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## thelist

Your 16-page week  
by week listings guide

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**UPTOWN FOLK**





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## First Word

### Mamma Mia! It's a double whammy for Midlands Abba fans

Smash-hit Abba musical Mamma Mia! is visiting Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre next month - and then making another Midlands stop-off early next year at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton.

The feelgood award winner shows at the Regent from Tuesday 18 to Saturday 29 April as part of its UK tour.

It then visits the Wolverhampton Grand from Tuesday 6 to Saturday 24 February 2018.

Commenting on the news, Adrian Jackson, the Grand's chief executive and artistic director, said: "The inclusion of Mamma Mia! to our 2018 season will give audiences an indication of the calibre of entertainment they can expect in the near future."

To book tickets for the Regent show, call 0844 871 7649 or visit [atgtickets.com/stoke](http://atgtickets.com/stoke). To grab your seat at the Grand next year, call 01902 429212 or visit [grandtheatre.co.uk](http://grandtheatre.co.uk).



### Move over, The Big Hoot - it's wolves in Wolves...

Thirty wolf sculptures are to be installed around Wolverhampton.

The six feet tall fibre-glass sculptures will be fixed onto plinths and will form part of a trail looping around the heart of the city. The Wolves In Wolves project calls to mind Birmingham's Big Hoot, which saw a series of owl sculptures being positioned at locations throughout the city during 2015.

The wolf sculptures will not be a permanent fixture across Wolverhampton. It's expected that they will be auctioned to raise cash for charity when the project ends in September. For more information, email [info@wolvesinwolves.co.uk](mailto:info@wolvesinwolves.co.uk)

### Major investment planned for city's music venues

Wolverhampton's Grade II listed Civic Halls venue is being given a £14.4million refurbishment.

The refurb will increase capacity in both the Civic Hall and Wulfrun Hall and improve the hospitality areas. It's expected that the work will be completed by October 2018.

Commenting on the refurbishment, Councillor John Reynolds, City of Wolverhampton Council Cabinet Member for City Economy, said: "This is an exciting time in the project, when we will begin to see real changes to the Civic Halls. The halls have

been around since 1938 and are an important part of our visitor economy, providing jobs and generating millions of pounds every year by staging nationally acclaimed shows. The importance of their contribution to the visitor economy was highlighted by Wolverhampton last year making the top 10 in a major survey of the best live music scenes in the UK."

### Open-air concert set to rock Shrewsbury

A host of 1980s pop legends are set to perform in Shropshire this spring. The Let's Rock Shrewsbury retro festival takes place in the town's beautiful Quarry Park on Saturday 27

May. Artists taking part include Billy Ocean, ABC, Tony Hadley, Heaven 17, Nick Heyward, Nik Kershaw, T'Pau, The Real Thing, Altered Images, Brother Beyond and Jaki Graham. Tickets are priced from £35 and are available from [letsrockshrewsbury.com](http://letsrockshrewsbury.com)



### 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 per-

former 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 [lichfield-arts.org.uk](http://lichfield-arts.org.uk)



### Award-winning musical Sunset Boulevard set to return 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 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.

## Opera outdoors at Stafford Festival



Stafford Festival Shakespeare 2017's production of *The Tempest* looks set to 'go down a storm' with theatre-goers - but it isn't the only show being presented on the Stafford Castle open-air stage this year...

An operatic performance of Mozart's mystery drama, *The Magic Flute* - presented by professional touring company Heritage Opera - will also take place at the venue during the festival (on Sunday 2 July).

Mozart and his librettist, E Schikaneder, composed the piece in the late 18th century. They were greatly influenced in their writing by *The Tempest*, a fact which makes *The Magic Flute* the perfect companion piece for this year's Shakespeare production.

*The Tempest* shows at the castle from Thursday 22 June to Saturday 8 July.

For more information, contact the box office on 01785 619080 or visit [staffordfestivalshakespeare.com](http://staffordfestivalshakespeare.com)

## Lichfield to host 10th literary fest

The city of Lichfield is this month hosting its 10th literature festival. Bringing together lectures, workshops and interactive events suitable for people of all ages, the festival's 2017 programme features talks about such diverse subjects as Jane Austen, the Reformation of the Church, nature walks, chocolate and the genetic code.

The event also includes a workshop for youngsters explaining 'how to create your own comic book', a writer's retreat, an interactive quiz night and a special festival party.

"To mark a decade of bringing authors to Lichfield, we're presenting a varied programme which celebrates literature in all forms," says Festival Director Jennifer Mears. "From children's books to award-winning novelists, cutting-edge science to new writing, free workshops to writer's retreats, we hope that visitors will find something here to inspire them."

The Lichfield Literature Festival takes place at various venues across the city from Wednesday 1 to Sunday 5 March.

For further information, visit [lichfieldfestival.org](http://lichfieldfestival.org)

## Celebrity MasterChef co-host at Shrewsbury Flower Show 2017

Straight-talking Celebrity MasterChef co-host John Torode is the headline chef at this year's Shrewsbury Flower Show.

John will be enlightening and entertaining visitors on both days of the popular event, which this year takes place on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 August.

Commenting on the news, Society Secretary Simon Badrock said: "John is a great personality, and no doubt his passion for good food and great discussion will be a huge success in our Food Hall, where he'll be demonstrating alongside some of Shrewsbury's home-grown talent." One of the country's premier horticultural events, the annual Shrewsbury Flower Show delivers a diverse programme of attractions and entertainment for all the family to enjoy.

As usual, both days' proceedings will culminate in a massed bands arena finale and a spectacular firework display.



## A music hall first for Victorian town

Blists Hill Victorian Town is this month hosting the first in a new series of nostalgic music hall evenings.

Taking place in the Forest Glen Pavilion on Friday 24 March as part of Ironbridge Gorge Museums' 50th Anniversary celebrations, the themed evening includes a two-course meal and live piano entertainment, featuring a host of classic Victorian-era songs.

Guests are invited to attend dressed in Victorian costume - so dust off those bustles and crinolines and spruce up your top hats and tails!

Tickets at £25 per adult must be pre-booked by calling 01785 252247 or emailing [nikkib@jenkinsonscaterers.co.uk](mailto:nikkib@jenkinsonscaterers.co.uk). Annual Passport Tickets are not valid for the evening and dogs will not be permitted.

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



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

## Sir Rod at the Greenhouse Meadow

Rod Stewart is set to combine his love of music and football this summer when he performs his latest tour show at Shrewsbury Town FC's Greenhouse Meadow stadium.

The Maggie May star brings *From Gasoline Alley To Another Country* to the venue on Wednesday 7 June. The show is one of only two UK mainland concerts Rod is performing in 2017.

Tickets for the show have gone on sale at [ticketmaster.co.uk](http://ticketmaster.co.uk)



## First Word

### Bake Off winner Candice to headline Newport Show

Great British Bake Off winner Candice Brown has been lined up to appear at Newport Show's Festival Of Food on 8 July.

The former PE teacher will be demonstrating some of her favourite recipes, as well as sharing tips and behind-the-scene stories from the Bake Off series. Commenting on the news, Show President Richard Maddocks said: "With Candice's passion for home cooking, she's a great ambassador for younger generations, so we can't wait to see what she cooks up for us. Although the show has evolved over the years, our agricultural roots remain at its heart, and the Festival Of Food is an extension of that, allowing us to expand on the journey from farm to fork so that people know the important role farmers play."

Earlybird tickets for the event, offering discounts on the gate price, are available to buy now at [newportshow.co.uk](http://newportshow.co.uk).



### Shropshire premiere of Dickens classic

Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society is this month presenting the Shropshire premiere of A Tale Of Two Cities: The Musical.

Based on the famous novel by Charles Dickens, the show tells an epic story of love, sacrifice and redemption, all played out against the bloody backdrop of the French Revolution.

The production is being presented at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn from Wednesday 22 to Saturday 25 March.

### Deaffest 2017

A festival aimed at supporting and developing the talents of emerging and established deaf filmmakers and artists is taking place at the Light House Media Centre in Wolverhampton from 12 to 14 May.

The annual Deaffest event showcases films and documentaries by international filmmakers. It also includes exhibitions, seminars, workshops and parties. For more information, visit [deaffest.co.uk](http://deaffest.co.uk)

### Lulu heading out on tour

Scottish singing star Lulu will this autumn visit Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre as part of her biggest-ever UK tour.

The Grammy-nominated performer, whose career hits include Shout and To Sir With Love, will appear at Theatre Severn on Wednesday 25 October and Wolves Grand on Sunday the 29th.

Commenting on her All About The Music tour, Lulu said, "I absolutely love playing live and can't wait to be out on the road again in autumn this year. My life has always been all about the music, so come and join me again - or for the first time - and let's have a great night together."

### Spinning a yarn in Staffordshire

A 600-acre farm near Penkridge in Staffordshire is set to host a brand new wool and yarn festival.

Wool@J13 will take place just one mile from Junction 13 of the M6 - hence the event's name - on Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 May.

The festival is being organised by Staffordshire-based wool artist Ingrid Wagner in collaboration with Val James, who runs a successful farm attraction.

"We want to offer visitors a great experience," says Ingrid. "The opportunity to discover new exhibitors is a

huge part of that, so we encouraged those who are taking the plunge and setting up wool and yarn-based businesses to be a part of our event. Overall, we've had a great response from exhibitors both well-known and brand new, so the shopping experience really will be buzzing."

For more details and to book tickets, visit [wool-j13.co.uk](http://wool-j13.co.uk).

### Community auditions for Brassed Off

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre is next month holding auditions for selected roles in a brand new production of Brassed Off.

The auditions take place at Newhampton Arts Centre on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 April. Auditionees may be required to attend both audition days. Those who are selected will also need to attend all rehearsals for which they're called within the rehearsal period. Anyone wishing to audition must also be available for all performances.

Brassed Off is the first major show to be produced in-house at the Grand for more than 40 years. It runs at the venue from Wednesday 23 August to Saturday 2 September.

### New show displays Seven Ancient Wonders of the World - Lego style!

Visitors to Wolverhampton Art Gallery will be able to check out the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World next month.

The famous constructions, which include the Colossus of Rhodes, the Statue of Zeus and the perhaps-mythical Hanging Gardens of Babylon, all feature in a new exhibition celebrating the versatility of Lego bricks. Brick Wonders will also include models of modern and natural wonders, including the Great Barrier Reef. The exhibition shows from 7 April to 4 July.

### Time to get those walking boots out...

The Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival is returning for a 12th year late next month.

The popular event takes place across nine days and offers participants the chance to enjoy a programme of themed walks and family-friendly trails.

The festival comprises 57 walks and takes place from Saturday 29 April to Sunday 7 May. All walks are free but pre-booking is essential. To reserve a place, contact the Ironbridge Visitor Information Centre by email at [tic@ironbridge.org.uk](mailto:tic@ironbridge.org.uk) or call 01952 433 424. For more details about the walks, visit [ironbridgewalking.co.uk](http://ironbridgewalking.co.uk)

# What's On HIGHLIGHTS

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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**

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

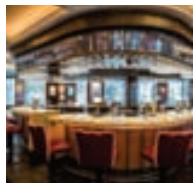
A company which owns a popular celebrity haunt in London has confirmed that it plans to open a new restaurant in Birmingham.

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.



## Michelin-starred Birmingham chef aiming to get saucy in his home city of Lichfield

- Lichfield-born Michelin-starred chef Richard Turner is this month heading back to his home city to showcase his culinary skills at a special dining event.
- Taking place at Lichfield's Wine House restaurant on Monday 20 March, the Sauce Supper Club evening will see Richard presenting a menu to reflect the relaxed style of dining he favours at his award-winning Harborne restaurant, Turners At 69.
- "Our new-look restaurant has proved a great hit," says Richard.
- "We're open for more hours and serving the best produce available at competitive prices. I look forward to welcoming old friends and new at the Wine House to showcase our new style."
- The Sauce Supper Club is a series of 'pop-up kitchen' events bringing together 'the finest ingredients and chefs to deliver a memorable gourmet experience'.



## REVIEW: Dorrington's Horseshoes Shropshire favourite serves up the best of British with a personal touch

With the site dating back over 300 years, popular Shropshire restaurant Dorrington's Horseshoes prides itself on serving authentic British dishes using high-quality, locally sourced ingredients. Having visited a number of times previously, and aware that it was now under new ownership, I was intrigued to see what the venue's latest incumbent had done with the place. On arrival, the friendly and wel-

coming owner, Tanya, introduced herself and gave us a bit of background information about the venue, explaining how long she'd had it for and what she'd changed since taking over. We were certainly off to a good start. It's personal touches like that which really make for a memorable visit. To start, I opted for the butcher's special black pudding, served in bacon with a peppercorn sauce and bread and butter. It was

absolutely delicious. The black pudding was warm and melted in the mouth, the sauce was a perfect accompaniment. It was a simple dish, executed perfectly - a theme that continued throughout the evening.

My partner opted for the Russian red caviar 'Ikra', served on a bed of smoked salmon, with bread, butter and fresh lemon. Both the caviar and the salmon were of a high quality, and the dish proved to be another tasty plate of food. For my main course, I chose the slow-roasted Welsh leg of lamb, served with butter mashed potatoes and minted Madeira sauce. It was one of the nicest lamb dishes I've ever tasted. The meat was cooked to perfection, providing a gorgeous flavour and texture. There was a lot of it too, which is always a winner in my book! The dish came with a side of seasonal vegetables and boiled potatoes (in addition to the mash) - a really enjoyable main course indeed.

My partner chose the premium fish fillet burger, served with homemade tartar sauce, triple cooked chips and a salad. As with the lamb, the fish was cooked perfectly, the batter crisp to just the right degree. The tartar sauce was delicious, the chips nicely cooked.

Although both suitably full, we had just about enough room to squeeze in dessert. I chose the

lemon-and-lime cheesecake served with double cream. My partner opted for the Belgium waffle with toffee sauce and ice cream. They both proved to be as naughty as they sounded, extremely tasty and a great end to the evening.

As well as the restaurant, the Horseshoes features five rooms that can be rented out per night or on a weekly or monthly basis. The restaurant can also be rented out privately and boasts ample space for live music entertainment, making it ideal for parties and drinks receptions alike. In addition, a private dining room can cater for up to 14 guests, for smaller, more intimate events.

Overall, our visit to Dorrington's Horseshoes was a very enjoyable one. The food was fantastic and the service exemplary. We'll certainly be returning in the future to sample more of the top-quality dishes on offer.

*Lauren Foster*

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall value	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>OVERALL</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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## Bridgnorth set to sing the blues

The Shropshire town of Bridgnorth is set to get its own blues-themed cafe. Specialising in authentic American cuisine, The Riverside Blues Cafe & Music Rooms will take its inspiration from pre-1950s southern American delta blues music.

The venue is owned by Wolverhampton-based Ashley Edwards - a member of Midlands blues band Creepin' Six - and will host live music as well as guitar, drums, vocal, bass and piano lessons. The cafe is expected to open late next month or in early May.



## Secret Supper event aiming to help Shrewsbury-based charity

A popular charity event that sees guests dining in three 'secret' restaurants in just one evening returns to Shrewsbury next month.

The Secret Supper is being held in aid of Shrewsbury-based charity Self Help Africa, an organisation that works in nine of the continent's countries to help rid rural Africa of famine and poverty.

Commenting on the event, Self Help Africa's Fundraising Officer, Steph Smith, said: "Marking

the launch of the 2017 Shrewsbury Food Festival, this special dining experience begins with a welcome drink at Tanners Wines before we visit three 'secret' restaurants.

"The event is now in its fourth year and has grown year on year. In 2016, we welcomed 228 guests across six restaurants and raised an amazing £4,629 for Self Help Africa."

Secret Supper takes place on Tuesday 25 April. For further details, visit [selfhelpafrica.org](http://selfhelpafrica.org)



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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

**EASTNOR CHILLI FESTIVAL** Now in its sixth 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, the event is a celebration of 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

**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

**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

**TELFOOD FESTIVAL** 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 Georgian 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

## Fancy something stronger?

**STOURBRIDGE GIN FESTIVAL** Over 80 gins will be available, sourced from all over the British Isles and beyond, with a wide range of mixers and fruits to match, Thurs 6 - Sun 9 April, Green Duck Beer Co., Stourbridge

**THE BOATHOUSE CIDER FESTIVAL** The pub's first ever cider festival, with a great selection of ciders to choose from, Fri 14 April, The Boathouse, Shrewsbury

**THE NEW INN GIN FESTIVAL** With over 70 gins from the UK and overseas making an appearance, the festival runs over two days this year due to demand, Sat 27 - Sun 28 May, The New Inn, Newport

**GIN FESTIVAL STOKE** Gin Festival is making its first ever trip to Stoke-on-Trent and features more than 100 gins, including some which aren't available anywhere else, Fri 23 - Sat 24 June, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**BIRMINGHAM RUM FESTIVAL** After a sellout first year, the festival returns with rum sampling, cocktail mixology, live music and street food, Sat 1 July, The Cuban Embassy, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM COFFEE FESTIVAL** Sat 1 - Sun 2 July, The Custard Factory, Birmingham

**STAFFORD BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL** Celebrating its 10th year and featuring a wide selection of beers, ciders, perry and country wines, Thurs 27 - Sun 29 July, Blessed William Howard School, Stafford

**BIRMINGHAM WHISKY FESTIVAL** A chance to sample the best of Scottish homegrown whiskies and a selection from all over the world, Sat 25 November, The Council House, Birmingham

**SHREWSBURY BEER FESTIVAL** Expect plenty of rare and exotic beers, plus cider, perry and country wines, Thurs 28 - Sat 30 September, Morris Hall, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**CODSALL BEER FESTIVAL** Forty individual real ales from independent and local breweries and ciders from across the West Midlands and beyond, Fri 6 - Sat 7 October, Codsall Village Hall, Wolverhampton

**SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST AND BEER FESTIVAL** From the organisers of Shrewsbury Food Festival comes a brand new festival with over 150 real ales, ciders, bubbles and more, Fri 6 - Sun 8 October, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

## Fatherson

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Mon 13 March

Glaswegian three-piece Fatherson have made plenty of waves on the music scene since their inception in 2010, along the way releasing debut album *I Am An Island* in 2013 and playing support slots for Frightened Rabbit, Twin Atlantic and Enter Shikari.

They released their second album, *Open Book*, to great critical acclaim in summer 2016, and have undertaken this current headline European tour after supporting Augustines last winter.

"It's always strange, especially when you've already released an album," guitarist and vocalist Ross Leighton tells *The Student Pocket Guide*. "People will come see you because they wanna hear the songs they know. If you go see a band under a new album cycle and they sort of play 60 percent new and 40 percent old tunes, ya know people are like, 'this is rubbish' - so we're trying to keep them to a minimum."



## Jarrod Dickenson

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury,  
Mon 27 March

Texas-born Jarrod Dickenson's critically acclaimed album, *The Lonesome Traveler*, saw him tour with Laura Marling (see opposite page), David Bromberg, John Fullbright, Duke Special and David Ford.

His EP, *Songs From Willow St*, enjoyed plenty of BBC airplay from radio hosts including Cerys Matthews and Dermot O'Leary. Dickenson returns to Shrewsbury's Henry Tudor House following his sell-out show there last year.

## 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.



## Ian Prowse

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton,  
Fri 24 March

English singer-songwriter Ian is currently frontman of Liverpool pop/rock group Amsterdam, having previously played with Cheshire indie rockers Pele.

The 25th anniversary of Pele's debut album, *Fireworks*, is being celebrated with a limited-edition reissue - including a vinyl pressing and live bootleg album - and this current UK tour. Prowse and his six-piece band will play the album in its entirety, as well as some Amsterdam classics.





## Craig David

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,  
Fri 24 March

Best known for hits such as 7 Days, I'm Walking Away and Re-Rewind with Artful Dodger, Craig David has sold over 15 million albums, achieved 16 top-ten hits and reached multi-platinum status in more than 20 countries. See him in Birmingham as part of his Following My Intuition arena tour, his biggest in the UK for 15 years.



## 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.



## Laura Marling

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Thurs 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.

## Stiff Little Fingers

The Robin, Bilston, Tues 14 March



This punk-rock group from Belfast haven't had the smoothest of careers. They started out as a schoolboy band called Highway Star, doing rock covers until they discovered punk. After six years and four albums, they split up, reforming five years later in 1987. Lead singer Jake Burns is the only member to have been with the band throughout. Despite major personnel changes, 2014 saw the release of their 10th studio album, No Going Back.

## 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.



## Halle Orchestra: The Firebird

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 24 March

The Manchester-based Halle has been a real force to be reckoned with since performing its first concert over 150 years ago. Although the orchestra is renowned for its affinity with English music - particularly the works of Elgar and Delius - it's here presenting a concert featuring pieces by Sibelius (*En Saga*), Rachmaninov (*Piano Concerto No 2*) and Stravinsky (*The Firebird: 1945 Suite*).

Lahav Shani leads the orchestra on what's being described as 'a gloriously colourful ride'. Russian classical pianist Sofya Gulyak (pictured) performs the Rachmaninov concerto.

## Birmingham Bach Choir

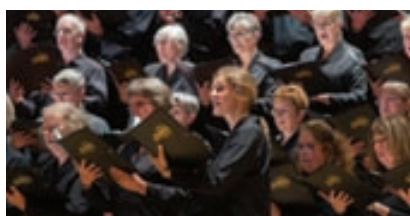
Lichfield Cathedral, Sat 11 March

One of the city's oldest and most distinguished musical groups here gets its collective teeth into a work which has never before been performed in the Midlands. Of the four Passions which JS Bach wrote, only two - St Matthew and St John - have survived in their entirety.

The St Mark Passion is a 'parody' work, having been mainly compiled from music Bach had already composed for other purposes.

First performed in Leipzig on Good Friday 1731, the score of the music has since disappeared, leaving only the text by Christian Friedrich Henrici, writing under the pen name of 'Picander'.

The survival of Henrici's libretto has allowed Bach's music to be reconstructed, a task undertaken by Andor Gomme in 1997. In doing so, he made use of recitatives and turba choruses from the St Mark Passion of Reinhard Keiser, an older contemporary of Bach. Paul Spicer conducts.



## Carducci String Quartet

Shrewsbury School, Sun 26 March



Performing around 100 international concerts each year, the 2016 recipients of the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society award for chamber music are regarded as one of the most successful string quartets in the business. Indeed, the *Washington Post* described their performance in a recent concert as 'extravagantly beautiful'.

The quartet here make their first of three Shropshire Music season appearances, presenting Beethoven's stormy *Serioso* quartet, Shostakovich's cryptic 11th quartet and Brahms' epic piano quintet masterpiece.

## 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.



## Ensemble 360

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs, Mon 13 March

Ensemble 360 has a fast-growing reputation for its ability to engage with different audiences and age groups. Its 11 internationally recognised musicians share the belief that concerts should be informal, friendly, relaxed and, where possible, performed 'in the round'.

The programme features works by Mozart, William Hurlstone, Schumann, Sofia Gubaidalina and Glinka.



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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 doffs 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.



# 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**





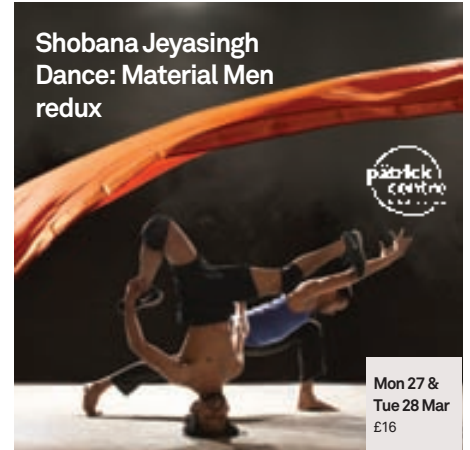
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## One Love: The Bob Marley Musical

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

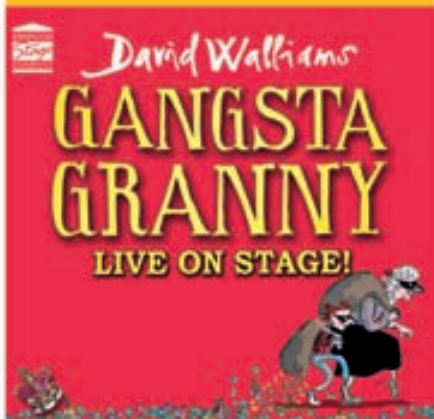
EastEnders' Shane Richie and Strictly Come Dancing's Laura Whitmore (pictured) spearhead this new stage adaptation of Peter James's ingenious novel. With more than 17 million copies of his books sold worldwide, James's reputation as a talented crime-fiction author was further enhanced last year when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



# GREAT SHOWS COMING UP AT WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE

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DAVID WALLIAMS  
**GANGSTA GRANNY**



MON 3 – SAT 8 APRIL

**THE PLAY THAT GOES  
WRONG**



MON 10 APRIL

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA  
GILBERT & SULLIVAN'S  
**PATIENCE**



TUE 11 APRIL

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA  
PUCCINI'S  
**TOSCA**



FRI 14 APRIL

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR  
**MESSIAH**  
CONDUCTOR PAUL SPICER



SAT 15 APRIL

**REAL DIAMOND**  
THE NEIL DIAMOND ROCKS TOUR



SUN 16 APRIL

**CIRQUE DU HILARIOUS**  
COMEDY EXPLOSION



TUE 25 – SAT 29 APRIL

**ROCK OF AGES**  
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SUN 30 APRIL

**THE SOLID SILVER  
60s SHOW**



# 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**



## 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 tyrannosaur.

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 bandmates 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**

# Slam Dunk

— 20 FESTIVAL 17 —

## ENTER SHIKARI

A 'TAKE TO THE SKIES' TEN YEAR CELEBRATION

don broco

Bowling for Soup

NECKDEEP

LESS THAN JAKE

Reel Big Fish

BEARTOOTH TONIGHT ALIVE

Against Me! **BRONX** **GOLDFINGER** MAD CADDIES

THE MOVIE LIFE WE the Kings CUTE **AIM FOR** MEMPHIS **AND FIRE**

SET IT OFF CITIZEN Turnover I PREVAIL MC LARS

TROPIC EYES LIKE PACIFIC ICE NINE KILLS OCEANS **THE ALASKA**

PLUS MANY MORE ARTISTS ACROSS 8 STAGES TO BE ANNOUNCED

### MIDLANDS

SAT 27TH MAY  
BIRMINGHAM - THE NEC

GENTING ARENA,  
NEC HALL 1  
+ OUTDOOR STAGES

### NORTH

SUN 28TH MAY  
LEEDS - CITY CENTRE

MILLENNIUM SQUARE,  
FIRST DIRECT ARENA + O2 ACADEMY  
LEEDS BECKETT UNI + OUTDOOR STAGES

### SOUTH

BANK HOLIDAY MON 29TH MAY  
HATFIELD - THE FORUM

UNIVERSITY OF HERTS CAMPUS,  
22 MINUTE DIRECT TRAIN FROM  
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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.

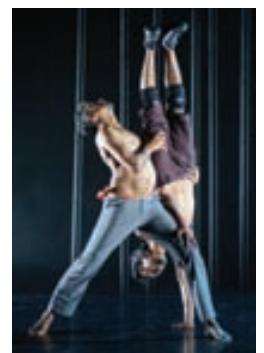
## Material Men: Redux

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](http://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**

**Win!**

To enter all competitions go to [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)

### Tickets to RAF Cosford Air Show



Closes Monday 5 June

### Tickets to Blood Brothers



Closes Wednesday 1 March

### Tickets to Olly Murs



Closes Friday 17 March

### Tickets to Snow In Midsummer



Closes Tuesday 7 March

### Tickets to Miniatura



Closes Thursday 9 March

### Tickets to ICHF events



Closes Friday 10 March

### 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



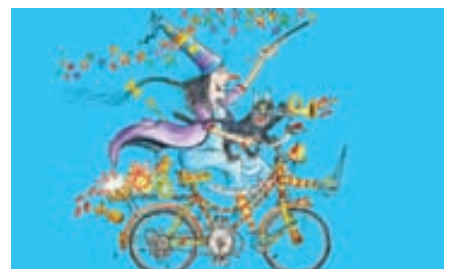
Closes Monday 6 March

### Tickets to The Machine Stops



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### Tickets to Winnie & Wilbur



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**



### 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 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**



## The Salesman

CERT 12a (124 mins)

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



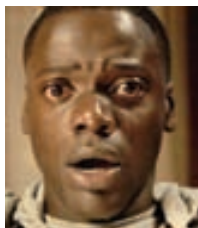
Nominated for an Oscar for best foreign language film, *The Salesman* is the story of a couple whose lives take a downturn when they move into a new apartment. An unexpected visitor to the flat turns out to be looking for a prostitute... From the director of the highly acclaimed *About Elly*, *A Separation*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

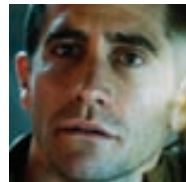
Released Fri 24 March



## 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)



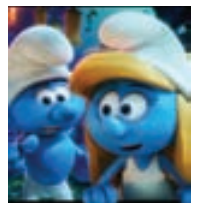
Like *Cinderella* and *Beauty And The Beast*, *Ghost In The Shell* is a live-action adaptation of a cartoon, itself based on the manga comic. Here, Scarlett Johansson plays a counter-cyberterrorist known as The Major, who happens to be a cyborg. It's her job to pinpoint and bring down a diabolical computer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



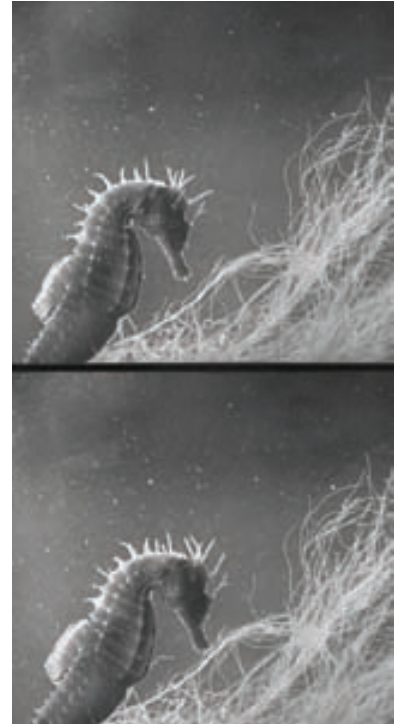
## Jean Painlevé

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  
© The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved. DACS 2016



Jean Painlevé, film stills from *The Seahorse* (1931)  
© Archives Jean Painlevé, Paris  
Image courtesy of Archives Jean Painlevé, Paris

**Jean Painlevé**  
15 March – 4 June 2017

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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.**

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**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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Offer applies to the standard ticket price of £15.

# the list

Your week to week  
listings guide

March 2017



Emily Portman & The Coracle Band at Ludlow Assembly Rooms - Monday 27 March

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

## What's On

Wed 1 to Sun 5 March



Codsall Village Dining Club at  
Village Coffee & Bakery, Codsall  
**Sun 5 March**

Mon 6 to Sun 12 March



An Evening with Levison Wood  
at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre  
**Wed 8 March**

Mon 13 to Sun 19 March



Shrewsbury 10K in  
Shrewsbury Town Centre  
**Sun 19 March**

Mon 20 to Fri 31 March



Gangsta Granny at  
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre  
**Wed 22 - Sun 26 March**

### THROUGHOUT MARCH

## Visual Arts

### Bilston Craft Gallery

**BOWLS, BUCKETS AND BEDSTEADS - BILSTON INDUSTRIES BETWEEN THE WARS** The period between the wars is often remembered for economic depression, but Bilston industries large and small kept producing the goods. Featuring products from firms such as Beldray, Sankey and Phoenix Glass, until Sun 26 Mar

### Newcastle Borough Museum & Art Gallery

**BETWEEN THE LINES - OUTLINE ART** Outline Art are a group of professional artists who live on the borders of Cheshire East and Staffordshire. The exhibition features work in different styles across a wide range of disciplines, until Wed 15 Mar

**TIME PASSING-TREES** Gunhild Thomson uses photography to record changes in nature. She produces a series of photos, taken from the same position, over a period of time, documenting the changes through the seasons, until Wed 15 Mar

### New Art Gallery - Walsall

**SCENES OF WALSALL** Many scenes of Walsall have been collected since the establishment of Walsall's public art collection in 1892. To help celebrate the Permanent Collection's 125th birthday, a range of these are here on display, from a lithograph of Walsall High Street in 1845 to contemporary photographs, until Sun 16 July

### Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

**NEW ANN SUTTON: ON THE GRID** Touring exhibition bringing the work of Ann Sutton back to her roots in Stoke-on-Trent and showcasing a new body of work inspired by her travels, Sat 18 Mar - Sun 27 Aug

### Shire Hall Gallery - Stafford

**NEW ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY MEMBERS BIENNIAL** Exhibition showcasing work from RPS members, from digital to analogue, including alternative processes, phone photography and scientific work, Sat 4 - Sun 26 Mar

### Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

**RHYME AROUND THE WORLD** Featuring artwork by best-loved, best-selling and acclaimed illustrators, including; Robert Ingpen, Shirley Hughes, Axel Scheffler, Emily Gravett, Mini Grey, Jessica Ahlberg and Polly Dunbar, until Sun 7 May

### The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**NEW BURTON & SOUTH DERBYSHIRE COLLEGE (BSDC) FORMAT** Showcasing

a selection of work produced in response to the 2017 edition of FORMAT photography festival, Fri 24 Mar - Sat 22 Apr, The Brewhouse Arts Centre

### Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**NEW MICHAEL BRENNAND WOOD - SEEDS OF MEMORY** Exhibition featuring retrospective pieces including Archive and The Art Of The Stitch alongside nine new specially commissioned works, Sat 11 Mar - Sun 7 May

### Other VISUAL ARTS

**SHROPSHIRE ART SOCIETY EXHIBITION** Showcasing the work of Marion Reed, Helen Sample and John Willetts, until Fri 3 Mar, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

**BRIERLEY HILL SOCIETY OF ARTISTS EXHIBITION** Featuring contributions from 24 artists working in a variety of media, including watercolours, oils, pastels and acrylics, until Sun 12 Mar, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

**TEMPERED NOT QUENCHED - THE BATTLE FOR BILSTON'S STEELWORKS** An exhibition exploring an overlooked chapter in Britain's industrial relations history, until Wed 29 Mar, Wolverhampton City Archives

**THREE COUNTIES OPEN PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION 2017** Images by talented photographers from Staffordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire, until Wed 29 Mar, Keele University

**MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION - EVOLUTION EXPLORED** The work of internationally renowned photographers reaches new audiences on the streets of Shrewsbury in a special exhibition inspired by the town's links to Charles Darwin, until Sun 23 Apr, The Square, Shrewsbury

**SIR ALAN COBHAM'S FLYING CIRCUS: A LIFE OF A PIONEERING AVIATOR** Highly visual display about pioneering aviator Sir Alan Cobham's life and his many notable achievements, showcasing some of the 'treasures' from the collection, until Sun 30 Apr, RAF Cosford, Shifnal

**NEW CONVERSATION WORKS** Art International was founded by Svetlana Elantseva in 2009. The aim of the group is to promote international understanding and co-operation through art, Thurs 2 Mar - Mon 3 Apr, Qube Gallery, Oswestry

**NEW PRINT & COLLECTORS** Featuring contributions from Richard Bawden, Melvyn Evans, Cameron Short and Andrew Waddington, plus work from The Redfern Gallery, Sat 4 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, Twenty Twenty Gallery, Much Wenlock

**NEW CARL ANSLOOS SOLO EXHIBITION** Carl's first solo exhibition after returning from two years living and painting in Valencia, Spain, Mon 6 - Sat 25 Mar, The Bear Steps Gallery

## Gigs

**BLUE OCTOBER** Wed 1 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SCORPZ** Wed 1 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**TALL SHIPS** Wed 1 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**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

**THE BUDAPEST CAFÉ ORCHESTRA** Wed 1 Mar, Keele University, Staffordshire

**CHRIS WOOD** Wed 1 Mar, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

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

**WEDNESDAY 13** Wed 1 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**STEVIE NIMMO TRIO** Wed 1 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**CILLA AND THE SHADES** Wed 1 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**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

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

**THE ORWELLS** Thurs 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**TWIN WILD** Thurs 2 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**OSWESTRY YOUTH MUSIC FESTIVAL** Thurs 2 Mar, Oswestry Showground, Shropshire

**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

**DREAMWAVE WITH THE KINGS PISTOL, EYRE LLEW & GOYA** Fri 3 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

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

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

**DECADE** Fri 3 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

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

**BLACK STAR RIDERS** Fri 3 Mar, William Aston Hall, Shrewsbury

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

**THE BARRON KNIGHTS** Fri 3 Mar, Lichfield Garrick, Staffordshire

**BLACK CELEBRATION** Fri 3 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

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

**ANDY MILLS** Fri 3 Mar, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**FRAN THE MAN** Fri 3 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

**MAGIC DOOR** Fri 3 Mar, Lab 11, Birmingham

**LIMEHOUSE LIZZY** Fri 3 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE CLONE ROSES** Fri 3 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**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, B'ham

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

**CHAS N DAVE** Sat 4 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse

Theatre

**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

**NIBBS & EDDY** Sat 4 Mar, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**GUNS OR ROSES** Sat 4 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

**MAETLOAF & THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS** Sat 4 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**MUMBO JUMBO** Sat 4 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**TOOTHLESS** Sat 4 Mar, O2 Institute, B'ham

**KEHLANI** Sat 4 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

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

**MALARKEY** Sat 4 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE 80'S INVASION TOUR** Sat 4 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

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

**AN EVENING WITH ANNE REID** Sun 5 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, North Shropshire

**BLAZE BAYLEY** Sun 5 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**KRIS DREVER** Sun 5 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**LUKAS GRAHAM** Sun 5 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

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

**MARRY WATERSON & DAVID A JAYCOCK** Sun 5 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**WITH CONFIDENCE** Sun 5 Mar, The Asylum, Birmingham

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

**EZIO** Sun 5 Mar, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury



## 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, Brotons, 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

**BBC PHILHARMONIC** Featuring Diego Mathuez (conductor) & Laura van de Heijden (soloist). Programme includes works by Berlioz, Elgar & Mussorgsky (arr. Ravel), Fri 3 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



**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

**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

**AIDA** Presented by Ellen Kent and Amphitheatre Productions, Sat 4 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, 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, B'ham

**HENNING WEHN** Thurs 2 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**GEORGE EGG, CAIMH MCDONNELL, RAHUL KOHLI, STU WOODINGS & BARRY DODDS** Thurs 2 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

**KUM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY NIGHT** Thurs 2 Mar, Stourbridge Town Hall

**MARK NELSON, THE NOISE NEXT DOOR & TWO COMICS TBC** Thurs 2 Mar, The George Hotel, Lichfield

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

**JOHN ROBERTSON, PHIL LUCAS** Fri 3 Mar, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

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

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

**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

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 4 Mar, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**STUART GOLDSMITH** Sun 5 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DALISO CHAPONDA, LOU CONRAN, GAVIN WEBSTER & DAN NIGHTINGALE** Sun 5 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

## Theatre

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

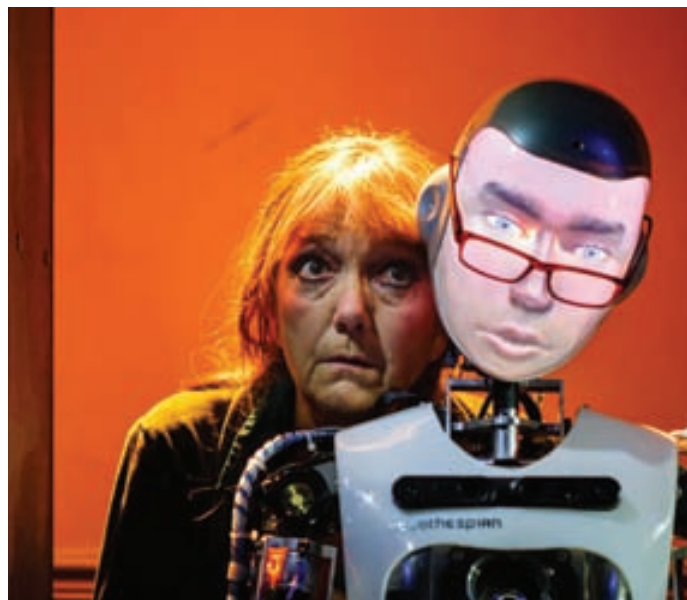
**THE WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION** The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Agatha Christie's most celebrated courtroom drama, Sat 25 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**MACBETH** The Nonentities present an amateur staging of Shakespeare's bloodiest play, Mon 27 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**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



Spillikin - Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton and Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

**ROUND THE HORNE: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR** Take a step back in time and experience this radio comedy classic live, Wed 1 Mar, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

**BEAUTIFUL MONSTER** UK premiere of Karlton Parris' darkly brooding play, set on the eve of Mary Shelley's death, Wed 1 Mar, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

**MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL** All-singing, all-dancing musical starring Cheryl Ferguson, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley & Ruth Berkeley, Wed 1 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**I AM BEAST** Sparkle & Dark fuse life-sized puppetry and live music in an award-winning exploration of the power of grief and childish imagination, Wed 1 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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

**HOLMES & WATSON** Stuart Fortey's blend of murder, mystery & comedy, Thurs 2 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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, B'ham

**MARILYN** Gwyn Edwards' new play, based on the life of Marilyn Monroe, Fri 3 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**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

**LAKME** Swansea City Opera present Delibes' 'jewel of an opera', Fri 3 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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, Birmingham

**HAIRY FAIRY TALES** Hairy Fairy Tales use rhyme, song, music, puppetry, mime and magical transformations to retell a series of classic fairytales, Sat 4 Mar, Ellesmere College Arts Centre, North Shropshire

**AIDA** Ellen Kent and Amphitheatre Productions present a new interpretation of Verdi's classic opera. Olga

# WHAT'S ON AT THEATRE SEVERN...

FRI 3 MAR



Swansea City opera return with this ravishing French opera, set in India during the 1880s amid religious tensions and conflict.

TUE 7 - WED 8 MAR

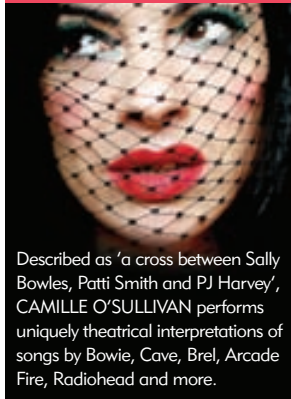
## Vamos Theatre present THE BEST THING



A swinging sixties story about sexual revolution, mistaken morals and broken hearts, from one of the country's must-see theatre companies.

THU 9 MAR

## CAMILLE O'SULLIVAN THE CARNY DREAM



Described as 'a cross between Sally Bowles, Patti Smith and PJ Harvey', CAMILLE O'SULLIVAN performs uniquely theatrical interpretations of songs by Bowie, Cave, Brel, Arcade Fire, Radiohead and more.

FRI 17 MAR

## THE NOISE NEXT DOOR UPROAR!

Side-splitting jokes, jaw-dropping characters, and mind-blowing songs...



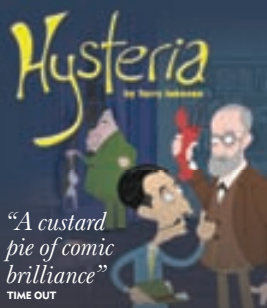
TUE 28 MAR - SAT 1 APR



**X FACTOR WINNER**  
**JOE MCDERRY**  
DONS THE COVETED COAT!  
Lyrics by **TIM RICE** Music by **ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER**

FRI 7 - SUN 9 APR

London Classic Theatre presents



"A custard pie of comic brilliance"  
TIME OUT

This Olivier Award-winning comedy and hilarious farce explores the fallout when the brilliant minds of Sigmund Freud and Salvador Dali collide.

CHECK THE [WEBSITE](#) FOR FULL LISTINGS



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THEATRE SEVERN, FRANKWELL QUAY, SHREWSBURY SY3 8FT

Birmingham Contemporary Music Group

## Oliver Knussen Conducts Grime

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

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

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**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*

**Box Office:**  
**0121 780 3333**  
[bcmg.org.uk](http://bcmg.org.uk)

[facebook.com/bcmgfans](https://www.facebook.com/bcmgfans)  
[@bcmg](https://twitter.com/bcmg)

VIENNA FESTIVAL BALLET

# CINDERELLA

Mon 7 March **ROSES THEATRE, TEWKESBURY** 01684 295074 / [roses-theatre.org](http://roses-theatre.org)  
Wed 8 March **OAKINGATES THEATRE (THE PLACE)** 01952 382382 / [theplacetheatre.com](http://theplacetheatre.com)  
Mon 30 March **BEDWORTH CIVIC HALL** 024 7637 6707 / [civichallinbedworth.wordpress.com](http://civichallinbedworth.wordpress.com)  
Mon 17 April **EVESHAM ARTS CENTRE** 01386 446944 / [eveshamartscentre.co.uk](http://eveshamartscentre.co.uk)  
Sun 23 April **ARTRIX, BROMSGROVE** 01527 577330 / [artrix.co.uk](http://artrix.co.uk)

[WWW.VIENNAFESTIVALBALLET.COM](http://WWW.VIENNAFESTIVALBALLET.COM)

Perrier, Alyona Kistenyova & Liza Kadelnik star, Sat 4 Mar, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**SPILLIKIN** Pipeline use theatre to explore big questions of love, death and technology, Sat 4 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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, B'ham

**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

**AN EVENING WITH ANNE REID** Join the star of Dinnerladies and Last Tango In Halifax for an evening of cabaret, Sun 5 March, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

## 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:

**20TH CENTURY WOMEN (15)** Comedy/Drama. Starring Elle Fanning, Alia Shawkat. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 2 Mar

**LION (PG)** Drama. Starring Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman. Malvern Theatres, until Thurs 2 Mar; Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 9 Mar

**JACKIE (15)** Biography/Drama. Starring Natalie Portman, Peter Sarsgaard. mac, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Mar; Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Mar

**LOVING (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring Ruth Negga, Joel Edgerton. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, 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

**A MONSTER CALLS (12a)** Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Sigourney Weaver, Felicity Jones. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 1 Mar

**FIRE IN THE BLOOD (PG)** Documentary. Starring Zackie Achmat, Peter Mugenyi. Free entry. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Wed 1 Mar

**THE CARD (U)** Comedy. Starring Alec Guinness, Glynis Johns. Free entry. Stoke Film Theatre, Wed 1 Mar

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

**PASSENGERS (12a)** Adventure/Sci-Fi. Starring Jennifer Lawrence, Chris Pratt. Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, Thurs 2 Mar

**STARFISH (15)** Drama. Starring Joanne Froggatt, Tom Riley. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 1 Mar

**LIVE BY NIGHT (15)** Crime/Drama. Starring Ben Affleck, Elle Fanning. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 2 Mar

**WHITE GOD (15)** Drama/Thriller. Starring Zsófia Psotta, Sándor Zsótér. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 3 Mar

**MY FERAL HEART (12a)** Drama. Starring Suzanna Hamilton, Pixie Le Knot. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 3 Mar

**BLOW UP (15)** Drama/Crime. Starring David Hemmings, Vanessa Redgrave. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 3 Mar

**WAITING FOR YOU (15)** Drama/Mystery. Starring Colin Morgan, Fanny Ardant. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 3 Mar

**DENIAL (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring Rachel Weisz, Tom Wilkinson. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Mar

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

**BRITAIN ON FILM: RAILWAYS (U)** Documentary. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 4 Mar

**ROCK DOG (PG)** Animation/Comedy. With the voices of Luke Wilson, Eddie Izzard. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 4 Mar

**THE ODYSSEY (12a)** Adventure, Biography. Starring Lambert Wilson, Audrey Tautou. Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 4 Mar

**LA LA LAND (12a)** Drama/Musical. Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Fri 3 Mar; The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Mar

**THE GENERAL (U)** Adventure/Comedy. Starring Buster Keaton, Marion Mack. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sun 5 Mar

**LADY MACBETH (18)** Drama. Starring



Cirque Du Soleil: Varekai - Genting Arena, Birmingham

Florence Pugh, Christopher Fairbank. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire, 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

**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

**MOSAIC WORKSHOP WITH LOCAL ARTIST LINDSEY KENNEDY** Learn about making beautiful glass and mirror tile

mosaics, Sat 4 Mar, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

**TEDDY BEAR RESTORATION & ADVICE CLINIC** Bring your teddy bear along for free advice on identification, age or 'clinical' needs, Sat 4 Mar, Merrythought Shop, Ironbridge, Shropshire

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

**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

**ELIZABETHAN LIVING HISTORY EVENT** The house is brought to life with re-enactments of Elizabethan life, complete with costumes, music and dancing, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Mar, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

**THE MONKEY FOREST OWL EXPERIENCE** Learn all about these beautiful birds, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Mar, Trentham Monkey Forest, Stoke-on-Trent

**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

**ZOENSO SKETCHBOOK SATURDAYS** Sat 4 Mar - Sat 8 Apr, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**SPRING TRAIL** Find out how Attingham Park bursts into life, in a riot of colour and growth, Sat 4 Mar - Fri 2 Jun, Attingham Park, Shropshire

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

**CODSALL VILLAGE DINING CLUB** Sun 5 Mar, Village Coffee, Bar & Kitchen, Codsall

**THE IMPERIAL COMMERCIALS VOLKSWAGEN DONINGTON RALLY** Sun 5 Mar, Donington Park Circuit, Derby

### 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

**80'S INVASION** Tues 7 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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

**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, W'hampton

**WAYNE DILKS AS GEORGE MICHAEL** Thurs 9 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**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 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

**SOMEONE LIKE YOU - THE ADELE SONGBOOK** Thurs 9 Mar, Victoria Hall, Staffordshire

**CAMILLE O'SULLIVAN** Thurs 9 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ARGLE BARGLE** Fri 10 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PROPAGANDA** Fri 10 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**NORMAN JAY** Fri 10 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**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

**THE PIGEON DETECTIVES** Fri 10 Mar, The Sugarmill, Staffordshire

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

**NINE BELOW ZERO** Fri 10 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**MARTIN SIMPSON** Fri 10 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**THE FALLEN STATE** Fri 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**GLASS ANIMALS** Fri 10 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DAVE BUSBY** Fri 10 Mar, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**REACH** Fri 10 Mar, Eleven, Staffordshire

**SING FOR A CAUSE** Fri 10 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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, Irish Centre, Birmingham

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

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

**FEROCEOUS DOG** Sat 11 Mar, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**THE CONCESSIONS** Sat 11 Mar, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, South Shropshire

**THE MERSEY BEATLES** Sat 11 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**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

**YOU WIN AGAIN - THE STORY OF THE BEE GEES,** Sat 11 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**CARA DILLON** Sat 11 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THAT'LL BE THE DAY** Sat 11 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TEN FE** Sun 12 Mar, Hare & Hounds, B'ham



**SUPERHEROES AT THE SYMPHONY** Sun 12 Mar, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER** Sun 12 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

**BONAFIDE** Sun 12 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

**CRAOBH RUA** Sun 12 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall, Staffordshire

**DAN REED NETWORK** Sun 12 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**THE FUREYS** Sun 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**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

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

**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

**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

**COUNT ARTHUR STRONG** Wed 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**STUART GOLDSMITH** Thurs 9 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

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

**AL MURRAY** Fri 10 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**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

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 11 Mar, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

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

### Theatre

**PSYCHIC SALLY** Evening of medi-umship, Mon 6 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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

**THE BEST THING** A Swinging 60s story of unconditional love from the UK's

leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Tues 7 - Wed 8 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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 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

**THE ODYSSEY** Based on Homer's epic poem and performed by Rabbit Theatre, Wed 8 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**CHEKOV SHORTS** European Arts present a collection of classic one-act farces by Anton Chekov, including The Evils Of Tobacco, The Dimwit, The Bear, Swan Song and The Proposal, Wed 8 Mar, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent



**TONY STOCKWELL** An evening of psychic mediumship, Wed 8 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

**THE FARAWAY TREE** Stafford Gatehouse Youth Group 3 present a staging based on Enid Blyton's famous book, Wed 8 - Fri 10 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

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



**BLIND DATE** Les Bordeliques present a 'funny and touching' performance in which the characters express themselves through dance and music in their search for love, Thurs

9 Mar, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch

**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

**KISS ME KATE** Kidderminster Operatic Society present an amateur staging of Cole Porter's classic musical, Thurs 9 - Sat 18 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**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

**THE FIZZOGS: THE SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR** Fri 10 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

**I AM A BEAST** Sparkle & Dark fuse life-sized puppetry and live music in this award-winning exploration of the power of grief and childish imagination, Fri 10 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**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 15 Apr, The REP, Birmingham

**FIONA COFFEY CABARET: A TOUCH OF MRS ROBINSON** Cabaret inspired by the woman who seduced The Graduate and became a legend in her own leopard print, Sat 11 Mar, Meole Brace Peace Memorial Hall, Shrewsbury

**PARADISE LOST (LIES UNOPENED BESIDE ME)** Lost Dog Theatre company staging of Milton's epic poem, Sat 11 Mar, Quatt Village Hall, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

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

**BEYOND THE BARRICADE** Past principal performers from the cast of Les Miserables recreate original songs from the West End and Broadway, Sat 11 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

**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!, Sat 11 Mar, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**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



Africarmen By Tavaziva - The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome

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

## Dance

**CINDERELLA** Vienna Festival Ballet present a combination of pure classical dancing and a touch of pantomime Wed 8 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**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

**STEVE PARISH MAD TOUR** An evening hosted by Steve's daughter, Frankie, in which she talks about her father's life, loves and experiences, Fri 10 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**BANG! SAID THE GUN** Evening of stand-up poetry for people who don't like poetry, Sun 12 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**PETER ALLIS: A QUESTION OF GOLF** A light-hearted evening with the legendary golfer, followed by a Q&A session, Tues 14 Mar, 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



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SUNDAY 5th MARCH



MARRY WATERSON  
&  
DAVID A JAYCOCK

TUESDAY 14th MARCH



EXTRA DATE!  
CHESNEY &  
CHIP HAWKES

TUESDAY 21st MARCH



DAMIEN O'KANE &  
DAOIRI FARRELL

TUESDAY 27th MARCH



JARROD  
DICKENSON

THE AWARD WINNING  
MUSIC & COMEDY  
VENUE  
IN SHROPSHIRE

What's  
on...



Saturday 18th March  
**ARRIVAL - THE HITS OF ABBA**  
Time: 7.30pm



Thursday 23rd March  
**SEANN WALSH**  
Time: 8.00pm



Sat 25th - Mon 27th March  
**JASPER CARROTT'S STAND  
UP & ROCK**  
Time: 7.30pm



Wednesday 29th March  
**DOREEN'S GRAND NIGHT OUT**  
Time: 7.30pm



Thursday 30th March  
**TOMMY FLEMING**  
Time: 7.30pm



Friday 31st March  
**THE THREE DEGREES**  
Time: 7.30pm



Friday 7th April  
**SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS**  
Time: 7.30pm



Monday 10th April  
**THE LITTLE MERMAID**  
Time: 11.00am & 3.00pm



Wednesday 12th April  
**CLASSIC ROCK USA**  
Time: 7.30pm

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TWC GP 01218

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

#### JAILHOUSE ROCK (U)

Drama/Musical. Starring Elvis Presley, Judy Tyler. Dementia friendly screening. Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, Mon 6 Mar

#### DANCES WITH WOLVES (15)

Drama/Western. Starring Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell. The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 6 Mar

#### SULLY (12a) Drama/Biography.

Starring Tom Hanks, Aaron Eckhart. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 6 Mar

#### JACKIE (15) Biography/Drama.

Starring Natalie Portman, Peter Sarsgaard. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 6 - Wed 8 Mar; Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Sat 11 Mar

#### OCEAN'S 11 (15) Comedy/Crime.

Starring Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin. Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke, Tues 7 Mar

#### EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT (12a)

Adventure/Drama. Starring Nilbio Torres, Jan Bijvoet. Foreign language, subtitled. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Tues 7 Mar

#### COURT (PG) Drama. Starring Vira Sathidar, Vivek Gomer.

Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 8 Mar

#### DENIAL (12a) Biography/Drama.

Starring Rachel Weisz, Tom Wilkinson. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 6 - Thurs 9 Mar; Stoke Film Theatre, Tues 7 & Thurs 9 Mar

#### THE DOUBLE (15) Drama/Thriller.

Starring Jesse Eisenberg, Mia Wasikowska. Includes pre-screening discussion. The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Thurs 9 Mar

#### T2 TRAINSPOTTING (18) Drama.

Starring Ewan McGregor, Ewen Bremner. Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Mar

#### ARRIVAL (12a) Drama/Sci-Fi.

Starring Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Mar

#### HACKSAW RIDGE (15) History/War.

Starring Andrew Garfield, Sam Worthington. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Mar

#### LA LA LAND (12a) Drama/Musical.

Starring Ryan Gosling, Emma Stone. Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, Fri 10 Mar; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Mar

#### BARRY LYNDON (PG)

Drama/Adventure. Starring Ryan O'Neal, Marisa Berenson. The Hive, Shrewsbury, 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

#### THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF BEER 2017

The UK's largest collection of beers and ciders from around the world, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Mar, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

#### 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

#### ULTIMATE DUBS UK 2017

Bringing together the Ultimate VW, Audi, Seat and Skoda show cars from all over Europe, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Mar, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

#### 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

#### DIRTRUN ULTRA IN THE BLACK COUNTRY

A scenic, urban loop around the historic Black Country, Sun 12 Mar, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

#### LUXURY WEDDING FAYRE

Sun 12 Mar, Telford Hotel & Golf Resort, Shropshire



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## SPRING 2017



2 March, 7.30pm  
**Michael George's London Varieties**  
Tickets: £14, £13.50 (Conc)



8 March, 7.30pm  
European Arts Company  
**Chekov Shorts**  
Tickets: £10, £8 (Conc), £5 (Student)



16 March, 7.30pm  
Thank You For the Music Presents  
**The Ultimate Tribute to Abba**  
Tickets: £20



18 March, 8pm  
**Tom Allen & Suzi Ruffell Hit the Road**  
Tickets: £12, £10 (conc)



4 & 5 April, 7pm  
**Theatre Ad Infinitum: Bucket List**  
Tickets: £12 plus 'bring a friend for free'



7 April 7pm  
At Burton Town Hall  
**Bee Gees Fever**  
Tickets: £18 (Adv), £20 (OTD)



11 April, 11.30am & 2.30pm  
Half Moon presents a Wrongsemble production  
**Three**  
Tickets: £6, £20 (family of 4)



15 April, 11am, 1pm & 3pm  
Egg Box Theatre:  
**The Moon & Me**  
at Burton Market Hall  
Tickets: £3



18 - 22 April, 7.30pm  
2.30pm Thu & Sat Mat  
LIC Youth  
**Les Miserables Schools Edition**  
Tickets: £12, £10 (Conc. & Mat)



27 April, 8pm  
**Shappi Khorsandi - 'Oh My Country!'** From Morris Dancing to Morrissey  
Tickets: £15, £13 (conc)

Box office:  
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WED 1 MAR + BIG WOLF BAND	<b>STEVIE NIMMO TRIO</b>
THU 2 MAR + DEAD HAPPY + WINTER STORIES	<b>TRAGEDY ALL-METAL BEEGEEES AND BEYOND!</b>
FRI 3 MAR + SMALL CHANGES	<b>LOS PACAMINOS FEAT PAUL YOUNG</b>
SAT 4 MAR + BROKEN WITT REBELS	<b>KING KING</b>
SUN 5 MAR	<b>DAVE MASON'S TRAFFIC JAM</b>
WED 8 MAR CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF	<b>OTIS REDDING WITH MUDEBU &amp; THE JEZEBEL SEXTET</b>
THU 9 MAR ON STAGE 8.30pm	<b>THE BEACH BOYS STORY</b>
FRI 10 MAR - THE FABULOUS BORGELLETTI	<b>NINE BELOW ZERO</b>
SAT 11 MAR WITH HIS BAND AND SINGERS	<b>GORDON DAVIS AS ELVIS PRESLEY</b>
SUN 12 MAR + VEGA	<b>DAN REED NETWORK 'TIGHT ANOTHER DAY' UK TOUR 2017</b>
TUE 14 MAR + THEATRE OF HATE	<b>STIFF LITTLE FINGERS</b>
WED 15 MAR LIVE ON STAGE 8.30pm	<b>HAZEL O'CONNOR WITH CLARE HIRST &amp; SARAH FISHER</b>
THU 16 MAR BRITISH SOUL PIONEERS	<b>KOKOMO FULL 10-PIECE BAND</b>
FRI 17 MAR	<b>FLASH A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN</b>
SAT 18 MAR TRIBUTE SHOW	<b>NO JACKET REQUIRED PHIL COLLINS</b>
SUN 19 MAR CHARITY SHOW	<b>PETE BODDIS BAND + FREEWHEELIN' BAND</b>
WED 22 MAR ALL SEATED SHOW	<b>STRAWBS ELECTRIC</b>
THU 23 MAR	<b>CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIEW</b>
FRI 24 MAR THE KING OF POP	<b>NAVI IS MICHAEL JACKSON</b>
SAT 25 MAR PUNK 1977	<b>SEX PISTOLS EXP + LONDON CALLING (CLASH)</b>
SUN 26 MAR DOUBLES HEADS	<b>EVANESCENCE TRIBUTE FALLEN + MALLEN UK</b>
MON 27 MAR PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS	<b>LISA STANLEY &amp; HER BAND</b>
WED 29 MAR ALL SEATED SHOW	<b>BRIAN KENNEDY</b>
THU 30 MAR	<b>BOOTLEG BLONDIE</b>
FRI 31 MAR + SUPPORT DORJA	<b>LIVEWIRE THE AC/DC SHOW</b>

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### Gigs

**PEANESS** Mon 13 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**KRISTA DETOR** Mon 13 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**FATHERSON** Mon 13 Mar, The Sugarmill, Staffordshire

**THE WEEKND** Mon 13 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**CHESNEY & CHIP HAWKES** Mon 13 - Tues 14 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**HIGH TYDE** Tues 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NATHAN GRISDALE** Tues 14 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BANG TANGO** Tues 14 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**TELFORD AND WREKIN MUSIC SHOWCASE** Tues 14 - Wed 15 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**STIFF LITTLE FINGERS** Tues 14 Mar, The Robin, Birmingham

**LAURA MARLING** Tues 14 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**IDLES** Tues 14 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CANAAN SMITH** Wed 15 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**HAZEL O'CONNOR** Wed 15 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

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

**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

**KRISTA DETOR** Wed 15 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**EMPIRE** Wed 15 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**DODDIE** 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

**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC** Thurs 16 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-Upon Trent

**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

**HAZEL O'CONNOR** Thurs 16 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

**KOKOMO** Thurs 16 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**LUKE DANIELS** Thurs 16 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**PROPAGANDA** Fri 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MONSTER TRUCK** Fri 17 Mar, O2 Institute, 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

**THE TREMBLING WILBURYS** Fri 17 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN** Fri 17 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**THE FUREYS** Fri 17 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

**PROJECT JAM SANDWICH** Fri 17 Mar, Wem Town Hall, Shropshire

**UNIVERSITY BIG BAND** Fri 17 Mar, The Bramall, Birmingham

**PLINI** Fri 17 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**KIOKO** Fri 17 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JUMP THE SHARK** Sat 18 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

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

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

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

**WHISTLE-STOP OPERA - AN EXPLORATION OF EUROPE** Sat 18 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**ROCK 'N' ROLL PARADISE** Sat 18 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**NO JACKET REQUIRED - THE PHIL COLINS TRIBUTE** Sat 18 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**BLACK STAR RIDERS** Sat 18 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE STRANGLERS** Sat 18 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**GUNS 2 ROSES** Sat 18 Mar, The Sugarmill, Staffordshire

**HANNAH & BRIAN** Sat 18 Mar, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**SENSATION** Sat 18 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**ARRIVAL - THE HITS OF ABBA** Sat 18 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

**SOMEONE LIKE YOU** Sat 18 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**NIKKI ILES AND KAREN SHARP QUARTET** Sat 18 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**BAY CITY ROLLERS STARRING LES MCKEOWN** Sat 18 Mar, Victoria Hall, Staffordshire

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

**PETE BODDIS BAND + FREEWHEELIN' BAND** Sun 19 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

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

**THE DALEIAN SINGERS** Sun 19 Mar, Victoria Hall, Staffordshire

**IRA (POLISH BAND)** Sun 19 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

### Classical Music

**ENSEMBLE 360** Programme to include works by Mozart, William Hurlstone, Sofia Gubaidalina & Glinka, Mon 13 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**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

**JENNIFER PIKE CELEBRITY RECITAL** Programme includes works by Mozart, Syznanowski, 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

**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

**G4 IN CONCERT** Fri 17 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**SEMI-TONED** All male cappella group and winners of The Choir: Gareth Malone's Best In Britain, Fri 17 Mar, Allington Hall, Shrewsbury School

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

**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, B'ham

### Comedy Gigs

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

**DANNY BAKER** Thurs 16 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

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

**SEAN MCLOUGHLIN** Thurs 16 Mar, mac, Birmingham

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

**THE NOISE NEXT DOOR** Fri 17 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TONY LAW** Fri 17 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

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

**PHIL BUTLER, TOM HOUGHTON & ANDY WHITE** Fri 17 Mar, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

**BARBARA NICE, TONY HAWKE & DARREN HARRIOT** Fri 17 Mar, The Lamp Tavern, Dudley

**MICK FERRY & COMICS TBC** Fri 17 Mar, The Mitre Inn, Stourbridge

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

**TOM ALLEN AND SUZI RUFFELL** Fri 17 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

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

**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

**MICK FERRY, TOM HOUGHTON, DAMION LARKIN & COMIC TBC** Sat 18 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 18 Mar, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**TOM ALLEN AND SUZI RUFFELL** Sat 18 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**ASHLEY BLAKER** Sun 19 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham



## Theatre

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

**THRIVE** Contemporary play developed in collaboration with psychologists and inspired by true stories of young people, Tues 14 Mar, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF VARIETY** Featuring special guest Anita Harris, Tues 14 Mar, Dudley Town Hall

**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

**HAIRSPRAY** Amateur production presented by Get Your Wiggle On, Wed 15 - Sat 18 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE KING LEAR** Shifting Sands present their own version of Shakespeare's classic play, Wed 15 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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..., Wed 15 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**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

**PORTRAIT** A frank, fun and provocative look at the trials and tribulations of modern life as seen through the eyes of a young black woman, Thurs 16 Mar, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

**DANNY BAKER: CRADLE TO THE STAGE** Danny presents a show featuring anecdotes, games involving sausages, and his impressive six octave range, Thurs 16 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

**THE BEST THING** A Swinging 60s story

of unconditional love from the UK's leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Thurs 16 Mar, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

**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

**THE BEST THING** A Swinging 60s story of unconditional love from the UK's leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Fri 17 Mar, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

**BLIND DATE** Les Bordeliques present a 'funny and touching' performance in which characters express themselves through dance and music in their search for love, Fri 17 Mar, Chelmarsh Village Hall, Nr Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**THE THING THAT CAME FROM OVER THERE** Critically acclaimed Gonzo Moose present a 'rip-roaring comedy adventure', Fri 17 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**NABUCCO** Opera & Ballet International present an Ellen Kent production of Verdi's haunting and melodic chorus of the Hebrew Slaves, Fri 17 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke On Trent

**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

**AIDA** Ellen Kent and Amphitheatre Productions present a new interpretation of Verdi's classic opera. Olga Perrier, Alyona Kistenyova and Liza Kadelnik star, Sat 18 Mar, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**PAUL CARROLL'S MUSIC HALL TAVERN** Comedy family drag variety show featuring Paul Carroll as Mrs T, Sat 18 Mar, Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

**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

**JURASSIC ADVENTURES** Brand new

show transporting young audiences to a prehistoric place full of fun, thrills and screams, Sun 19 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

## 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, Tues 14 Mar, 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

**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

**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

**MARY BERRY EVERYDAY** Join Mary as 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



## 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 B'ham

**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

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

**HOBBYCRAFTS** 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, Fri 17 - Sun 19 Mar, NEC, B'ham

**SHIRE HORSE SHOW** Fri 17 - Sun 19 Mar, Staffordshire County Showground

**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

**NIGHT RUN** Suitable for beginners, regular runners and families, Sat 18 Mar, Attingham Park, Shropshire

**MARCH PLANT HUNTERS FAIR** Featuring nursery experts, stalls to browse and 150 acres of maturing woodland to explore, Sat 18 Mar, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

**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

**WEDDING FAYRE** Featuring a wide selection of exhibitors, including cake decorators, photographers and venue decorators, Sun 19 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffs

### 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

**DAMIEN O'KANE TRIO & DAOIRI FARRELL** Tues 21 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**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

**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

**LOVE/HATE** Thurs 23 Mar, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**CREDESCENCE 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  
**LIZABETT RUSSO** Thurs 23 Mar, SpArC, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

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

**JAMES ARTHUR** Fri 24 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

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

**MARTIN TAYLOR** Fri 24 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall, Staffordshire

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

**T.REXTASY** Fri 24 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**GA GA** Fri 24 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**BOAT TO ROW** Fri 24 Mar, mac, Birmingham

**MAD DOG MCREA** Fri 24 Mar, The Sugarmill, Staffordshire

**GIN ANNIE BAND** Fri 24 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**ORANMORE** Fri 24 Mar, Irish Centre, B'ham

**CRAIG DAVID** Fri 24 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**CLASSIC ROCK USA** Fri 24 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

**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

**1977 - THE YEAR PUNK EXPLODED** Sat 25 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**GORDIE MACKEEAN AND HIS RHYTHM BOYS** Sat 25 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Shropshire

**BILL KIRCHEN** Sat 25 Mar, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Staffordshire

**MAD4BRIT** Sat 25 Mar, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

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

**KILLERSTREAM** Sat 25 Mar, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**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

**THE DUBLIN LEGENDS** Sat 25 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

**NEW ORLEANS HEAT** Sat 25 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**A R RAHMAN** Sat 25 Mar, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**MARTI PELLOW** Sat 25 Mar, Birmingham Town Hall

**SYNERGY** Sat 25 Mar, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**ARMORED SAINT** Sat 25 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER** Sun 26 Mar, Lichfield Guildhall, Staffordshire

**FALLEN & LIGHTWISH** Sun 26 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**TONY KEARNEY** Sun 26 Mar, Irish Centre, Birmingham

**DAVID BUSBY** Sun 26 Mar, The Huntsman, Telford

**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

**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

**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

**UNIVERSITY WOMAN'S CHOIR** Featuring Simon Carrington (conductor) Programme includes works by Cozzolani, Verdi & Gardner, Fri 24 Mar, The Barber Institute, B'ham

**HALLE ORCHESTRA** Featuring Lahav Shani (conductor) & Sofya Gulyak (soloist). Programme includes works by Stravinsky & Rachmaninov, Fri 24 Mar, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

**TELFORD ORCHESTRA** Featuring Tom Payne (guest conductor) & Alison Matthews (leader). Programme includes works by Sibelius, Haydn & Schubert, Sat 25 Mar, St Michael's Church, Madeley, Telford

**CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET** Programme includes works by Beethoven, Shostakovich & Brahms, Sun 26 Mar, Maidment Hall, Shrewsbury School

**SMALLMAN & GARRETT MILLERICK** Fri 24 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**IGNACIO LOPEZ, SIMON EMANUEL** Fri 24 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**SEANN WALSH** Fri 24 Mar, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**BEAT THE GONG** Fri 24 Mar, The Elephant & Castle, Stourbridge

**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, B'ham

**THE NOISE NEXT DOOR** Sat 25 Mar, Artrix

**DIANE SPENCER, CHRISTIAN REILLY, JIM SMALLMAN & GARRETT MILLERICK** Sat 25 Mar, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 25 Mar, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**COMEDY IN THE MET** Sat 25 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**JASPER CARROTT'S STAND UP & ROCK** Sat 25 - Mon 27 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

### 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

**INVINCIBLE** Torben Betts' abrasive comedy about the class divide, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Mar, Lichfield Garrick

**HYSTERIA** London Classic Theatre present Terry Johnson's farce, which explores the fallout when two of the 20th century's most brilliant and original minds collide, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Mar, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**MR BLOOM'S NURSERY LIVE!** Interactive show to entertain parents and toddlers alike, Wed 22 Mar, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

**HOME** Tale of unexpected friendship exploring a new and unknown world via a multi-sensory story of discovery, Wed 22 - Thurs 23 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THAT'LL BE THE DAY** A musical romp through the '50s, '60s and '70s, with comedy thrown in for good measure, Wed 22 - Thurs 23 Mar, The Roses, Kidderminster

**MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS GOT HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF** Birmingham School Of Acting presents a 'ferociously iconoc-

### Comedy Gigs

**TOADALLY FREE COMEDY!** Mon 20 Mar, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

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

**SEANN WALSH** Thurs 23 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

**TOM STADE, JOHN FOTHERGILL, IAN STONE & ELLIOT STEEL** Fri 24 Mar, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DIANE SPENCER, CHRISTIAN REILLY, JIM**

# Monday 20 - Sunday 26 March

clastic' re-examination of Mary's life, told in 16th century Scots and Standard English, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**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

**A TALE OF TWO CITIES** Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society stage a musical version of Charles Dickens' novel, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**GANGSTA GRANNY** Birmingham Stage Company's acclaimed production, based on David Walliams' best-selling book, Wed 22 - Sun 26 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**DOREEN'S GRAND NIGHT OUT** Doreen returns with a brand new live show, Thurs 23 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**LABELS** Worklight Theatre's award-winning show, using humour and honesty to explore the issues of mixed heritage and immigration, Thurs 23 Mar, Ellesmere College Arts Centre, North Shropshire

**THE ODYSSEY** Based on Homer's epic poem and performed by Rabbit Theatre, Thurs 23 Mar, Snailbeach Village Hall, Nr Minsterley, South Shropshire

**FORGET ME NOT** An Alzheimer's whodunnit, described as part social commentary, part black comedy, part clue-do, Thurs 23 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROCK OF AGES** Backstreet Theatre Company present an amateur staging of the award-winning '80s-themed musical, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

**PINK MIST** Owen Sheers' powerful story about three men deployed to Afghanistan, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**THE ODYSSEY** Based on Homer's epic poem and performed by Rabbit Theatre, Fri 24 Mar, Harley Village Hall, Shropshire

**THE SECOND BEST BED** Liz Grand stars as Anne Hathaway on the night of Shakespeare's funeral, Fri 24 Mar, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**LABELS** Worklight Theatre's award-winning show using humour and honesty to explore the issues of mixed heritage and immigration, Fri 24 Mar, SpArC, Bishops Caste, South Shrops

**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

**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, B'ham

**ANYTHING GOES** Ludlow College present an amateur staging of Cole Porter's musical comedy, Fri 24 - Sat 25 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

**MACBETH** The Roses Youth Theatre give a fresh perspective on Shakespeare's classic tragedy, Fri 24 - Sat 25 Mar, The Roses, Kidderminster

**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

**JANE EYRE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY** Rebecca Vaughan embodies Charlotte Bronte's gothic subversion of fairytale romance, Sat 25 Mar, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**DORIS THE DRAGON SHOW** Join Doris and her fiery friends in a show full of giddy games, panto-style slapstick and audience interaction, Sat 25 Mar, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**MOZART & SALIERI** Rimsky-Korsakov's rarely performed two-hander, sung in English and accompanied by piano, Sat 25 Mar, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

**SCREEN TIME** Helen Timmins' drama, reflecting on the important things in life, Sat 25 - Sun 26 Mar, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**THE FIRST HIPPO ON THE MOON** Staging of David Walliams' space adventure for children, Sat 25 - Sun 26 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**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

## Dance

**MATERIAL MEN: REDUX** A virtuoso piece for two dazzling performers of the Indian diaspora which explores rhythm and location, as dancers create new ways of belonging to each other and to the world around them, Mon 27 - Tues 28 Mar, Birmingham Hippodrome



## Talks

**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

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 24 Mar, showing at selected cinemas

**AQUARIUS (15)**

**CHIPS (15)**

**LIFE (tbc)**

**POWER RANGERS (tbc)**

**THE LOST CITY OF Z (15)**

## Events

**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, Shropshire

**WALK THE LONG MYND SKYLINE** A walk over the Long Mynd, Caer Caradoc, and Ragleth Hill, complete with stunning views, Fri 24 Mar, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills

**THE TEENAGE MARKET** Free platform for young people to showcase their creative talents, Sat 25 Mar, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

**REVOLTING RHYMES** A phizz-whizzing day of gloriouptious music, storytelling and art, to celebrate Roald Dahl's jumpsquiffing tales, Sat 25 Mar, The Barber Institute, B'ham

**THOMAS AND FRIENDS WEEKENDS** Thomas and friends invite you to join them on their magical weekends, Sat 25 Mar, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

**BRITISH ALPACA SOCIETY NATIONAL SHOW** Sat 25 - Sun 26 Mar, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

**WILDERNESS SURVIVAL SKILLS** Learn to build dens and light fires, Sat 25 - Sun 26 Mar, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

**WILD WEEKEND WITH STAFFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST** Join Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for nature-inspired crafts, bug hunts, nature trails and scavenger hunts, Sat 25 - Sun 26 Mar, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

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## MARCH HIGHLIGHTS



SAT 11 MAR,  
1.30PM & 3.30PM

### CHICKEN LICKEN

A baby chick is born and thinks the sky is falling down. On the way to tell the King, she meets Henny Penny, Ducky Lucky & Turkey Lurkey, but there's a shocking surprise!

£10, £7.50 Children



TUES 14 MAR, 7.30PM

### PETER ALLISS - AN EVENING WITH 'THE VOICE OF GOLF'

Join the former professional golfer, Ryder Cup legend and one of Britain's most celebrated television commentators for an evening packed full of anecdotes, humour and stories.

£19.50, £17.50



FRI 17 & SAT 18 MARCH, 7.30PM

### DONG DING MURDER ME ON HIGH!

Pratt's back and once again he is in the 'presents' of murder! Starring Jeffrey Holland (Hilde-Hil), Anna Brecon (Emmerdale), Mark Little (Neighbours), Natasha Gray (Emmerdale) and David Callister (The Bill) as Pratt.

£19.50, £17.50 Students



SAT 18 MAR, 7.45PM  
Hijinx Theatre in association with Blind Summit presents

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

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THU 30 MAR - SAT 1 APR, 7.45PM,

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### Gigs

**THE DIRTY HIT TOUR**  
FEATURING:  
**SUPERFOOD, PALE WAVES, KING NUN** Mon 27 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**HUNDREDTH, 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

**EMILY PORTMAN & THE CORACLE BAND** Mon 27 Mar, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

**LISA STANLEY AND HER BAND** Mon 27 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**JARROD DICKENSON BAND** Mon 27 Mar, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**DOC BROWN** Mon 27 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**STEVE 'N' SEAGULLS** Mon 27 Mar, The Sugarmill, Staffordshire

**THE MOONLANDINGZ** Tues 28 Mar, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SONATA ARCTICA** Tues 28 Mar, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

**THE DUBLIN LEGENDS** Tues 28 Mar, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

**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



Emily Portman - Ludlow Assembly Rooms

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

**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

**TOMMY FLEMING** Thurs 30 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**PROPAGANDA** Fri 31 Mar, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE THREE DEGREES** Fri 31 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**THE JESUS & MARY CHAIN** Fri 31 Mar, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**LIVEWIRE - TRIBUTE TO AC/DC** Fri 31 Mar, The Robin, Bilston

**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

**CAMERON FORREST** Fri 31 Mar, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**NEIL MCSWEENEY & VERA VAN HEERINGEN** Fri 31 Mar, Hermon Chapel Arts Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

**SPILT MILK SOCIETY** Fri 31 Mar, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**BAY CITY ROLLERS STARRING LES MCKEOWN** Fri 31 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**A VISION OF ELVIS** Fri 31 Mar, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Staffordshire

**KARKOSA** Fri 31 Mar, O2 Academy, B'ham

### Classical Music

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH RAÚL PRIETO RAMÍREZ** Programme includes works by Juan Maria 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 18 Mar, Birmingham Conservatoire

**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

**OPERA BOYS** An evening of vocal harmony featuring some of the West End's leading men, Fri 31 Mar, William Aston Hall, Wrexham



**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



**JON RICHARDSON** Fri 31 Mar, Theatrefest, Clwyd

**KEITH FARNAN, MIKE NEWALL, FUNMBI OMOTAYO & DARRELL MARTIN** Fri 31 Mar, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**STAND UP COMEDY SHOWCASE** Fri 31 Mar, mac, Birmingham

### Theatre

**BUDDY - THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY** Award-winning musical, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**JOSEPH & THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT** Starring Joe McElderry in the lead role, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**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 EMPTY NESTERS' CLUB** World premiere of John Godber's latest comedy-drama, Tues 28 Mar - Sat 1 Apr, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**THE BEST THING** A Swinging 60s story of unconditional love from the UK's leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Wed 29 Mar, mac, Birmingham

**DOREEN'S GRAND NIGHT OUT** Doreen returns with a brand new live show, Wed 29 Mar, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

**MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL** All-singing, all-dancing musical starring Cheryl Ferguson, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley and Ruth Berkeley, Thurs 30 Mar, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE MISFIT ANALYSIS** Access All Areas journey through a world of wheel-



Steve 'N' Seagulls - The Sugarmill, Stoke-On-Trent

chairs 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, B'ham

**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, B'ham

**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

**THE BEST THING** A Swinging 60s story of unconditional love from the UK's leading full-mask theatre company, Vamos, Fri 31 Mar, Conquest Theatre, Hereford

**IOLANTHE** Amateur production presented by the Walsall Gilbert &

Sullivan Society, Fri 31 Mar - Sat 1

Apr, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

**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

## Dance

**VIRAGO** Sonia Sabri Company present a dance-digital solo production exploring the light vs dark and real vs fairytale versions of female existence, Wed 29 Mar, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton



## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**BRIDGET JONES'S BABY** (15) Comedy/Romance. Starring Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth. The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 27 Mar

**HIDDEN FIGURES** (PG) Drama/Biography. Starring Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Mon 27 - Thurs 30 Mar

**PALE MOON** (tbc) Drama. Starring Rie Miyazawa, Sosuke Ikematsu. mac, Birmingham, Tues 28 Mar

**NOCTURNAL ANIMALS** (15) Drama/Thriller. Starring Amy Adams, Jake Gyllenhaall. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Tues 28 Mar

**20TH CENTURY WOMEN** (15) Comedy/Drama. Starring Elle Fanning, Alia Shawkat. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 28 - Wed 29 Mar

**LION** (PG) Drama. Starring Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman. Wem Town Hall, Shropshire, Tues 28 & Thurs 30 Mar

**RISEN** (12) Adventure/Drama. Starring Joseph Fiennes, Tom Felton. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Thurs 30 Mar

**MOONLIGHT** (15) Drama. Starring Mahershala Ali, Shariff Earp. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 31 Mar

**THE BRAND NEW TESTAMENT** (15) Comedy/Fantasy. Starring Pili Groyne, Benoît Poelvoorde. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 31 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)

## Events

**SCI-FI CELEBRATES STAR TREK** Garrett Wang, Claudia Christian and Alan Flyngare joined by authors James Swallow and Una McCormack, Fri 31 Mar - Sun 2 Apr, Telford International Centre

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### SPRING FILM FESTIVAL - APRIL 2017

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#### 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 7.30pm "A UNITED KINGDOM"

Prince Seretse Khama of Botswana causes an international stir when he marries a white woman from London in the late 1940s. (12a)  
David Oyelowo • Rosemond Pike • Jack Davenport



#### 8<sup>th</sup> April 2017 7.30pm "CAROL" (2015)

An aspiring photographer develops an intimate relationship with an older woman in 1950s New York. (15)  
Cate Blanchett • Rooney Mara • Sarah Paulson



#### 15<sup>th</sup> April 2017 7.30pm "BRIDGET JONES'S BABY"

Bridget's focus on single life and her career is interrupted when she finds herself pregnant, but with one hitch... she can't only be fifty percent sure of the identity of her baby's father. (15)  
Renée Zellweger • Gemma Jones • Jim Broadbent



#### 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017 7.30pm "SULLY: Miracle on the Hudson"

The story of Chesley Sullenberger, an American pilot who became a hero after landing his damaged plane on the Hudson River in order to save the flight's passengers and crew. (12a)  
Tom Hanks • Aaron Eckhart • Laura Linney



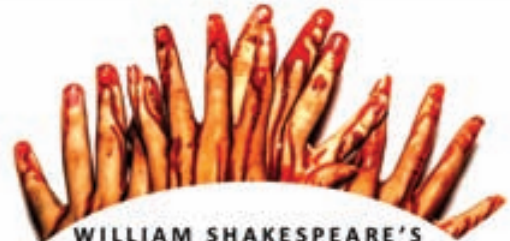
#### 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017 7.30pm "I, DANIEL BLAKE"

A middle aged carpenter, who requires state welfare after injuring himself, is joined by a single mother in a similar scenario. (15)  
Dave Johns • Hayley Squires • Sharon Percy

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SATURDAY 29TH APRIL



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