE FATHER TEDS Sat 4 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

SWAMPMEAT FAMILY BAND Sat 4 Mar, The Night Owl, Birmingham

SOULED OUT 2 FUNK Sat 4 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

TOOTHLESS Sat 4 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

KEHLANI Sat 4 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SURF'S UP: SMILE Sat 4 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

KIRVANA (NIRVANA TRIBUTE BAND) Sat 4 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

MALARKEY Sat 4 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

YOUNG CULTURE COLLECTIVE Sun 5 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

BLAZE BAYLEY Sun 5 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

VIN GARBUTT Sun 5 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

LUKAS GRAHAM Sun 5 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PAT JORDAN & FINIAN'S RAINBOW Sun 5 Mar, Irish Centre, B'ham

WITH CONFIDENCE Sun 5 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

MAN & THE ECHO Sun 5 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham



Elbow - O2 Academy, Birmingham

Classical Music Comedy Gigs

CBSO: BRITISH CLASSICS Featuring John Wilson (conductor) & Roderick Williams (baritone). Programme includes works by Walton, Elgar, Wood, Farnon, Coates, Ireland, German & Vaughan Williams, Wed 1 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FRENCH HORN RECITAL WITH JAVIER BONET Also featuring Joanne Sealey (piano). Programme includes works by Schubert, Weber, Dukas, Schumann, Sarasate, Piazzola & Monti, Thurs 2 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

OLIVER KNUSSON CONDUCTS GRIME BCMG premiere Helen Grime's Piano Concert alongside works by Carter, Boulez and Maxwell Davies, Fri 3 Mar, CBSO Centre, B'ham

GALA PIANO ALL-NIGHTER 12 hours of piano music, featuring Simon Callow, Alistair McGowan, Gergely Boganyi, Peter Donohoe, Dr. Anna Scott, Antony Hewitt and many more... Fri 3 - Sat 4 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall



BEL CANTO: THE SONGS OF DONIZETTI & BELLINI Featuring Sarah-Jane Brandon (soprano), Stephanie Marshall (mezzo-soprano) & Gary Matthewman (piano). Programme includes works by Donizetti & Bellini, Fri 3 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

YEOMAN OF THE GUARD Presented by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and featuring the University of Birmingham Voices, John Wilston (conductor), Sarah Fox (Elsie Maynard), Heather Shipp (Phoebe), Benjamin Hulett (Colonel Fairfax), Simon Butteriss (Jack Point) and Sir Thomas Allen (Sergeant Meryll), Sat 4 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

OLIVER KNUSSON CONDUCTS GRIME BCMG premiere Helen Grime's Piano Concert alongside works by Carter, Boulez and Maxwell Davies, Sun 5 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CRAIG HILL, LIAM PICKFORD & DIANE SPENCER Fri 3 Mar, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham

RACHEL PARRIS Fri 3 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

PAUL MCCAFFREY, JOSH HOWIE, PETE OTWAY & COMIC TBC Fri 3 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

GEORGE EGG Fri 3 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

ROB DEERING, KEITH FARNAN, LAURA LEXX & COMIC TBC Sat 4 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CRAIG HILL, LIAM PICKFORD & DIANE SPENCER Sat 4 Mar, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham

CROFT AND PEARCE Sat 4 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

PAUL MCCAFFREY, JOSH HOWIE, PETE OTWAY & COMIC TBC Sat 4 - Fri 3 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

STUART GOLDSMITH Sun 5 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

WAITING FOR GODOT Presented by Different Animal, Tues 28 Feb - Thurs 2 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

THE WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Agatha Christie's most celebrated courtroom drama, Sat 25 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

SISTER ACT THE MUSICAL Alexandra Burke takes the lead in Craig Revel Horwood's staging of the smash-hit musical comedy, Mon 27 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

AMÉDÉE British playwright, director and comedian Sean Foley (The Play What I Wrote, The Ladykillers) brings Eugene Ionesco's surreal comedy to life in his sharp and finely tuned new adaptation. Josie Lawrence and Trevor Cox star, Roxana Silbert directs... Tues 28 Feb - Sat 11 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

SNOW IN MIDSUMMER A contemporary re-imagining of one of the most famous classical Chinese dramas, until Sat 25 Mar, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

VAMPIRE'S ROCK: THE GHOST TRAIN Steve Steinman returns as Barron Von Rockula in an all-new saga, Wed 1 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

HAPPY HOUR New-work night hosted by Tmesis Theatre, one of the UK's leading physical theatre companies, Wed 1 Mar, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE BEST THING A Swinging 60s story of unconditional love from the UK's leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Thurs 2 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove



Amédée

The REP, Birmingham, until Sat 11 March

Playwright, director and comedian Sean Foley, whose previous stage productions include *The Play What I Wrote* and *The Ladykillers*, is the man behind this new adaptation of Eugene Ionesco's 1954 work. A leading figure in French avant-garde theatre, Ionesco is best known for his absurdist plays, many of which reflect on the insignificance of human existence.

Amédée, his first full-length offering, features a frustrated playwright and his switchboard-operator wife. Struggling to make ends meet in a dilapidated London apartment (Foley's adaptation switches the action from Paris), the couple are becoming ever more concerned about the problem in their other room - a corpse that's causing mushrooms to sprout all over the apartment...

Roxana Silbert directs this Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company production which stars Black Country-born actress Josie Lawrence (pictured), alongside Trevor Fox.

SPILLIKIN Pipeline use theatre to explore big questions of love, death and technology, Thurs 2 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

A MACHINE THEY'RE SECRETLY BUILDING Proto-type Theater vent their frustration at the insidious machine of surveillance, Thurs 2 - Fri 3 Mar, mac, Birmingham

PA/NG New night celebrating the best in local emerging artists and spanning music, live art, performance and digital art. Playwright, poet & screenwriter Sabrina Mahfouz headlines, Thurs 2 - Fri 3 Mar, mac, Birmingham

HILDA AND THE SPECTRUM Surrealist play which follows the meeting and relationship between two otherworldly outsiders, told through mime, clowning and improvisation, Fri 3 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR: ONE MAN, MANY VOICES James Hurn voices the entire cast of three classic episodes

of Hancock's Half Hour, Fri 3 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

JULIUS CAESAR Angus Jackson directs Shakespeare's epic and thrilling tragedy as the politics of spin and betrayal turn bloody and brutal, Fri 3 Mar - Sat 9 Sep, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

PRESENT LAUGHTER Associate artist Vanessa Comer directs Noel Coward's classic comedy, Fri 3 - Sat 11 Mar, The Bear Pit Theatre - The United Reformed Church, Stratford-upon-Avon

BERYL Maxine Peake's warm and witty celebration of unsung sporting legend Beryl Burton, Fri 3 - Sat 18 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

TIATA FAHODZI: GOOD DOG A piece of theatre which chronicles growing up in a multicultural community, and the everyday injustices that drive people to take back control, Sat 4 Mar, mac,

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Mon 30 March BEDWORTH CIVIC HALL 024 7637 6707 / civic-hall-in-bedworth.wordpress.com
Mon 17 April EVESHAM ARTS CENTRE 01386 446944 / eveshamartscentre.co.uk
Sun 23 April ARTRIX, BROMSGROVE 01527 577330 / artrix.co.uk

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Birmingham Contemporary Music Group

Oliver Knussen Conducts Grime

Sunday 5th March 2017, 7.30pm
CBSO Centre, Birmingham

Conductor: **Oliver Knussen**
Piano: **Huw Watkins***

Elliott Carter: Canon for 4 - Homage to William
Pierre Boulez: Dérive I
Peter Maxwell Davies: Unbroken Circle
Helen Grime: Piano Concerto
(World premiere / BCMG Sound Investment & Wigmore Hall co-commission)*
Helen Grime: A Cold Spring
(Aldeburgh Music, BCMG and Sue Knussen Trust co-commission 2009)
Elliott Carter: Triple Duo

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Birmingham

THE FIZZOGS: THE SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR Sat 4 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

AIDA Ellen Kent and Amphitheatre Productions present a new interpretation of Verdi's classic opera. Olga Perrier, Aliona Kisteniyova & Liza Kadelnik star, Sat 4 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE VIRGIN MARIAS Lying Lips Theatre Company present a revenge play, written by Nathalie Bazán and presented in Jacobean English, Sat 4 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CONFUSIONS Amateur production of Alan Ayckbourn's five short plays, each of which deals with a different set of human emotions and dilemmas, Sat 4 - Sat 11 Mar, The Oldbury Rep

Dance

DANCE SAMPLED Showcase of various dance styles, from the sexiest tango to the hottest hip-hop, a classy taste of ballet, plus some gripping kathak and mind-blowing contemporary. Full line-up to be confirmed... Fri 3 - Sat 4 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

LOVING (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Ruth Negga, Joel Edgerton. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Mar; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, until Thurs 2 Mar; mac, Birmingham, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Mar

MOONLIGHT (15) Drama. Starring Mahershala Ali, Shariff Earp. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Mar

HIDDEN FIGURES (PG) Drama/Biography. Starring Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Mar

HACKSAW RIDGE (15) Drama/History. Starring Andrew Garfield, Sam Worthington. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Mar

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA (15) Drama. Starring Casey Affleck, Michelle Williams. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Mar

FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Eddie Redmayne, Ezra Miller. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Wed 1 Mar

ARRIVAL (12a) Drama/Sci-Fi. Starring Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Thurs 2 Mar

A UNITED KINGDOM (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring David Oyelowo, Rosamund Pike. Artrix,

Bromsgrove, Fri 3 Mar

TINKER BELL & THE LEGEND OF THE NEVERBEAST (U) Animation/Adventure. mac, Birmingham, Sat 4 Mar

THE LEGO MOVIE (U) Animation/Adventure. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 4 Mar

LA LA LAND (12a) Drama/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Mar

DRIVE (18) Drama/Crime. Starring Ryan Gosling, Carey Mulligan. Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 5 Mar

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 3 March, showing at selected cinemas

FIST FIGHT (15)

LOGAN (tbc)

TRESPASS AGAINST US (15)

VICEROY'S HOUSE (12a)

Events

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL VAREKAI - TALES OF THE FOREST Wed 1 - Sun 5 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

HEDGELAYING Have you ever wanted to learn how to lay a hedge? Whether it's your garden hedge, an unruly hedge on your smallholding, or a skill you would just like to learn, this course is an ideal place to start, Fri 3 Mar, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

WHAT CAREER LIVE? WHAT UNIVERSITY LIVE? An essential event for 15 to 19-year-olds, to help them decide what to do after leaving school - whether it's an apprenticeship, school-leaver programme or university after A Levels, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

PETER KAY'S DANCE FOR LIFE Peter Kay brings his three-hour dance-athons to Coventry, with all profits going to Cancer Research UK, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Mar, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Try, buy, book and hire everything you need for your special day at the ultimate day out for the whole bridal party. With over 300 wedding specialists, from bridal boutiques and florists to jewellers and photographers, this event is the ultimate wedding shopping experience, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

BRIT ASIA TV WORLD MUSIC AWARDS Featuring the best of both British-Asian and international music, including R&B, Grime, Bhangra and Bollywood, Sat 4 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

FLOYD MAYWEATHER'S LAS VEGAS BALL Sat 4 Mar, International Convention Centre (ICC), Birmingham

DRUM & BASS AWARDS 2017 Now in its



Cirque Du Soleil: Varekai - Genting Arena

11th year, Sat 4 Mar, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

GHOST TOURS An evening ghost tour of one of Britain's most haunted buildings, Sat 4 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham

SOOTY'S BIRTHDAY BAKE OFF Direct from the hit CITV series. Join the gang as they bake a chocolate cake with a sprinkle of Cadbury magic, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Mar, Cadbury World, Birmingham

THOMAS AND FRIENDS WEEKEND Thomas and friends invite you to join them on their magical weekends, Sat

4 - Sun 5 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

THE TUDOR WOMAN Marking the beginning of Women's History Month, Sun 5 Mar, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

THE IMPERIAL COMMERCIALS VOLKSWAGEN DONINGTON RALLY The circuit is transformed into a giant stage, Sun 5 Mar, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL RECORD FAIR Sun 5 Mar, National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA
FREE ENTRY FOR KIDS

Easter Sunday
Join us for a choc-tastic Easter Sunday as we delve deep into the Gardens on a eggsciting Easter egg hunt! There will also be a chocolate factory and workshop, plus lots of other activities throughout the day.

Easter Monday
Bouncy castle, children's entertainer, Easter bonnet parade, face painting and arts & crafts.

10th - 14th April
There will be lots of fun activities for all weathers such as arts & crafts, pond dipping, bug hunting and story walks.

Please note some of the activities will be chargeable. For more information please contact reception or visit us at:

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PREMIERE



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

8 March, 1pm & 7pm

Double-Bill of comedy drama from fabulous female artists for **International Women's Day 2017**: 'Save Our School Dinners... Jamie!' by Paven Virk (National Theatre, Belgrade Coventry) and 'LITE' by Moolville Theatre (Birmingham Rep, mac)

Tickets from £8

PREMIERE



NOISE

13-15 April, 2pm, 5.30pm & 8pm

Dynamic new drama from Birmingham writer and director **Thomas Moran** (Birmingham Rep Foundry). Vocally snappy and physically powerful, **NOISE** will reverberate the stage.

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NEW ADAPTATION



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Gigs

HIGHLY SUSPECT Mon 6 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE SESHEN Mon 6 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

DUTCH UNCLES Mon 6 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

ELLA - CELEBRATING 100 YEARS Mon 6 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LANY Mon 6 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PRESS TO MECO Mon 6 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

JOSEFIN ÖHRN & THE LIBERATION Tues 7 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

BILL LAURANCE Tues 7 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE WYZE GUYZ Tues 7 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

US THE DUO Wed 8 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

JULY TALK Wed 8 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

BARE KNUCKLE PARADE Wed 8 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EMMA BALLANTINE Wed 8 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

DAYGLO ABORTIONS Wed 8 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

GOSPEL CENTRAL Wed 8 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE PIGEON DETECTIVES Wed 8 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MAWKIN Wed 8 Mar, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

TINARIWEN Wed 8 Mar, The Glee Club, B'ham

TRIBUTE TO OTIS REDDING PERFORMED BY MUDIBU & THE JEZEBEL SEXTET Wed 8 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

CHALI 2NA Thurs 9 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

PROSE Thurs 9 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

ACDC EXPERIENCE Thurs 9 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

THE HIGH TONES Thurs 9 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE SWEET AND TENDER HOOLIGANS Thurs 9 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

LUCY SPRAGGAN Thurs 9



Lucy Spraggan - O2 Institute, Birmingham

Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE BEACH BOYS STORY Thurs 9 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

EVAROSE Thurs 9 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

JOE DOLMAN Thurs 9 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ARGLE BARGLE Fri 10 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PROPAGANDA Fri 10 Mar, O2 Academy Birmingham

NORMAN JAY Fri 10 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

J J GALWAY Fri 10 Mar, Irish Centre, B'ham

FOO FIGHTERS Fri 10 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

THE UPBEAT BEATLES Fri 10 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LOWER THAN ATLANTIS Fri 10 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

NINE BELOW ZERO Fri 10 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

THE FALLEN STATE Fri 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

GLASS ANIMALS Fri 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE FALLEN STATE Fri 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

UNIVERSITY BRASS BAND & SAX CHOIR Fri 10 Mar, The Bramall, B'ham

SOLID SOUL Fri 10 - Sat 11 Mar, The Jam

House, Birmingham

VENKMAN, DELTA AUTUMN, REPEAT OF LAST WEEK Sat 11 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

TEEDRA MOSES Sat 11 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LAO CHE Sat 11 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

BANG ON THE EAR Sat 11 Mar, The Irish Centre, Birmingham

THE REAL PEOPLE Sat 11 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

THE ELO ENCOUNTER Sat 11 Mar, The Roadhouse, B'ham

DRAGSTER, VOODOO KINGS, DEMON SMILES, WASTED LIFE & FACE UP Sat 11 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

WHITE LIES Sat 11 Mar, Keele University, Staffordshire

GOJIRA Sat 11 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

UNIVERSITY WIND BAND: BEST OF BRITISH Sat 11 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham

PERKELT Sat 11 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE DEREK NASH FUNK EXPERIENCE Sat 11 Mar, Pizza Express Live, Birmingham

TEN FE Sun 12 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BONAFIDE Sun 12 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

80'S INVASION TOUR 2017 Sun 12 Mar, Town Hall, Birmingham

Classical Music

MONDAY SHOWCASE Featuring Aaron Bilson (cello) & Connor Wilcox (piano) - Rachmaninov's Cello Sonata. Also featuring Shiya Zhang (soprano) & Bernard Tan (piano) who'll perform works by Arr. Qiu-Feng Zheng, Xue-Qin Cao, Zhu Qing & Arr. Yan-Jiang Hu, Mon 6 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

LOUIS LORTIE CELEBRITY RECITAL Programme comprises George Benjamin's Shadowlines & 6 Canonic Preludes plus Chopin's 24 Preludes Op.28, Tues 7 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO: WHEN IN ROME Presented by the City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and featuring Daniele Rustioni (conductor) & Francesca Dego (violin). Programme includes works by Wagner, Wolf-Ferrari, Respighi & Mendelssohn, Wed 8 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE: LE NOZZE DI FIGARO BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Featuring Fraser Goulding (conductor) & Michael Barry (director), Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC FEATURING JORDI SAVALL (VIOL/DIRECTOR) Programme includes works by Lully, Marais, Handel & Rameau, Thurs 9 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CHETHAM'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC Featuring Julius Jonusas (cello), Amber Jordan (saxophone), Gemma Riley (trombone) & Martyn Parkes (accompanist), Fri 10 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

RAINER HERSCH: COMEDY MEETS THE ORCHESTRA Programme includes works by Rossini, Beethoven, Mozart, Strauss, Verdi & Vivaldi, Fri 10 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

RETORICA Programme includes works by William Croft, David Matthews, Moeran, John McCabe & Rawsthorne, Fri 10 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: ST MARK PASSION Featuring Paul Spicer (director), Elizabeth Cragg (soprano), Simon Ponsford (countertenor), Thomas Hobbs (Evangelist), Jeremy Budd (tenor) & Henry Neill (baritone), Sat 11 Mar, Lichfield Cathedral

NIGEL KENNEDY & FRIENDS Special gala celebration show featuring world-renowned violinist Nigel Kennedy, Sat 11 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERT ORCHESTRA: SUPERHEROES AT SYMPHONY HALL An afternoon of music celebrating the iconic scores from your favourite Superheroes, Sun 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor). Programme includes works by Schoenberg, Mussorgsky, Boris Godunov & Prokofiev, Sun 12 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham University

Comedy Gigs

JO ENRIGHT, LINDSEY SANTORO & MAUREEN YOUNGER Wed 8 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

CARL DONNELLY, TOM LUCY, CHRISTIAN SCHULTE-LOH & PAUL THORNE Fri 10 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ADAM BLOOM, JUNIOR SIMPSON, LAURA LEXX & COMIC TBC Fri 10 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

CARLY SMALLMAN & NICK PAGE Fri 10 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

CARL DONNELLY, TOM LUCY, CHRISTIAN SCHULTE-LOH & PAUL THORNE Sat 11 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LOU CONRAN, QUINCY & SCOTT GIBSON Sat 11 Mar, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham

HANNAH SILVESTER & CRAIG DEELEY Sat 11 Mar, mac, Birmingham

ADAM BLOOM, JUNIOR SIMPSON, LAURA LEXX & COMIC TBC Sat 11 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

KOJO, AXEL BLAKE, SLIM & KANE BROWN Sun 12 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

BLOOD BROTHERS Award-winning show written by Willy Russell and telling the story of twins who, separated at birth, grow up on opposite sides of the track, Mon 6 - Sat 11 Mar, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

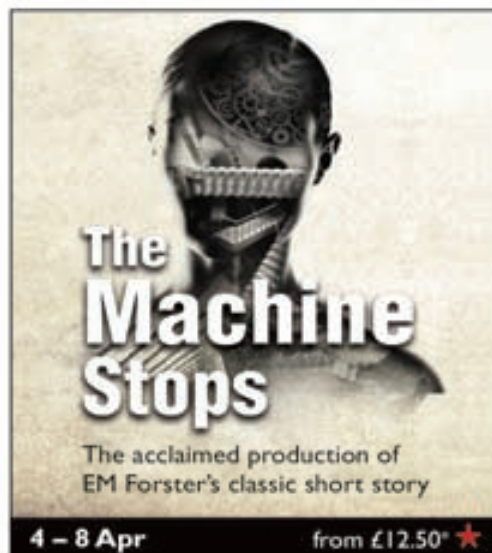
SHIRLEY VALENTINE Jodie Prenger takes the lead in Willy Russell's heart-warming comedy, Mon 6 - Sat 11 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

CHESS Knowle Musical Society present an amateur production of Tim Rice's politically-driven musical. Music score comes from Abba's Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Mar, The Core, Solihull

BETTY BLUE EYES Walsall Operatic Society present an amateur production of the popular musical comedy, based on Alan Bennett's A Private Function, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL Smash-hit musical based on the Oscar-nominated movie of the same name and featuring a timeless score by Elton John, Tues 7 Mar - Sat 29 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY DOUBLE BILL Two works from Midlands writers for International Women's Day 2017: Save Our School Dinners... Jamie! - a new comedy-drama about a gang



Look for the ★ to save 20% off the cost of your full price tickets when you book equivalent amounts for two or more participating shows at the same time. See website for further information on ticket prices and other concessions.

Ticket prices include a £1 booking fee. No booking fee applies if booked online.

of dinner ladies - and Moorville Theatre's *Lite* - a multimedia stage production exploring themes of identity, self-image and skin lightening through a young black woman's eyes, Wed 8 Mar, The Old Rep, Birmingham

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL All-singing, all-dancing musical starring Cheryl Ferguson, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley & Ruth Berkeley, Thurs 9 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE EULOGY OF TOBY PEACH Inspiring exploration of modern science and the human body, Thurs 9 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

LABELS Worklight Theatre's award-winning show, exploring the issues of mixed heritage and immigration, Thurs 9 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO Birmingham Conservatoire presents its version of Mozart's quintessential opera, Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

STORIES TO TELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT Storytelling with a difference, presented via a live, late-night radio show for those who aren't asleep. Instead of records, the DJ spins stories that exist between dusk and morning, Fri 10 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

DANCING BEAR, DANCING BEAR Award-winning company Gameshow present a story about men and women and how they relate to each other, Fri 10 Mar, mac, Birmingham

TALES AND TONIC Opportunity to preview some of the work-in-progress shows being produced by The REP's brightest new talent, Fri 10 Mar - Fri 7 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

ONE LOVE: THE BOB MARLEY MUSICAL Premiere of a new musical focusing on a defining period in the life and career of Bob Marley, Fri 10 Mar - Sat 8 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

THE FIZZOGS: THE SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR Sat 11 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE CLUB New comedy by Ruaraidh Murray, described as Phoenix Nights meets *The Sopranos*, Sat 11 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

CHICKEN LICKEN Theatre for younger audiences which fuses shadow and rod puppetry with an original musical score, Sat 11 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

WOW! SAID THE OWL Little Angel Theatre invites audiences to explore the world of colours with a curious little owl who's determined to stay awake to see what daylight brings, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Mar, mac, B'ham

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA Iqbal Khan returns to the RSC to direct Shakespeare's tragedy of love and power, Sat 11 Mar - Thurs 7 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

DARE DEVIL RIDES TO JARAMA Townsend Productions present a new play commissioned by the International Brigades Memorial Trust, Sun 12 Mar, mac, Birmingham

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE A 'compelling' afternoon giving voice to regional



Festival Of The Dead - The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

creative writing talents, presented to mark International Women's Day, Sun 12 Mar, mac, Birmingham

OYSTER BOY Haste Theatre present a bittersweet tale about the trials of love and what it means to be 'other', Sun 12 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Dance

AFRICARMEN BY TAVAZIVA An entangled story of desire, deceit and corruption unfolds in an African township where military corruption is rife. Carmen defiantly ignores all warnings to pursue a better life, but tragedy follows her like a shadow in the hot sun, Thurs 9 Mar, DanceXchange, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome



VIRAGO Sonia Sabri Company present a dance-digital solo production exploring the light vs dark and real vs fairytale versions of female existence, Sat 11 Mar, mac, Birmingham

Talks

AN EVENING WITH LEVISON WOOD The bestselling author, photographer and TV presenter shares stories about his experiences and exploits as a modern-day explorer, Wed 8 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BANG! SAID THE GUN Evening of

stand-up poetry for people who don't like poetry, Sun 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

LOVING (12a) Biography/Drama. Starring Ruth Negga, Joel Edgerton. mac, Birmingham, Mon 6 - Wed 8 Mar

A UNITED KINGDOM (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring David Oyelowo & Rosamund Pike. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 6 - Fri 10 Mar

JACKIE (15) Biography/Drama. Starring Natalie Portman & Peter Sarsgaard. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Tues 7 - Wed 8 Mar;

FENCES (12a) Drama. Starring Denzel Washington & Viola Davis. mac, Birmingham, Mon 6 - Thurs 9 Mar

PIETA IN THE TOILET (tbc) Drama. Starring Yojiro Noda & Hana Sugisaki. Foreign language, subtitled. mac, Birmingham, Tues 7 Mar

ZIGGY STARDUST & THE SPIDERS FROM MARS (PG) Documentary/Music. Starring David Bowie. mac, Birmingham, Tues 7 Mar

PREVENGE (15) Comedy/Fantasy. Starring Gemma Whelan & Kate Dickie. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Wed 8 Mar

20TH CENTURY WOMEN (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Elle Fanning & Alia Shawkat. mac, Birmingham, Fri 10 & Sun 12 Mar

MOONLIGHT (15) Drama. Starring Mahershala Ali & Shariff Earp. mac, Birmingham, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Mar

MY FERAL HEART (12a) Drama. Starring Suzanna Hamilton & Pixie Le Knot. mac, Birmingham, Sat 11 Mar

A SILENT VOICE (12a) Animation/Drama. Starring Miyu Irino & Saori Hayami. Foreign language, subtitled. mac, Birmingham, Sat 11 Mar

NOTES ON BLINDNESS (U) Documentary/Drama. Starring John M. Hull & Marilyn Hull. Q&A following

the film. mac, Birmingham, Sun 12 Mar

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 10 March, showing at selected cinemas

CAT FIGHT (15)

DANCER (12a)

ELLE (18)

KONG: SKULL ISLAND (12a)

RULES DON'T APPLY (tbc)

THE CHAMBER (tbc)

THE LOVE WITCH (tbc)

THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES (tbc)

Events

YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 Tues 7 - Sun 12 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

CRUFTS The world's most famous dog show, Thurs 9 - Sun 12 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

THE RUM FESTIVAL Featuring over 100 different rums from around the globe, live entertainment, food and giveaways, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Mar, The Bond Complex, Birmingham

BOWMAN ANTIQUES Antiques, curios, vintage, retro and collectables, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Mar, Staffordshire County Showground

FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD Carnival-esque pageantry, giant skull processions, acrobats, dancers, decorative art & costumes, Sat 11 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

DISCOVER RAG RUGGING Sat 11 Mar, Birmingham Back to Backs

THOMAS AND FRIENDS WEEKEND Thomas and friends invite you to join them on their magical weekends, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

ST. PATRICK'S PARADE BIRMINGHAM This year's theme is Irish Dancing, Sun 12 Mar, Digbeth, Birmingham

IRONBRIDGE HALF MARATHON Sun 12 Mar, Ironbridge, Shropshire

Gigs

PEANESS Mon 13 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE WEEKND Mon 13 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

HIGH TYDE Tues 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NATHAN GRISDALE Tues 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CATH NIGHTINGALE WITH OZ MCGOWAN Tues 14 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

CAITLIN KOCH Tues 14 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS Tues 14 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

LAURA MARLING Tues 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KRISTA DETOR Tues 14 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

IDLES Tues 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CANAAN SMITH Wed 15 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LUCAS D & THE GROOVE GHETTO Wed 15 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

JULIE FELIX Wed 15 Mar, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THE FUREYS Wed 15 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

MARTIN TURNER EX WISHBONE ASH Wed 15 Mar, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

EZIO Wed 15 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

THE WAILERS Wed 15 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CHARLIE WORSHAM Wed 15 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

EMPIRE Wed 15 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DODIE Thurs 16 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

CROWBAR Thurs 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CURVED AIR Thurs 16 Mar, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

ALL TIME LOW Thurs 16 Mar, O2 Academy,

Birmingham
SURFER BLOOD Thurs 16 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

THE VIRGINMARYS Thurs 16 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

DEVIN TOWNSEND PROJECT Thurs 16 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

NANNA RADLEYS Thurs 16 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

KOKOMO Thurs 16 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

LUKE DANIELS Thurs 16 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JUNIOR Thurs 16 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

PROPAGANDA Fri 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MONSTER TRUCK Fri 17 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RHINO AND THE RANTERS Fri 17 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SARAH JANE MORRIS WITH ANTONIO FORCIONE Fri 17 Mar, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

FOLLOW NATIVES Fri 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOE FOX Fri 17 Mar, Ort Cafe, Birmingham

ALIVE AND KICKING & U2+1 Fri 17 Mar, Route 44, Birmingham

SCOTT BRADLEE & POSTMODERN JUKEBOX Fri 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

STATE CHAMPS Fri 17 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

HOWARD JONES Fri 17 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE TREMBLING WILBURYS Fri 17 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

TANGO WITH THE QUINTETO JUAN VASSALLO Fri 17 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

UNIVERSITY BIG BAND Fri 17 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham

PLINI Fri 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KIOKO Fri 17 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PAUL CARRACK Fri 17 - Sat 18 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JUMP THE SHARK Sat 18 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

GENTLEMAN'S DUB CLUB Sat 18 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

L.A. GUNS Sat 18 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

THE NERVE Sat 18 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

BLACK STAR RIDERS Sat 18 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

IVOR & LYN'S CLASSIC ROCK DISCO Sat 18 Mar, Route 44, Birmingham

THE HURLING BOYS Sat 18 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

THE STRANGLERS Sat 18 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HANNAH WANTS Sat 18 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

DAVE HAUSE AND THE MERMAIDS Sat 18 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE RECORD COMPANY Sat 18 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

HVMM Sat 18 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

DEVILSKIN & SUMO CYCO Sun 19 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SIENNA SKIES, HIGH HOPES, I & THE DREAMER Sun 19 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham

GEORGIE FAME Sun 19 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

MEGSON'S FAMILY FOLK SHOW Sun 19 Mar, mac, Birmingham

JUIAN SIEGEL Sun 19 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall



The Virgin Marys - O2 Academy, Birmingham

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Featuring the Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir & Paul Spicer (conductor). Programme includes works by Dvorak & Walton, Mon 13 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

MONDAY SHOWCASE: BRIDGE Featuring Matthew Johnstone (viola) & Eden Walker (piano). Programme includes works by Hindemith & Bridge, Mon 13 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

JENNIFER PIKE CELEBRITY RECITAL Programme includes works by Mozart, Syzmanowski, Vaughan Williams & Wieniawski, Tues 14 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

HALLE ORCHESTRA Featuring Sir Mark Elder (conductor) & Gerard McBurney (creative director). Actors to be announced. Programme comprises Beyond The Score: Elgar's Enigma Variations, Tues 14 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Robert Trevino (conductor) & Stephen Hough (piano). Programme includes works by Rachmaninov, Bartok & Shostakovich, Thurs 16 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring James Southall (conductor) & Nicholas Morris (organ). Programme includes works by Paul Norman, Poulenc & Schubert, Fri 17 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

LUNCHTIME CONCERT: HAYDN & MENDELSSOHN Featuring Hun-sik Lee, Ming Yung, Ellie Chapman, Angela Monge-Alvarez, Clarke Luigi Alonzi, Jing Ming, Yisong Yang & Alice Cheer. Programme comprises Haydn's String Quartet Op.76 No.4 & Mendelssohn's String Quartet Op.13, Fri 17 Mar, Birmingham Museum And Art Gallery

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY SINGERS Featuring Julian Wilkins (conductor). Programme includes works by Whitacre, Monteverdi, Tavener, Spiritual arr. Whalum & Britten, Fri 17 Mar, The Barber Institute, B'ham

TANGO WITH THE QUINTETO JUAN VASSALLO Featuring Diego Vassallo (violin), Catherine Vassallo (viola), Eduardo Vassallo (cello), Danny Vassallo (double bass) & John Turville (piano), Fri 17 Mar, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

G4 IN CONCERT Fri 17 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHORUS & SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Daniele Rosina (orchestral director) & Julian Wilkins (chorus director). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Ginestera & Haydn, Sat 18 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BIRMINGHAM GAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Sat 18 Mar, St Paul's

Church, Birmingham

CHAMBER CHOIRS AND UNIVERSITY CAMERATA Featuring Alexander Creamer and Matthew Brady (Camerata conductors); Bradley Gill & Sidney Brass (Chamber Choir conductors). Programme includes works by Mendelssohn, Bruckner, Esenvalds, Durufle, Monteverdi, Ola Gjeilo, Whitacre, Parry & Tippett, Sun 19 Mar, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

BEASTDOME: KELP ROAD A sea-themed concert in the immersive environment of the Dome Room, to complement the Kelp Road sound system in the Bramall foyer, Sun 19 Mar, The Bramall, University of Birmingham

SINGALONG WITH THE CBSO Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the CBSO Chorus & Simon Halsey (conductor). Programme comprises Mendelssohn's Elijah (highlights), 60', Sun 19 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

JERRY 'THE KING' LAWLER Wed 15 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

HAL CRUTTENDEN, ALAN HUDSON & PADDY LENNOX Thurs 16 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham

SEAN MCLOUGHLIN Thurs 16 Mar, mac, Birmingham

MIKE GUNN, JONNY AWSUM, STEVE SHANYASKI & KAREN BAYLEY Thurs 16 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

JARRED CHRISTMAS, PAUL MCCAFFERY, STEVE GRIBBIN & MIKE WILMOT Fri 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL HOWARD Fri 17 - Sat 18 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

TONY LAW Fri 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDREW BIRD, CHARLIE BAKER, MATT REED & SOL BERNSTEIN Fri 17 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

BRENDON BURNS, HARRY STACHINI, CARLY SMALLMAN Fri 17 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

JARRED CHRISTMAS, PAUL MCCAFFERY, STEVE GRIBBIN & MIKE WILMOT Sat 18 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOJO SUTHERLAND, ALISTAIR BARRIE & MARK SIMMONS Sat 18 Mar, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham

ANDREW BIRD, CHARLIE BAKER & MATT REED & SOL BERNSTEIN Sat 18 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

BARNSTORMERS COMEDY NIGHT Sat 18 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

ASHLEY BLAKER Sun 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NATALIE ANN CUTLER Sun 19 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Theatre

THE COMMITMENTS Feelgood celebration of soul, direct from the West End. Kevin Kennedy stars, Mon 13 - Sat 18 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

MEET FRED Hijink Theatre tell the story of Fred, a regular guy who just wants to get on in life. The only problem is that Fred is a puppet, and that's where his dependency issues start..., Tues 14 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

HOME A tale of unexpected friendship explored via a multi-sensory story of discovery, Tues 14 - Wed 15 Mar, mac, Birmingham

ALL SHOOK UP Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company present a new twist on Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, featuring the songs of Elvis Presley, Tues 14 - Sat 18 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE GONDOLIERS Birmingham Savoyards present one of Gilbert & Sullivan's best-known works, Tues 14 - Sat 18 Mar, The Old Rep, B'ham

DANNY BAKER: CRADLE TO THE STAGE Danny presents a show featuring anecdotes, games involving sausages, and his impressive six octave range, Wed 15 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

BLUE STOCKINGS The Crescent Youth Theatre present Jessica Swale's drama, charting the harrowing struggles of a small group of women at Girton College, Cambridge, the first college in Britain to admit women, Wed 15 - Sat 18 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

BLOOD WEDDING Birmingham School Of Acting present Federico García Lorca's surrealist, blood-soaked story of doomed love and isolation, Wed 15 - Sat 18 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

LUCAS AND TIME Exploration of memory, image and multiple identities, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 Mar, George Cadbury Hall (University Of Birmingham)

ORDINARY DAYS Adam Gwon's original musical about growing up and enjoying the view, told through a series of intricately connected songs and vignettes, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MUSICALS DISCOVERED II Presented by the Night Project Theatre Ensemble, Fri 17 Mar, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

KEIN APPLAUS FÜR SCHEISSE A portrait of a generation, fusing dance, trashy pop, theatre, rollerskating, acrobatics and love. Presented by Fierce, Fri 17 Mar, mac, Birmingham

WONDERWOMAN Notnow Collective present a show that looks into family, parenthood and work-home subjects in a challenging, visual and immersive way, Fri 17 Mar, mac, B'ham

DING DONG MURDER ME ON HIGH! Jeffrey Holland (Hi-de-Hi!), Anna Brecon (Emmerdale), Mark Little (Neighbours), Natasha Gray

(Emmerdale) and David Callister (The Bill) star in the world premiere of the fourth instalment of Peter Gordon's Pratt trilogy, Fri 17 - Sat 18 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

SCARY SH*T Rhiannon Faith presents a show about friendship, being a woman and asking for help... Sat 18 Mar, mac, Birmingham

MEET FRED Hijink Theatre tell the story of Fred, a regular guy who just wants to get on in life. The only problem is that Fred is a puppet, and that's where his dependency issues start..., Sat 18 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

Dance

VERVE 2017 Four distinct dance works choreographed by international artists James Cousins, Carlos Pons Guerra, Leila McMillan and Matthias Sperling, Thurs 16 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove



MK ULTRA The latest work from the highly acclaimed Rosie Kay Dance Company, a 'supercharged mash-up of thrilling dance, music & imagery', Fri 17 - Sat 18 Mar, Birmingham Rep

Talks

PETER ALLIS: A QUESTION OF GOLF A light-hearted evening with the legendary golfer, followed by a Q&A session, Mon 13 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull & Tues 14 March, Lichfield Garrick

WHAT'S ON TOUR AND TALK SAREHOLE STORIES: DECLINE AND RISE OF SAREHOLE MILL Learn how Sarehole Mill was saved for future generations, as you're taken from derelict mill to working corn mill in this illustrated talk and tour, Tues 14 Mar, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

THE NUREMBERG CHRONICLE: LECTURE BY DR ELAINE FULTON Part of University Arts & Science Festival 2017, Thurs 16 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham University

WHAT'S WHAT WITH JAMES WATT? The year 2019 will mark the 200th anniversary of the death, in Birmingham, of inventor, industrialist, engineer and artist James Watt. This is one of several events over the next few years which explore the man and his legacy, Thurs 16 Mar, Soho House, Birmingham

MARY BERRY EVERYDAY Join Mary as



Danny Baker: Cradle To The Stage - Birmingham Town Hall

she talks informally about her life and her new book. The event also includes a Q&A with the 'icon of homecooking' at the end of the show, Thurs 16 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

AMERICAN FICTION SPECIAL EVENT WITH GEORGE SAUNDERS The National Book Award-shortlisted US writer celebrates the publication of his debut novel, Lincoln In The Bardo, Sat 18 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

ARCHIVE TALKS: SHAKESPEARE AT THE REP Sat 18 Mar, The REP, B'ham

Film

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 17 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (tbc)

GET OUT (tbc)

GLEASON (tbc)

PERSONAL SHOPPER (tbc)

THE SALESMAN (12a)

Events

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM'S ARTS & SCIENCE FESTIVAL This year taking the theme of 'land and water', Mon 13 - Sun 19 Mar, The University of Birmingham

THE BIG BANG UK YOUNG SCIENTISTS & ENGINEERS FAIR The UK's largest celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) for young people, Wed 15 - Sat 18 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

BTCC SEASON LAUNCH Check out the new cars, drivers, teams and liveries in action, Thurs 16 Mar, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

HARMONOGRAPH: SEEING SOUND

Sound artist Bobby Bird demonstrates his hand-built harmonograph, a scientific instrument invented in the Victorian era which uses pendulums to visualise the invisible forces of maths and science, Thurs 16 Mar, Soho House, Birmingham

SEWING FOR PLEASURE AND FASHION EMBROIDERY Thurs 16 - Sun 19 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

HOBBYCAPS All the latest supplies and cutting-edge ideas in the world of creativity, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

CAKE INTERNATIONAL The sugarcraft, cake decorating & baking show, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 Mar, NEC, Birmingham



SPRING STEAM GALA Get up close to an array of steam locomotives, then jump on board and venture back in time, Fri 17 - Sun 19 Mar, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

THOMAS AND FRIENDS WEEKEND Thomas and friends invite you to join them on their magical weekends, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

MCM BIRMINGHAM COMIC CON A week-end-long celebration of all things great and geeky, presented by the team behind MCM London Comic Con, the largest event of its type in Europe, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW The UK's largest event for people with a passion for photography, Sat 18 - Tues 21 Mar, NEC, Birmingham

Gigs

SONIC BOOM SIX Mon 20 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PRIDES Mon 20 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham

LUKE DANIELS - REVOLVE & ROTATE: THE POLYPHON CHRONICLES Mon 20 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

THE EARLY NOVEMBER Tues 21 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ANTHONY MARSDEN QUARTET Tues 21 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

CLUB DRIVE Tues 21 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

SUICIDE SILENCE Wed 22 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CLOUD NOTHINGS Wed 22 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BATTLE BEAST Wed 22 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

WARPAINT Wed 22 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE STRAWBS, Wed 22 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

ALEXANDRA JAYNE Wed 22 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE JAMES BROTHERS Wed 22 Mar, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS: THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Wed 22 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

BAD SOUNDS Wed 22 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

KOJO FUNDS Wed 22 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALSARAH & THE NUBATONES Thurs 23 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SINKANE Thurs 23 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GRAHAM CUNNINGTON, PAUL JAMROZY, GNOD & MUTATE Thurs 23 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham

TASITA D'MOUR - A TRIBUTE TO TINA TURNER Thurs 23 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

OLLY MURS Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham

CREEDENCE

CLEARWATER REVIEW Thurs 23 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

ONE NIGHT OF ELVIS Thurs 23 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE ARKYARD SESSIONS Thurs 23 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

FINAL YEAR JAZZ RECITALISTS Thurs 23 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham

KING SALAMI & THE CUMBERLAND THREE Thurs 23 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

PROPAGANDA Fri 24 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JAMES MASLOW Fri 24 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MALLORY KNOX Fri 24 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ED GEATER Fri 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CHRIS PAYNE, DJ RUSTY EGAN, SCARLET FANTASTIC & TEN: TEN Fri 24 Mar, The Flapper, Birmingham

SKLAMBERG & THE SHEPHERDS Fri 24 Mar, mac, Birmingham

B'SPOKE Fri 24 - Sat 25 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

JAMES ARTHUR Fri 24 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

AC/DC UK Fri 24 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

MARTIN TAYLOR Fri 24 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall, Staffs

IAN PROWSE - FIREWORKS 25TH TOUR Fri 24 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

BOAT TO ROW Fri 24 Mar, mac, Birmingham

ORANMORE Fri 24 Mar, Irish Centre, B'ham

CRAIG DAVID Fri 24 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

YUNG JIMMY'S BIG IDEAS Fri 24 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

JAZZY B Fri 24 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SWAMP DONKEY Fri 24 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

RUSSIAN CIRCLES Sat 25 Mar, O2 Institute,

Birmingham

THE BLUE NOTES Sat 25 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

MAD4BRIT Sat 25 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

STAR OF THE SEA Sat 25 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

CAPTAIN HORIZON Sat 25 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BLUE ZOO & AGENTS OF EVOLUTION Sat 25 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham

HAKEN Sat 25 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

KIT HOLMES Sat 25 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

FRANK CARTER AND THE RATTLESNAKES Sat 25 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

MAD DOG MCREA Sat 25 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

A R RAHMAN Sat 25 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

MARTI PELLOW Sat 25 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

ELECTRIC CIRCUS (WASP) & MOTORKILL Sat 25 Mar, Route 44, Birmingham

ARMORED SAINT Sat 25 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE VRYLL SOCIETY Sat 25 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

POPPY FIELDS 2017 Sun 26 Mar, The Roadhouse, B'ham

PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER Sun 26 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall, Staffs

FALLEN & LIGHTWISH Sun 26 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

DEVON SPROULE Sun 26 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

JIVE TALKIN' Sun 26 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

JARROD DICKENSON Sun 26 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TONY KEARNEY Sun 26 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

SAMPHA Sun 26 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

DANTEVILLES Sun 26 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

Classical Music

UNIVERSITY CAMERATA Featuring Daniel Mahoney & James Naylor (conductors). Programme includes works by Rameau, Victoria, Elgar & Lauridsen, Mon 20 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

PERFORMANCE PLATFORM: RENATA KONYICSKA (PIANO) Programme includes works by Handel-Liszt, Schubert & Chopin, Tues 21 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

JOHN IRELAND AND THE PIANO Featuring Eric McElroy. Programme includes Ireland's London Pieces, Ballade of London Nights, Earth's Call & Sarnia, Tues 21 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

JUST CALL ME GOD The Final Speech of a Dictator featuring John Malcovich (actor), Sophie von Kessel (actress), Martin Haselbock (organ & musical concept), Franz Danksagmüller (live electronics) & Michael Sturminger (writer & director). Programme includes additional works by Bach, Franck, Widor, Messiaen & Ligeti, Tues 21 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RENATA KONYICSKA PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Handel-Liszt, Schubert & Chopin, Tues 21 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

I FAGIOLINI: FLAMING HEART Comprising a programme to celebrate Monteverdi's unique expressive genius, Wed 22 Mar, The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham

ANDRE RIEU Wed 22 Mar, Genting Arena, Birmingham



FRONTIERS: RECORDER FUTURES Featuring members of the Conservatoire Recorder Department, Thurs 23 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

RODRIGO'S GUITAR CONCERTO Featuring Josep Pons (conductor) & Canizares (guitar). Programme includes works by Turina, Rodrigo, Falla & Ravel, Thurs 23 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

TOADALLY FREE COMEDY! Mon 20 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

FAT PENGUIN COMEDY Wed 22 Mar, The Patrick Kavanagh, Birmingham

TOM STADE, JOHN FOTHERGILL, IAN STONE & ELLIOT STEEL Fri 24 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DIANE SPENCER, CHRISTIAN REILLY, JIM SMALLMAN & GARRETT MILLERICK Fri 24 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

STEPHEN BAILEY Fri 24 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

IGNACIO LOPEZ & SIMON EMANUEL Fri 24 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TOM STADE, JOHN FOTHERGILL, IAN STONE & ELLIOT STEEL Sat 25 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MANDY KNIGHT & JOHN MOLONEY Sat 25 Mar, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham

THE NOISE NEXT DOOR Sat 25 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove



DIANE SPENCER, CHRISTIAN REILLY, JIM SMALLMAN & GARRETT MILLERICK Sat 25 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

Theatre

JON RONSON'S PSYCHOPATH NIGHT Join Ronson as he recounts the funny, terrifying and compelling events that led to his bestselling book, *The Psychopath Test*, Mon 20 Mar, The REP, B'ham

MR BLOOM'S NURSERY LIVE! Interactive show to entertain parents and toddlers alike, Mon 20 - Tues 21 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

GHOST Brand new production, based on the Academy Award-winning movie starring Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore & Whoopi Goldberg. The show stars Carolyn Maitland as Molly, Jacqui Dubois as Oda Mai Brown, Sam Ferriday as Carl and Andy Moss as Sam, Mon 20 - Sat 25 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

JOSEPH & THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT Starring Joe McElderry, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Mar, Malvern Theatres

ACORN ANTIQUES THE MUSICAL Coleshill Operatic Society present an amateur production of Victoria Wood's comedy musical, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

INVINCIBLE Torben Betts' abrasive comedy about the class divide, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GOT HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF Birmingham School Of Acting presents a 'ferociously iconoclastic' re-examination of Mary's life, told in 16th century Scots and Standard English, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

WE'RE STUCK! Interactive show created by award-winning theatre-maker Sarah

Punshon and looking into how 'amazing and utterly rubbish our brains can be at maths', and how we can best grow our grey matter, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

GANGSTA GRANNY Birmingham Stage Company's acclaimed production, based on David Walliams' best-selling book, Wed 22 - Sun 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



PINK MIST Owen Sheers' powerful story about three men deployed to Afghanistan, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

ICONIC THE SHOW Steve Steinman's all-new show delivers the best of the coolest and most iconic movies of all time, Sat 25 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Dance

A ROOM FOR ALL OUR TOMORROWS From Igor & Moreno And The Place comes a duet about the secret lives we all possess when we are close to others, Thurs 23 Mar, DanceXchange, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE TWELVE DANCING PRINCESSES Midland Theatre Ballet fuse unique choreography, fabulous costumes and sets to present an inspiring take on the classic fairytale, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

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, Fri 24 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Talks

DR PHIL HAMMOND - DR PHIL'S HEALTH REVOLUTION An evening in which to 'laugh, love, shout and reclaim our NHS', Thurs 23 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove



SPECIALIST TALK: WOMEN ARTISTS OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITES Join the house steward for a relaxed talk followed by a walking tour of the collection, which features work by artists including Evelyn De Morgan, Lizzie Siddal and Lucy Madox Brown, Sat 25 Mar, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

TER CALLS (12a) Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Sigourney Weaver & Felicity Jones. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 20 - Tues 21 Mar

HIDDEN FIGURES (PG) Drama/Biography. Starring Taraji P. Henson & Octavia Spencer. mac, Birmingham, Mon 20 - Thurs 23 Mar

RAMMSTEIN: PARIS (18) Documentary, Music. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Thurs 23 & Sun 26 Mar

LA LA LAND (12a) Drama/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling & Emma Stone. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 24 Mar

CERTAIN WOMEN (12a) Drama. Starring Michelle Williams & Kristen Stewart. mac, Birmingham, Fri 24 - Thurs 30 Mar

JOURNEY 2: THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (PG) Action/Adventure. Starring Dwayne Johnson & Michael Caine. mac, Birmingham, Fri 24 - Thurs 30 Mar

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS (U) Adventure/Comedy. Starring David Niven & Cantinflas. mac, Birmingham, Sun 26 Mar

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 24 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

AQUARIUS (15)

CHIPS (15)

LIFE (tbc)

POWER RANGERS (tbc)

Events

RAPTORS REVEALED - AN INTRODUCTION TO FALCONRY Exclusive opportunity to see, handle and fly traditional falconry birds under personal guidance, Wed 22 Mar, Kenilworth Castle

VICTORIAN MUSIC HALL EVENING Step back in time at the first in a series of nostalgic music hall evenings, Fri 24 Mar, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shrops

THUNDERSPORT GB MOTORCYCLE RACES Presented by one of the country's leading organisers of thrilling motorcycle races, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Mar, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

THE BRITISH MOTOR INDUSTRY, WHAT IS



A Room For All Our Tomorrows

DanceXchange, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 23 March

"A Room For All Our Tomorrows is about the secret lives we all possess when we're close to others," explain London-based artists Igor Urzelai and Moreno Solinas. "It's about those moments - between coffee and dancing - when harmony abandons us, and all we have left is the desire to scream. It's a performance and place to imagine how things might be other than the way they are. It is a simple room for all our tomorrows."

Igor and Moreno have been collaborating for 10 years, building a reputation both in the UK and internationally. "We want to reclaim the role of the theatre as a place for assembly," they explain, "whilst exploring the cathartic properties of live performance. Across all our works we have always tried to create a frame to share our views without dictating a single reading, instead creating space for reflection for the viewer."

THE ROAD AHEAD? Series of lectures by Britain's motor industry experts, Sat 25 Mar, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

REVOLTING RHYMES A phizz-whizzing day of glorumptious music, storytelling and art, to celebrate Roald Dahl's jumpsquiffing tales, Sat 25 Mar, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

THOMAS AND FRIENDS WEEKEND Thomas and friends invite you to join them on their magical weekends, Sat 25 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

MOTHER'S DAY TEA PARTY - 100 YEARS

OF HATS Wear your best hat, enjoy afternoon tea and take a whirlwind trip through the history of the hat, Sun 26 Mar, Aston Hall, Birmingham

MOTHERING SUNDAY Victorian-style Mother's Day. Admission is free for mums throughout the day, when accompanied by another full-paying adult, Sun 26 Mar, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire



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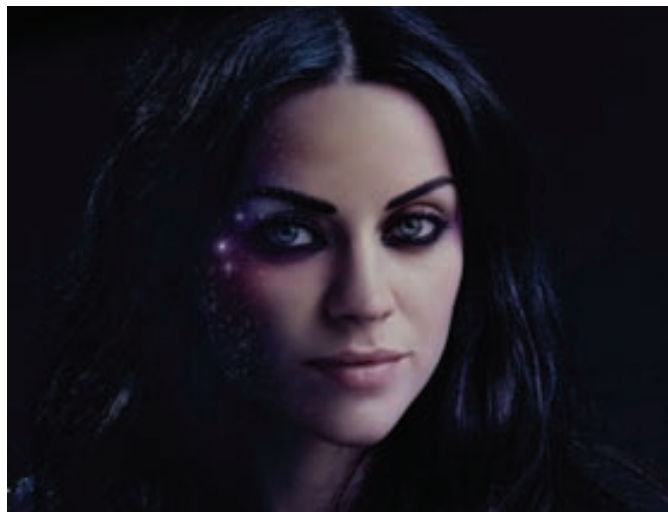


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Prices shown refer to adult advance general admission. On the day admission costs will be higher. Full details available at www.donington-park.co.uk.
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*Tickets must be booked before 24/03/17 to qualify for entry into the prize draw **Advance tickets available to purchase until 5pm Wednesday 29 March 2017



Amy MacDonald - Symphony Hall

Gigs

THE DIRTY HIT TOUR

FEATURING: SUPERFOOD, PALE WAVES & KING NUN Mon 27 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham
HUNDRETH, LANDSCAPES & SILENT PLANET Mon 27 Mar, The Flapper, B'ham
SUPERFOOD Mon 27 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
SLAVES Mon 27 Mar, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham
LISA STANLEY AND HER BAND Mon 27 Mar, The Robin, Bilston
DOC BROWN Mon 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
THE MOONLANDINGZ Tues 28 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
SONATA ARCTICA Tues 28 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
THE ACOUSTIC SESSIONS Tues 28 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham
ALBERT LEE Tues 28 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove
JOHNNY FLYNN Tues 28 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
JOEY JORDISON'S VIMIC Wed 29 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
ROOK CRUTCHES Wed 29 Mar, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham
BRIAN KENNEDY Wed 29 Mar, The Robin, Bilston
LEWIS WATSON Wed 29 Mar, O2 Institute,


Birmingham
STEVE TILSTON & JEZ LOWE Wed 29 Mar, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham
NME AWARDS TOUR WITH BLOSSOMS Wed 29 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
THE DUBLIN LEGENDS Wed 29 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull
GABBIDON Wed 29 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham
MIST Wed 29 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
DAVE Thurs 30 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
THE RAMONAS Thurs 30 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
BINKER & MOSES Thurs 30 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
BOOTLEG BLONDIE Thurs 30 Mar, The Robin, Bilston
GRAND MAGUS Thurs 30 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
DEL CAMINO Thurs 30 Mar, The Jam House, Birmingham

AMY MACDONALD Thurs 30 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
PROPAGANDA Fri 31 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
DETROIT SOUL COLLECTIVE Fri 31 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, The Jam House, Birmingham
LIVEWIRE - TRIBUTE TO AC/DC Fri 31 Mar, The Robin, Bilston
THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN Fri 31 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham
STEVE 'N' SEAGULLS Fri 31 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham
RICKY COOL & THE IN CROWD Fri 31 Mar, mac, Birmingham
OLIVER DAWSON SAXON & SLADE UK Fri 31 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham
JO HARMAN Fri 31 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove
TOMMY FLEMING Fri 31 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull
SPILT MILK SOCIETY Fri 31 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
KARKOSA Fri 31 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham



Steve 'N' Seagulls - O2 Academy, Birmingham

Classical Music

UNIVERSITY WOMAN'S CHOIR Featuring Simon Carrington (conductor). Programme includes works by Cozzolani, Verdi & Gardner, Fri 24 Mar, The Barber Institute, B'ham
BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Featuring Michael Lloyd (conductor) & Alison Roddy (soprano). Programme includes works by Mozart, Brahms, Haydn & Mahler, Sun 26 Mar, The Bramall, University of Birmingham
LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH RAÚL PRIETO RAMÍREZ Programme includes works by Juan María Thomas, Jesús Guridi & Julius Reubke, Mon 27 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
ARMIDA QUARTET Programme includes works by Haydn, Narko Nikodijevic & Beethoven, Mon 27 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall
ANDREW RANDALL Winner of the Andrew Downes Performance Prize, The Ashleyan Opera Prize, the John Ireland Prize and the Edward Brookes English Song Prize, baritone Andrew Randall performs in this special lunchtime vocal programme, Tues 28 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER'S CLASSICAL SHOWCASE Also featuring Domanos Csabay (piano), Caroline Modiba (soprano), Luke English (clarinet) & Yu-Mien Sun (violin), Wed 29 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

BEETHOVEN'S EROICA Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Jamie Phillips (conductor) & Toby Spence (tenor). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Britten & Beethoven, Wed 29 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
BEETHOVEN STRING QUARTETS Featuring Zoe Beyers & Jane Wright (violins), Adam Romer (viola) & Richard Jenkinson (cello). Programme includes Beethoven's String Quartet in B flat Op.130 & Gross Fugue Op. 133, Thurs 30 Mar CBSO Centre, Birmingham
BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA Featuring Lucy Russell (director/baroque violin). Programme includes works by Rameau, Telemann, Mozart, Purcell & Handel, Thurs 30 Mar, St Philips Cathedral, Birmingham
CBSO: SPRING CLASSICS Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Julian Wilkins

(conductor), Anne-Marie Minhall (presenter) & the CBSO Children's Chorus. Programme includes works by Delius, Vivaldi, Coates, J. Strauss II, Grainger, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Schumann, Copland & Beethoven, Fri 31 Mar, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

NATALIE ANN CUTLER Thurs 30 Mar, mac, Birmingham
FIN TAYLOR, MAT EWINS Fri 31 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham
IVO GRAHAM, BOBBY MAIR, PIERRE NOVELLIE Fri 31 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham
JOJO SMITH, EDD HEDGES & DAVID LONGLEY Fri 31 Mar, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham
KEITH FARNAN, MIKE NEWALL, FUNMBI OMOTAYO & DARRELL MARTIN Fri 31 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham
STAND UP COMEDY SHOWCASE Fri 31 Mar, mac, Birmingham
GEOFF NORCOTT Fri 31 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Theatre

OYSTER BOY Haste Theatre present a bittersweet tale of the trials of love and what it means to be Other, Fri 24 Mar, The Old joint Stock, Birmingham
DOREEN'S GRAND NIGHT OUT Doreen returns with a brand new live show, Fri 24 Mar, Artrix, Bromsgrove
FRAME OF MIND Riverside Performing Arts presents a fast-paced sketch show mixing humour, news, music and personal stories to explore issues of mental health, Fri 24 - Sat 25 Mar, mac, Birmingham
ICONIC THE SHOW Steve Steinman's all-new show delivers the best of the best soundtracks from some of the coolest and most iconic movies of all time, Sat 25 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
MOZART & SALIERI Rimsky-Korsakov's rarely performed two-hander, sung in English and accompanied by piano, Sat 25 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham
CIRCUS OF HORRORS: THE NEVER ENDING NIGHTMARE Amalgamation of 'bizarre, brave and beautiful' acts, all woven into an Alice In Horrorland-type story, driven by a mainly original soundscape and performed with a forked tongue firmly in each cheek!, Sun 26 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, B'ham
WATCHERS OF THE SKIES A secret and an odyssey, told through story, poetry, music and myth, Sun 26 Mar, mac, Birmingham
MEMORY LANE A fast moving roller-coaster of a journey through some of the greatest songs of the '50s, '60s and '70s, and featuring one of the

UK's top comedians, Mon 27 - Tues 28 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull
BUDDY - THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY Award-winning musical, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

A PASSIONATE WOMAN Liza Goddard takes the lead in Kay Mellor's romantic comedy. Antony Eden, Hasan Dixon and Russell Dixon also star, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, Malvern Theatres

MADE IN DAGENHAM Sutton Coldfield Musical Theatre Company present an amateur staging of the West End musical, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

FUNNY GIRL Natasha J Barnes takes the lead in this touring production of the iconic musical, charting the rise to fame of Broadway star Fanny Brice, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE BEST THING A Swinging 60s story of unconditional love from the UK's leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Wed 29 Mar, mac, B'ham

AN EVENING WITH PAM AYRES Thurs 30 Mar, The Core Theatre, Solihull

THE MISFIT ANALYSIS Access All Areas journey through a world of wheelchairs and blow-up dolls in an unconventional exploration of an autistic mind, Thurs 30 Mar, Arena

Theatre, Wolverhampton

DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE All & Sundry present David Edgar's dramatic adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic horror story, Thurs 30 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

CYMBELINE Lichfield Garrick Youth Theatre present an immersive version of Shakespeare's story of power and jealousy, Thurs 30 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT EVEN TRYING Birmingham Ormiston Academy Year 13 Musical Theatre students present their version of Frank Loesser's satire, Thurs 30 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

THE HYPOCRITE Riotous new comedy from writer Richard Bean (One Man, Two Guvnors), Fri 31 Mar - Sat 29 Apr, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

WALK OF SHAME Critically acclaimed standup debut about sex, sobriety, sambuca and the modern addict that lies within us all, Fri 31 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN Oscar Wilde's witty assault on prejudice and hypocrisy, Fri 31 Mar - Sat 8 Apr, Hall Green Little Theatre, B'ham

WINNIE AND WILBUR New play by

Mike Kenny, based on the bestselling picture books created by Valerie Thomas and Korky Paul, Fri 31 Mar - Sat 22 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

Thurs 30 Mar, Palace Theatre, Redditch

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

LA LA LAND (12a) Drama/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling & Emma Stone. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 27 & Fri 31 Mar

PALE MOON (tbc) Drama. Starring Rie Miyazawa & Sosuke Ikematsu. mac, Birmingham, Tues 28 Mar

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 31 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

FREE FIRE (tbc)

GHOST IN THE SHELL (tbc)

GRADUATION (15)

MAN DOWN (tbc)

SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE (tbc)

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MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday 2 March 7.30pm
The Jive Aces
 A night of vintage jive and swing music! Their high-energy stage show includes guest Amy Baker.  
 £16

Saturday 4 March 7.30pm
The Fizzogs - Suck It And See
 Comedy sketch show featuring The Dancing Grannies and Black Country Comedian Jonny Cole. (Age 14+)  
 £15

Monday 13 March 7.30pm
Peter Alliss - A Question of Golf
 An audience with the hugely popular ex-pro golfer turned broadcaster. Golfing tales plus Q & A session. A perfect gift for any golf fan. 
 £22

Thursday 16 March 8pm
Jongleurs on the Road
 Live stand up featuring Steve Sharynski, Jonny Awsum and Mike Gunn hosted by MC Karen Boyley.  
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Monday 27 & Tuesday 28 March 2.30pm & 7.30pm
Memory Lane
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ARTRIX

March 2017

Wednesday 8th March
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Thursday 9th March
THE EULOGY OF TOBY PEACH
 A CHARMING CELEBRATION OF SURVIVAL!


Friday 10th March
STORIES TO TELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
 BIRMINGHAM REP PRODUCTION


Sunday 12th March
OYSTER BOY
 HASTE THEATRE'S BITTERSWEET TALE


Friday 24th March
DOREEN'S GRAND NIGHT OUT
 ONE OF THE LAST DATES FOR THIS SHOW


Wednesday 29th March
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER'S BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE SHOWCASE


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