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Your 16-page week
by week listings guide



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Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
Eastgate Street, Stafford,
ST16 2LT



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JOHN GODBER

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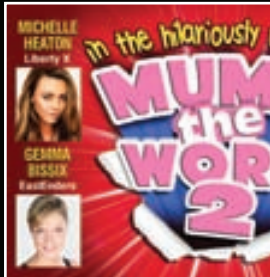
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princeofwales.live



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Peep Show star on tour with The Actual One
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Photographer's book offers a taste of the Black Country

A photographer who's spent two years creating an intimate photographic portrait of the Black Country town of Smethwick, its people and its food, has had her work showcased in a brand new publication.

Home Made In Smethwick features Liz Hingley's photographs presented alongside the hand-written recipes of Smethwick residents.

Commenting on the publication, Liz said: "The smells of cooking from all around the world permeate the terraced streets of Smethwick. I was generously welcomed into homes and given the unique opportunity to taste personal dishes embedded with meanings and associations. All those I met contributed to this celebration of the social heritage and culinary richness of Smethwick today. With the aim of capturing the essence of a community, I've been the lucky guest at their table and passenger on their journey."

Home Made In Smethwick was commissioned by Multistory, a community arts charity based in West Bromwich. The book can be purchased from Multistory's website - multistory.org.uk/shop/



Wanted! Football fans to share their stories...

Supporters of Birmingham's three major football clubs are being invited to help create a new play.

Birmingham Repertory Theatre wants fans of Aston Villa, Birmingham City and West Bromwich Albion to share their stories about why they love the game and why their club is so important to them.

The contributions are needed for a new play, Stadium, which will premiere at The REP next summer.

"Birmingham is lucky to have three football clubs, all with a huge, loyal following," says the play's director, Mohamed El Khatib, "so The REP is the perfect place for us to create Stadium. Football is full of drama, adrenaline and emotion, both on and off the pitch, and we want to talk to the supporters who make football what it is.

"We're keen to hear why fans have grown up supporting their particular club and why some families have supported one team for generations."

Stadium is part of The REP's Furnace initiative, offering local people opportunities to develop new talents, discover how theatre is made and create their own shows.

Any Villa, Birmingham or West Brom supporters interested in sharing their stories and explaining their passion for their club should contact Rosalyn.lesurf-olner@birmingham-rep.co.uk or call 0121 245 2023.

Wolverhampton university aiming to transform city's derelict brewery

The University of Wolverhampton has submitted planning and listed building consent applications to transform a derelict brewery into an education hub.

The university is hoping to relocate its School of Architecture And The Built Environment to the city's former Springfield Brewery site.

Commenting on the plans, the university's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Geoff Layer, said: "Our aim through the redevelopment of this brownfield site is for the new centre to act as a catalyst for the wider economic and social regeneration of Wolverhampton.

"The new site will provide a collaborative research environment, working closely with business and offering cutting-edge facilities equipped with the latest technologies, to provide innovative teaching across a lifelong learning ladder of opportunities."



A Grand re-opening!

The Wolverhampton Grand Theatre reopens on Saturday 10 September following a major front-of-house refurbishment and an upgrade of its auditorium seating.

The popular venue has temporarily moved its box office to the foyer of the nearby Light House Media Centre. The box office will remain at the neighbouring venue until the 9th of the month.

Forthcoming programming at the theatre features comedian-ventriloquist Nina Conti (25 September), an evening with MasterChef finalist Jimmy Osmond (26 September), a new staging of Stephen King's *The Shawshank Redemption* (27 September to 1 October) and the ever-popular musical, *The Sound Of Music* (4 to 8 October).

Online and telephone bookings are unaffected by the Grand's box office currently being situated at the Light House Media Centre. The box office is still contactable on its usual number of 01902 429212. Its opening hours are 11am till 6pm Monday to Saturday.

New film festival for Shropshire

A group of volunteers who're passionate about the arts have launched an international film festival in Wellington, Shropshire. Clifton Community Arts Centre Ltd is presenting four movies during the course of September, one on each Saturday of the month. Beginning with Indian film *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, the festival also includes Canadian drama *Home Again*, quirky Chinese romance *Mermaid* and the Oscar-winning Polish film, *Ida*. The four-film presentation precedes the town's Autumn Film Festival in October, which is being held in association with the Wellington Festival. For more information, visit the-clifton.org

Ex-Poet Laureate launches debut book in Wolves

Former Birmingham Poet Laureate Roy McFarlane will be at the Arena Theatre in Wolverhampton on 14 September to launch his debut collection of poems. Entitled *Beginning With Your Last Breath*, the collection explores the themes of love, loss, adoption and identity. Tickets to the event, which starts at 7.30pm, cost £5.



All welcome at Ride & Stride

Shropshire's Historic Churches Trust is aiming to raise £30,000 this month when it stages a sponsored Ride & Stride on Saturday 10 September. The event will see cyclists, walkers and riders visiting as many places of worship - of all denominations - as possible between the hours of 10am and 6pm, in an effort to raise money for the county's historic churches. For more information about how to participate in the event, visit shropshirehct.org.uk



West End musical kicks off UK tour in Shropshire

A critically acclaimed West End musical is visiting Shropshire this month as part of a UK tour. Following in the footsteps of other '60s jukebox musicals about The Beatles and The Kinks, *All Or Nothing* tells the story of mod favourites The Small Faces.

Although surviving in their original incarnation for only four years, The Small Faces made a significant splash on the music scene, enjoying chart hits with numbers including *Whatcha Gonna Do About It*, *Tin Soldier*, *Lazy Sunday*, *Here Comes The Nice*, *Itchycoo Park* and the show's title track. The production visits Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Monday 19 to Wednesday 21 September.

From Harlem to Cannock...

One of opera's most sought-after international performers is making an appearance in the Midlands this month as part of an autumn tour. Noah Stewart will be presenting a programme of opera favourites and musical theatre numbers when he stops off at the Prince Of Wales Centre in Cannock on 28 September. The show will also see Noah paying tribute to the music that inspired him as a young boy growing up in Harlem.



Telford is The Place to be for panto fun with Bernie and his ostrich...

The latest addition to the cast of this year's panto at Oakengates Theatre's *The Place* might well arrive at the Telford venue in a rather unusual way. On an ostrich! Long-established comedian and entertainer Bernie Clifton - who's best known for 'riding' faithful ostrich companion Oswald - will be appearing in the Shropshire theatre's Christmas presentation of *Sleeping Beauty* alongside Wink Taylor from CITV's *The Sooty Show*.

Commenting on the news, the show's producer and director, James Shone, said: "Bernie is a true entertainer, and we're sure he'll be a firm favourite with the audience at every single performance. He's supported by an amazing cast that's set to catch the imagination of the crowd, from the very youngest to the very oldest viewer, from curtain up until the very end. "Sleeping Beauty is a classic panto, and we're excited to be bringing it to life, complete with the best laughs, scenery, costumes, effects and obligatory panto clichés, for the people of Telford and beyond."

The show runs from Wednesday 7 to Saturday 31 December. A relaxed performance takes place on Friday 30 December at 11am. Tickets are now on sale and can be booked online at theplacetelford.com, by calling the box office on 01952 382382, or in person at the theatre or Southwater One in Telford Town Centre.



First Word

Further casting announced for Wolverhampton's biggest pantomime

Britain's Got Talent soprano Lucy Kay and illusionist Stefan Pejic have joined the cast of the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's 2016/17 pantomime.

Lucy will take the role of Princess Jasmine and Stefan the part of evil sorcerer Abanazar in the venue's eagerly anticipated production of Aladdin.

The talented duo join Joe McElderry, Lisa Riley, Ben Faulks, Doreen Tipton and Ian Adams in the show, which runs at the Grand from Saturday 10 December till Sunday 22 January.

Tickets are already on sale and can be booked in person, by phone on 01902 429212, or online at grandtheatre.co.uk.



The return of The Fizzogs

Award-winning Midlands theatre company Fizzog Productions make a welcome return to the stage next month when they present A Black Country Fairytale... Ay It! at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

The company is best known for its stage productions 50 Shades Of Fizzog and Freezin', and for its creation of internet sensations The Dancing Grannies.

Comprising Sue Hawkins, Jacky Fellows and Deb Nicholls - and occasionally featuring guest performers - Fizzog describes its Grand Theatre show as 'another non-traditional tale of fantasy, perfected in a single afternoon's rehearsal!'

The production shows at the Grand on 27 October.

For more information, visit thefizzogs.com



Alternative music event replaces cancelled festival

Following the recent cancellation of the Shrewsbury Fields Forever festival, the town's popular nightclub, The Buttermarket, is set to hold a free alternative music event for all ticket holders, featuring local bands and promoters.

Acts on board so far include promoters Perception (Conspire, Escape, Jay Dubz and Tim Ryan), Pop Up House (Lomas, Duarte Castro, Lokia, Reg, Dan & Jay) and Traffic (Bazland, James Taylor and Will Purcell). There are live sets from Andy O'Brien, Independent Country, Ryan Evans, George Rowlands and Amelia Caesar. There's also a BBC Introducing Shropshire Stage, contributors to which are yet to be announced.

For further event information and announcements, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk.



Comedy festival promises 10 days of mirth

Birmingham Comedy Festival (BCF) this year features headline appearances by Romesh Ranganathan (9 & 12 Oct, Town Hall), Sam Wills appearing as The Boy With Tape On His Face (13-15 Oct, mac Birmingham) and Kerry Godliman, co-star of the Ricky Gervais television series, Derek (14 Oct, The Glee).

Returning in October to provide another 10 days of mirth, the annual event also features performances by Matt Forde, Justin Moorhouse, Nathan Caton, Tony Law and Jason Byrne.

Other festival highlights include hit musical The Rocky Horror Show, Paul Richards' 50 Ways To Leave Your Drummer - in which the musician/comedian recounts the experience of being fired by 50 acts, including Frank Turner and Heaven 17 - live panel show Panelbeaters, co-created by Mock The Week's Gary Delaney, and two free-to-attend Sunday afternoon 'half-dayer' events featuring 18 comedians performing new shows.

The Birmingham Comedy Festival runs from Friday 7 to Sunday 16 October. For full details, visit: bhamcomfest.co.uk



Financial boost for Midlands museums

Six West Midlands museums have been awarded a total of £414,719 by Arts Council England to help them become more sustainable businesses.

The money comes from the Arts Council's Museum Resilience Fund and will support a range of projects to ensure the museums have the resources they need to make the most of their collections.

Commenting on the award, Peter Knott, Area Director for Arts Council England, said: "In the Midlands we're fortunate to have an exceptional mix of museums housing local histories and national treasures. We believe these museums - and the objects they keep safe - play a vital part in community life, helping us celebrate our heritage, deepening our knowledge of the world around us, and entertaining people of all ages. This latest investment from our Museum Resilience Fund is about helping our region's museums become more sustainable businesses so that their rich collections can be used and enjoyed for many years to come." The six museums are: Lapworth Geology Museum, Birmingham (awarded £58,184); Shropshire Council (£72,890); Museum of Cannock Chase, Staffordshire (£78,000); Staffordshire Archives & Heritage Service (£102,000); Compton Verney, Warwickshire (£56,000); and Association of British Transport & Engineering Museums, Warwickshire (£47,645).

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7PM
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Steve Nallon

talks to **What's On** about playing Margaret Thatcher in Jonathan Maitland's story of loyalty, love, political morality and Britishness...

On 13 November 1990, Geoffrey Howe delivered the fatal blow to Margaret Thatcher's premiership with a devastating resignation speech that sent shockwaves through parliament. His attack was uncharacteristic and almost entirely unexpected: such was Howe's reputation for quietness and docility that his Labour opponent Denis Healey once likened criticism from him to "being savaged by a dead sheep".

So *Dead Sheep* became the title of Jonathan Maitland's first play, inspired by the turbulent relationship between the Iron Lady and this 'mouse that roared'. Arriving at the Birmingham REP this month and then visiting Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn and Coventry's Belgrade in October, the production stars Paul Bradley (*Eastenders*/*Holby City*) as Geoffrey Howe, alongside Spitting Image's Steve Nallon as Thatcher.

"I remember watching Howe's speech at the time and just thinking, 'She's toast!'" Nallon recalls. "One of the great dramatic points is that there's a rule that you can't be heckled when you're making a resignation speech from the government. So here was an ideal opportunity for this very quiet man to say exactly what he wanted, and he stabbed her, and you can see it on her face. We do most of the speech in the play, and when we do that scene, it's electric! It puts the audience right in the House of Commons."

Well before Howe's final decision to leave the Cabinet, tensions had been growing between him and Thatcher. Having previously served as both Chancellor of the Exchequer and Foreign Secretary, he regarded the offer of Home Secretary in the Prime Minister's 1989 cabinet reshuffle as a demotion - a punishment for disagreeing with her on key foreign policy decisions. He turned down the position, instead becoming Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the House of Commons.

"She was much crueller than I thought," says Nallon of Thatcher. "When she moved Geoffrey out of the Foreign Office, she basically fired him, and took away his home, because when you're Foreign Secretary you get a grace-and-favour country house. Apparently, the way she took it away from him was quite spiteful. I think what the play makes clear is that Prime Ministers are very, very powerful. They're the ones that appoint and shape the government, and we're seeing it again at the moment with Theresa May."

Of course, as it turned out, far from chastening him, Thatcher's snub pushed Howe to kick back with a response that would ultimately be her own undoing. Among Howe's main motives for resigning was the Prime Minister's undermining of EMU (Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union) policies proposed by the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England.

"It's rather like sending your opening batsmen to the crease," Howe said of her interference, "only for them to find, as the first balls are being bowled, that their bats have been broken before the game by the team captain."

At the time, disputes over what the extent and nature of Britain's involvement in Europe ought to be caused massive rifts within the party which continue to this day: the conversations that finally brought about a referendum on Britain's EU membership in 2016 actually began decades earlier.

"I'm 55 now and I've been aware of the arguments about Europe since I was a kid," says Nallon. "Britain first tried to join the common market, as it was then, back in the 1960s. Had the referendum vote been to remain, I think that would have been it - *Dead Sheep* would have become a museum piece. But with the prospect of Brexit, the play feels very contemporary, and the philosophical arguments



about Britain's place in Europe and the world just buzz with excitement.”

Nevertheless, the way Jonathan Maitland's play tells it, the Europe question was only part of the wider story of Howe's clashes with his party leader: a much longer-running conflict of loyalty also helped to spur him on to his momentous decision.

“It became very clear that Geoffrey Howe's wife and Margaret Thatcher really hated each other,” Nallon explains. “Howe was obviously loyal to his wife, but he also had great loyalty to Thatcher, so he was torn between the two of them, and that became the basis of the play. When I spoke to Jonathan Maitland about who had influenced him as a writer, he mentioned Terence Rattigan, who wrote plays that were very talky and also very human, often on big themes like loyalty. I think you can see that influence in *Dead Sheep*.”

Though physically portraying Thatcher for the first time in this play, Nallon is certainly no stranger to capturing the way she sounds. Having made his name on *Spitting Image*

providing voices for multiple personalities including hers, he's since lent his talents in vocal impersonation to various films and TV shows, often without a credit.

“Bizarrely, recordings of Mrs Thatcher are quite difficult to clear for copyright reasons. It's hard to get clearance to use recordings of her speeches in parliament or even clips from the BBC, so more than once I've gone into a studio and done the voice for films and so on, because it's so much easier and cheaper for them.”

Far from making him an obvious choice for the role, however, his experience as an impressionist has been a source of scepticism for some, often hindering his ability to find ‘serious’ acting work.

“I don't think anybody wanted me to do this play. It was my friend Alistair McGowan who suggested to the writer that they get me in for a reading. Alistair and I have both suffered over the years because directors and casting people will say that they don't want an impressionist, they want an actor, whereas we share the opinion that the two things aren't mutually exclusive.”

Then, of course, there's the fact that he's a man who'll be cross-dressing for the part, which might lead some to be concerned that his casting could undermine the more serious elements of the story. They needn't worry, however: there's a world of difference between *Dead Sheep* and shows like *Margaret Thatcher: Queen Of Soho*.

“To be honest, I don't really like the word 'drag'. I can see why journalists and reviewers have described it that way, but I think it's misleading. There's nothing wrong with drag, but what drag artists do is constantly remind you of the fact that they're a man dressed up as a woman. They'll usually be wearing an outrageous outfit and exaggerated make-up to draw attention to the artificial nature of what they're doing, whereas I simply regard the outfit as a costume like any other. In fact, a lot of the people who came to see the show didn't even know it was a man doing it!”



From *Handbagged* to *The Iron Lady*, *Dead Sheep* is far from the first production on stage or screen to place Britain's first female and perhaps most divisive Prime Minister centre stage. Just what is it about Thatcher and her government that has captured the imaginations of so many writers?

“I think it's partly just the fact that it's now history, but of course, there are some great stories from that period, and she's a great character. I should add that the play is also very funny. My favourite scene is actually one where I don't even speak. Thatcher was known for not having a sense of humour, and there's a wonderful moment where someone tells her a joke, and all she does is stare at the man with incredulity. Every single night, that's what gets the biggest laugh from the audience.”

.....
Dead Sheep shows at Birmingham REP from Monday 26 September to Saturday 1 October and at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury from Monday 3 to Saturday 8 October.

“ *It became very clear that Geoffrey Howe's wife and Margaret Thatcher really hated each other* ”

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Celebrating the Chinese Harvest Festival at Chung Ying

Birmingham's Chung Ying restaurant group is marking this month's Moon Festival - the Chinese harvest festival - by offering customers 'a fantastic night of food, drink and live entertainment'. The company is hosting celebrations at all three of its

Birmingham eateries on the night of Thursday 22 September, providing patrons with a menu of Cantonese cuisine, a variety of oriental wines and Moon cake. The evening will also include live music and karaoke. For more information, visit chungying.co.uk

Pop into the pop-up at The Pound for live music and nosh...

A new pop-up meat & fish menu is being launched at a Shropshire pub this month. From Friday 16 September, The Pound Inn at Church Stretton will offer a selection of dishes including Shropshire ribeye steak, whole grilled lemon sole,

Shropshire sirloin on the bone and half-grilled lobster. The launch evening also features a performance by Irish folk singer Brendan Monaghan. For more information, visit thepound.org.uk

REVIEW: The Yockleton Arms, Shropshire The perfect recipe for an enjoyable evening...



Shropshire-based restaurant The Yockleton Arms, formerly The Pink Elephant, has recently been taken over by Liam Hall. The eatery has undergone a complete overhaul, with changes made to the menu, decor and staff.

Having not long moved from Shrewsbury venue The Loopy Shrew, Liam's purchase of The Yockleton Arms sees him fulfilling his lifelong ambition to own his own restaurant.

The venue boasts a classic British menu with chef-inspired twists. Liam, who prides himself on using local produce - all lamb and beef is sourced within a half-mile radius - is aiming 'to bring high-quality, local British food back to the local community' - and that's exactly what we got.

To start, I chose the mussels with chopped bacon and rose-

mary in a white wine cream, served with fresh bread. The dish was delicious. The mussels were fresh and meaty, the white wine cream by far the nicest I've tasted - rich and full of flavour. It topped everything I'd sampled in Belgium earlier in the year - a huge achievement given that moules frites is the country's signature dish.

Sticking with the seafood theme, my partner opted for the seared mackerel fillet. It was served with wasabi mayo, pickled vegetables and rocket shoots. The fish was beautiful. The pickled veg added a little acidity, whilst the subtle kick from the wasabi provided another dimension. The chef's knowledge of flavour combination was showcased perfectly in this dish - another successful starter.

For my main, I chose the slow-

roasted pork belly served with scallops, pea veloute, black pudding & rosemary mash and crackling. My partner opted for the loch-reared sea trout accompanied by a scallop and crayfish risotto and buttered asparagus. Both were presented nicely and arrived in good time.

Just as we were about to tuck in, some extra crackling was delivered to our table - a lovely touch. You can never have too much crackling!

The pork belly was tender and full of flavour, cooked to perfection. The scallops were cooked well and the black pudding & rosemary mash an unusual yet tasty accompaniment. The addition of the pea veloute added a burst of freshness and helped to bring the whole dish together.

The trout, too, was cooked to perfection and tasted fresh, but

it was the risotto that stood out for me - so much so, in fact, that I'd say it was the highlight of the evening. The flavour was outstanding - one of the best risottos I've ever tasted.

On recommendation I chose the lemon tart for dessert. Both the filling and the pastry were lovely, the flavours a spot-on balance between sharp and sweet. My partner opted for the ice cream selection, which consisted of chocolate, vanilla and strawberry.

I'd have liked to have seen a few more dessert options on the menu, but I'm sure that will come with time.

Located eight miles outside Shrewsbury, The Yockleton Arms is a little out of the way, but don't let that put you off visiting. The menu isn't extensive - showcasing six starters and six mains - but the food is delicious and nicely presented, the prices reasonable and the staff welcoming and friendly. The perfect recipe for an enjoyable evening.

Lauren Foster

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

The Yockleton Arms
Stoney Stretton
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A vegan's delight in Wolverhampton

The ninth annual West Midlands Vegan Festival takes place at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall next month (Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 October).

The two-day event will feature 120-plus stalls offering hot and raw food, cakes, confectionary, footwear, clothing, cosmetics and toiletries. The festival also includes 10 cookery demonstrations, 40 talks, a selection of live, on-stage entertainment throughout the weekend, a vegan bar, alternative therapies and numerous kids' activities. For more information, visit midlandsveganfestival.org.uk



Telford pub restored to its former glory

A Shropshire pub built in the early 1800s has been restored and reopened.

The Ugly Duckling in Telford is described by its owners as having been 'returned to its former glory but with a modern twist, combining the best of old and new'.

"Our aim is to provide a casual and informal space," they explain, "but with no compromise on the quality of the food. Our inspiration comes from dining tables across Europe. The food style is strong and bold, with an emphasis on simplicity and using the finest ingredients we can source."



Ludlow Food Festival

Great British Menu winner Richard Bainbridge and Masterchef: The Professionals winner Mark Stinchcombe feature among the guests at this month's Ludlow Food Festival (9 to 11 September).

Richard and Mark will be joined by Adam Johnson, best known from the BBC TV show, Raymond Blanc's Kitchen Secrets.

Now in its 14th year, the festival's attractions include more than 180 artisan food producers and an abundance of demonstrations and

activities catering for all ages.

Numerous regular elements of the festival, including a kids' area with cookery lessons, are presented within the castle grounds, while the show's always-popular food trails take place out in the wider town.

New for 2016 is a series of talks and debates around the theme of sustainable food and farming, and reducing waste.

For more information, visit foodfestival.co.uk

Stone Food And Drink Festival

The 12th edition of Staffordshire's biggest gastronomic celebration is taking place at the end of the month.

The Stone Food And Drink Festival debuted in 2005 and attracts thousands of food lovers to the delightful market town every autumn.

As ever, this year's event features a wide range of attractions for visitors to enjoy, including a pop-up gourmet restaurant, a beer tent and a wide selection of ready-to-eat cuisine, from Staffordshire oatcakes through to exotic street food. Cookery demonstrations and masterclasses, numerous talks and plenty of live music also feature. Professor Panic and his performers from Panic Circus are on hand too, keeping youngsters entertained with circus workshops and free puppet and clown shows.

The festival takes place from Friday 30 September to Sunday 2 October. For more information, visit stonefooddrink.org.uk



Goldie

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury,
Fri 9 September

Metalheadz founder Goldie is without doubt one of the biggest names in electronic music, not only in the UK but also worldwide. Having sold more than three million records globally, the music pioneer has transformed an underground British sound into a mainstream international movement with the evolution of drum & bass, collaborating with major pop icons along the way.

As well as conquering the spheres of art and music, he's also made his mark in the acting world, appearing on TV in EastEnders and on the big screen in Guy Ritchie's gangster flick Snatch and Bond movie The World Is Not Enough.

He returns to the Buttermarket cellars - alongside MC Codebreaker - for the first time in 14 years, for what promises to be an unmissable event for jungle and drum & bass fans alike. Perception residents Conspire and Jay Dubz support.



The Leisure Society

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury,
Sun 25 September



The Leisure Society are an English rock band comprising founding members Nick Hemming, Christian Hardy and Mike Siddell. The group began the year with a three-week tour of Italy in a pared-down acoustic-trio formation.

This month, they're bringing that Italian inspiration back to the UK, playing a four-date tour of intimate venues, one of which is Henry Tudor House.

"These UK dates are entirely for our fans," says Christian. "We're going to crowdsource the setlist using our social media pages, so it should be a totally different show every night."

Hypnotic Brass Ensemble

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham,
Thurs 29 September

Hypnotic Brass are an eight-piece Chicago-based ensemble consisting of eight sons of the jazz trumpeter Phil Cohran. Their musical style ranges from hip-hop and jazz to funk and rock, incorporating calypso and gypsy music along the way.

They've recorded with artists such as Erykah Badu and Ghostface Killah, and performed with the likes of Wu Tang Clan, De La Soul, Prince, Femi Kuti and Gorillaz, to name but a few.

Their hit song War was featured in box office favourite The Hunger Games.

The ensemble's latest release, Sound Rhythm & Form, is said to be 'a teaser to satisfy the fans who've been waiting patiently for Bad Boys Of Jazz', which is set to be released next year.



Roy Harper

Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
Wed 7 September

English folk-rock singer Roy Harper has been on the professional music scene since the mid-1960s. With 23 studio LPs and almost as many live and compilation releases to his name - not to mention public endorsements from the likes of Fleet Foxes, Led Zeppelin and Kate Bush - it's little wonder he's been honoured with both the MOJO Hero Award (2005) and Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC Radio Two Folk Awards (2013). Roy visits Birmingham in celebration of his 75th birthday.

Beth Orton

O2 Institute, Birmingham,
Wed 28 September



Best known for her folktronica sound, English singer-songwriter Beth Orton came to prominence in the mid-1990s via collaborations with William Orbit, Red Snapper and The Chemical Brothers. Her first solo album, *Trailer Park* (she chooses not to count the earlier, Orbit-influenced *SuperPinkyMandy*, which was released only in Japan), received great critical acclaim, and she's since released a further four - *Central Reservation* (1999), *Daybreaker* (2002), *Comfort Of Strangers* (2006) and *Sugaring Season* (2012). Orton's latest offering, *Kidsticks*, includes the song *1973*, the music video for which featured the singer spray-painting a federally protected cholla cactus and Joshua Tree in the southern California desert, a move which did not go down well with the locals...

Milburn

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,
Thurs 22 September



Joe Carnall (lead vocals/bass), Louis Carnall (vocals/rhythm guitar), Tom Rowley (lead guitar) and Joe Green (drummer) formed Milburn back in 2001, having developed their friendship whilst playing football together. After the release of two successful albums, *Well Well Well* (2006) and *These Are The Facts* (2007), and performing an abundance of sell-out shows, the Sheffield four-piece called it a day following an attack on band member Louis. Eight years later, the boys have announced a UK tour following a sold-out, four-night residency back in the spring.



Toseland

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,
Wed 28 September; The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, Thurs 29 September

"Cradle The Rage is all about trying to control the frustrations of life that we all go through," says former world superbike champion James Toseland in talking about

the song that's lent its name to his band's new album. "It's about when things aren't going your way, or you seem to be getting nowhere fast. I wanted a song you could sing to release that energy and frustration." Having recently supported the legendary Deep Purple, the band visit Wolverhampton to promote their new album.

Haley Reinhart

The Glee Club, Birmingham,
Mon 19 September



Twenty-five-year-old Haley Reinhart is an American singer, songwriter and voice actress from Chicago who rose to prominence after coming third in the 10th series of *American Idol*. Reinhart garnered widespread recognition in 2015 for performing and touring with Scott Bradlee's *Postmodern Jukebox*, and for her cover of Elvis' *Can't Help Falling In Love*. The latter appeared in a TV ad for *Extra Gum*, racking up nearly 13 million views on YouTube and peaking at number 16 on the US Adult Contemporary Chart. She performs in the Midlands as part of a UK headline tour to support her new album, *Better*.

Megson

Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham,
Tues 20 September; The Brewhouse Arts
Centre, Staffordshire, Thurs 20 September

Since releasing first album *On The Side* in 2004, husband-and-wife team Stu and Debbie Hanna have developed an enviable reputation on the English folk music circuit. Specialising in self-composed melodies which bring together intimate harmony singing and multi-instrumental acoustic playing, the pair have released numerous albums since *On The Side*, with their latest studio offering - *Good Times Will Come Again* - available now.



MY WEST END STORY

Daniel Koek performs at Shrewsbury's Henry Tudor House

He's played countless coveted roles in much-loved musicals, performed in major international venues from Edinburgh to Adelaide, taken on the part of Tony in West Side Story's 50th anniversary tour and become the West End's youngest ever Jean Valjean; over the last 10 years, Australian tenor Daniel Koek has been making waves in musical theatre around the world, as well as releasing two successful solo albums. This month, as part of an ongoing UK regional tour, Koek visits Shrewsbury's Henry Tudor House for a small-scale concert that will take listeners on a journey through the highs and lows of his career so far.

"I originally put the show together for the 2015 Cabaret Festival in Adelaide, to mark the 10th anniversary of me moving to London to study musical theatre," he explains. "It's a very intimate sort of show with just me and a piano, doing songs and stories about all the ups and downs and the roles I've played along the way."

Though classically trained, Koek is best known for his renditions of popular musical show tunes. As such, both his albums and his solo concerts feature an eclectic mix of songs ranging from Italian arias to contemporary pop hits, all brought together in an engaging crossover style that's been described as 'popera'.

"I think it's a genre of music that's always been quite popular and helps to make classical music more accessible. While I've been classically trained, I've always loved the big production songs as well. I think in

the end, people like hearing a nice melody with a through-line and a chorus and good lyrics. It can be really joyous and inspirational for them."

For a singer with such varied interests, there are endless possibilities when it comes to assembling material for a new album or tour, but as far as Koek is concerned, there are two key factors in choosing what to include: the personal emotional resonance of a song, and the potential to make it his own.

"I think music inspires us and touches us on a daily basis, and there are certain songs and pieces of music that form a kind of soundtrack to your life. Sometimes you just find yourself coming back to a song that reminds you of a particular occasion or a poignant moment or a success that you've had. I remember those and set them aside for when I'm putting together shows like this. Of course, I also like to put my own slant on things, like with Set Fire To The Rain. It's a beautiful song with such a great lyric that when I did it for the album, I decided to make it more acoustic, especially at the beginning."

Released last year, Koek's second album, HiGH, includes a medley of Billy Joel songs - And So It Goes and She's Always A Woman - as well as a rendition of Josh Groban's February Song, both of which, he says, will appear in the concert. The album also features the vocal talents of former G4 tenor Jonathan Ansell, as well as Britain's Got Talent's Charlotte Jaconelli, with whom Koek has also performed live.



“Charlotte actually originally came to me after she parted ways with Jonathan [Antoine, her former singing partner]. She’d seen me in *Les Mis* and her management called up to ask if I would be interested in doing a duet on her album. She’s a beautiful little up-and-coming star, so of course I jumped at the chance. With *Bring It Home*, after doing *Les Mis*, I knew I wanted it on my new album, but of course everyone who plays that role records it for an album, so I was looking for a way of doing something different with it. The arrangement I did with my MD works really well with two male voices, and Jonathan’s a beautiful tenor, so we brought him on board for that.”

To raise the money for his album, Koek turned to crowdfunding website PledgeMusic, enabling him to capitalise on his existing fanbase and offer them a range of perks and goodies for supporting his work.

“It’s a really great platform for engaging the fans you already have and getting them on board with the funding of a new album. Obviously, in this day and age, making money out of music is much harder, and creating something on the scale I did for the second album isn’t cheap - there are the musicians and the arrangements and the photoshoots, which can all really add up. This way, people can help by doing anything from buying the album on pre-sale to getting signed items or gig tickets and experiences with me. It makes the fans feel involved and that’s what I really like about it.”

As well as giving a sense of ownership to the fans, crowdfunding also offers a greater level

of control over the finished product to artists and creators.

“I’ve always been very determined and very focused on the kind of music that I want to make. Sometimes, if you’re signed to a major label, that can get taken out of your hands, which I don’t really like the idea of.”

Over the years, Koek has built up an impressive list of stage credits, including parts in *West Side Story*, *South Pacific*, *Chess* and *Saturday Night Fever*, but his most stand-out role, as previously mentioned, has been Jean Valjean in the West End production of *Les Miserables*. As much as it’s a joy and a privilege to play a part like that, however, Koek is also candid about the costs.

“When you’re in a production like that, it means doing seven or eight shows a week, sometimes two a day, and that particular part is like a marathon. It’s really all-consuming, and from an audience perspective, it requires you to be bang on the money all the time, so you just have to really knuckle down and keep yourself very fit and healthy and focused and look after your body. For a while, I basically had no social life and no personal life, but it’s a sacrifice you make for your career.”

Over time, this strenuous routine began to take its toll, and Koek realised it was time to make a change. After taking some time out to recover, he began to focus on smaller concerts, as well as recording his album and developing new material.

“I’d been lucky enough to go from show to show, touring both nationally and internationally, so by the time I finished in *Les Mis*,

it was my sixth year in a row of doing eight shows a week. Not that I wasn’t enjoying it, but towards the end of *Les Mis*, I found myself becoming all new levels of exhausted, and I think sometimes you just need to listen to your body and your mental state and give yourself a rest.

“I also decided it was time to kind of regroup and redefine myself as an artist, rather than just being the product of someone else’s show. I think that’s a trap that a lot of musical theatre performers get stuck in: obviously the financial rewards of doing lots of big shows are high, and you can become reliant on that if you don’t do something fresh and new to inspire yourself.

“At the moment, I’m really enjoying being able to do regional gigs like this one in Shrewsbury. It will be my very first time there, but I’ve got a property up in Derbyshire where I’ll be staying for the weekend, so it won’t be far for me to travel.

“I’m also doing a lot of corporate work. I’ll go out and headline cruise ships from time to time, and I’ve been doing some writing. Just not having that packed schedule gives you time and energy to create things.”

.....

Daniel Koek: My West End Story is at Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury on Sunday 11 September.

STEPHAN MEIER

Heather Kincaid talks to Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's new Artistic Director...



Almost 30 years after helping to set up the organisation back in 1987, husband-and-wife team Stephen and Jackie Newbould have finally bid goodbye to Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, stepping down from their respective roles as Artistic Director and Executive Producer. Since 2001, under Stephen's watchful eye, BCMG has flowered into one of Europe's most well-respected music ensembles, and the departure of not just one, but two of its key figures is bound to entail major changes.

The Artistic Director's shoes might be big ones to fill, but BCMG is confident it's found the right man for the job in percussionist, composer and conductor Stephan Meier, who is eager to get stuck in to the task ahead. What's On spoke to Meier to find out more about his background and his plans for the future of the group.

"I'm finding it absolutely thrilling here so far!" Meier enthuses. "I feel like this is a very special story which I'm diving into at the moment."

Originally from Germany, Meier rose to prominence on the contemporary music scene as the founder and Artistic Director of Hanover's acclaimed Das Neue Ensemble. It was in this capacity that his awareness of BCMG and its work began to grow.

"I've known some of the musicians here for quite a long time, having met them in Frankfurt and Berlin and other places where contemporary music is pushed forward. Those shared experiences have been in the background while working with my own Das Neue Ensemble."

As someone coming from outside the UK, Meier brings with him a wealth of knowledge about music from across Europe that will be invaluable in the role. His vision for BCMG is of a dynamic, outward-looking, international organisation that can hold its own on the world stage.

"I'm looking forward to broadening the scope of



BCMG and bringing more of the excellent music being worked on around the world to Birmingham. I think it would be lovely to build up BCMG's exceptional standard of playing and performing knowledge on a global level."

In this, he's not alone. Meier's arrival in Birmingham happens to coincide with the appointment of the Lithuanian Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla as Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, an organisation with which BCMG has always fostered strong ties. Add to this the ongoing redevelopment of the Birmingham Conservatoire under its new Principal, Julian Lloyd-Webber, as well as the arrival of Caroline Newton as Executive Producer at BCMG, and the coming year starts to feel like a very exciting time for music in the city.

"I'm continuously meeting people who are really intensely keen to drive things forward, who are very open to new ideas and to every possibility. And not just in the musical field, I have to add."

Among Meier's main responsibilities in his new position will be programming the many concerts and events that fill the BCMG calendar, as well as commissioning new work from current composers. For the 2016/17 season, he will be mainly focused on continuing the work of his predecessor and seeing through projects already set in motion.

"For the next 12 months, Stephen has set a wonderful programme celebrating all the things that BCMG has reached and achieved. Our next season will be about building up a strong network of nationwide and worldwide eminent composers and conductors, as well as building up the Sound Investment scheme."

First established in 1992, Sound Investment is a unique BCMG creation that pioneered crowdfunding for new commissions long before the use of such methods of raising money for creative projects became popularised online. This radical approach has proved highly successful, enabling BCMG to position itself at the forefront of contemporary music. To date, the scheme has given rise to over 70 original works by an impressive array of composers, as well as encouraging a sense of ownership and direct engagement from its supporters.

"The composers from the BCMG family, if I may put it like that, are at the core of what we're doing over the coming months - people like Thomas Adès and Colin Matthews, as well as younger musicians like our fantastic Apprentice Composer-in-Residence Patrick Brennan. I'm very much looking forward to being part of this process of collaboration and co-operation."

Elsewhere, Meier will also be overseeing the group's education and outreach arm, taking a lead on its various projects.

"BCMG has gained a worldwide reputation, not only artistically, but also in the sector which they call Learning & Participation. I would say that currently, the main focus is on young people, so I hope to extend that to encompass the wider public. We have wonderful plans in terms of broadening these activities, and I hope that all curious people will want to share with BCMG in exploring what today's music will be."

Without a doubt, it's going to be an extremely busy period for Meier. As well as spending time mapping out the future of BCMG, he'll also be continuing with much of his work back home in Germany, including

staying on as Artistic Director of Das Neue.

"Having set up this small ensemble in Hanover for contemporary music, I feel that saying goodbye to it would be like giving up my identity. But I don't think it will be a problem for me, otherwise I wouldn't have been chosen. Just look at Mirga, who I think has three jobs at the moment! My impression is that the board who appointed me would see this as an advantage rather than a disadvantage, because of the possibilities it opens up for international exchange."

Far from being troubled by the workload, then, Meier is looking forward to the challenges ahead. Having previously described BCMG as "one of the world's finest new music ensembles, admired for its joyous, uncompromising championing of the music of today," he views it as a privilege to lead the group through this exciting new chapter in its story.

"There are two things, I believe, that make this group so special. The first is the extraordinary capability of the players, who are all working at a standard well above what is usual. The second is the way in which they work together as an ensemble. There is a really wonderful community of musicians here - 'work' is almost not the right word to describe what they are doing, since you can see how much they're enjoying going on these adventures together. It's a fantastic starting point for me to build from."

.....
Stephan Meier's tenure as Artistic Director of BCMG begins with the 2016/17 season. A full programme of events and activities is available at whatsonlive.co.uk

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Festivals

Moseley Folk Festival

Moseley Park, Birmingham, Fri 2 - Sun 4 September

There's no need to walk 500 miles to see The Proclaimers this month - they're much closer to home than that, sharing headlining duties at this genre-hopping annual festival.

Presented in the stunning setting of Moseley Park, the event has a reputation for punching above its weight when it comes to enticing star names, and this year is no exception.

Along with Scottish twins Craig and Charlie, who'll draw proceedings to a close on the Sunday, the line-up also includes Levellers, The Coral, The Jayhawks and Billy Bragg.

Other notable names taking to the stage at the three-day festival are Phosphorescent, Songhoy Blues, Oysterband and Benjamin Francis Leftwich.

Line-up at a glance: Levellers, The Coral, The Proclaimers, Billy Bragg, The Jayhawks, Songhoy Blues, Phosphorescent, Oysterband, Benjamin Francis Leftwich, Jacqui McShee's Pentangle, Sam Lee & Friends, This Is The Kit, Laura Gibson, Steve Tilston.



Kenilworth Arts Festival

Various venues, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, Mon 12 - Sun 18 September

"Our aim," explain the organisers of Kenilworth Arts Festival, "is to bring together some of the finest contemporary music, literature and art from across the country, as well as to offer a platform for bright local talent. "That said, it's important to point out that 'arts' isn't intended as a code word for 'hodgepodge'. We have a very clear vision for the festival, and our insistence on quality, originality and contemporary creative expression will shape the programme of events."

Previously called the Kenilworth Festival and rebranded for this year, the event includes contributions from critically acclaimed contemporary artists and keynote speakers. There are numerous workshops to attend as well, and a free, open-air, child-friendly get-together in Abbey Fields featuring music, food, arts & crafts and stalls selling local produce.

Line-up at a glance: Jason Rebello, Kitty MacFarlane, Luke Jackson, Rachel Sermanni (pictured), Rebecca Omonira-Oyekanmi, Rob Cowen, The Ayoub Sisters, Andrew Davies, Claire Trevien, David Morley, Jo Bell, Jonathan Edwards, Luke Kennard, Sarah Howe.



Stafford Blues Festival

Lower Drayton Farm, Nr Penkridge, Staffordshire, Fri 2 - Sun 4 September

Eager to ensure the second edition of the Stafford Blues Festival builds on the promising notes sounded by last year's inaugural offering, organisers have added what they describe as 'a touch of rock' to this year's event. The Sick Notes, Stuart Woolfenden and Rock Dogs will all be on hand to offer a side-order of headbanging to go with the main dish of chilled-out jazz and blues.

There's also a Women In Blues day, featuring contributions from female artists including the internationally acclaimed Judy Emeline and up-and-coming local talent Rheanna Forrester.

A jam/open-mic session kickstarts proceedings on the Thursday, at what promises to be a pleasantly low-key get-together boasting a relaxed, family atmosphere.

Line-up at a glance: Stu Woolfenden, The Sick Notes, Rockdogs, Bang To Rights, Rainbreakers, Lol Goodman Band, Pistol Pete Wearn, Used Blues, Ged Wilson, Ben Miles, Cold Flame, Voodoo Stone, Blackfish, The Zoe Green Band, Maggie Thomas, Narn, The Bonny Lou Band, Imaner, Northbound, Barrel House Jukes.

Rockstock And Barrel

The Chimneys, Willington, Derbyshire, Fri 30 September - Sat 1 October

A small but perfectly formed event is how its relatively modest band of dedicated enthusiasts would describe Rockstock And Barrel, a festival taking place in the shadow of the Willington cooling towers.

Live power lines overhead, an atmosphere sparking with electricity, plenty of highly charged music and no small amount of brain-battering cider ensure the two-day event boasts a style and character all its own.

This year's line-up features Nottingham folk-punk/ska band Ferocious Dog and South Yorkshire blues/rockers Black Tartan Clan, both of whom are headlining.

Line-up at a glance: Ferocious Dog (pictured), Black Tartan Clan, The Lagan, Blind Fever Hillbilly Blues, Headsticks, Star Botherers, Emma And The Professor, We Steal Flyers, The Bar-Steward Sons Of Val Doonican, The Blue Horizon, The Eskies.



Romesh Ranganathan

William Aston Hall, Wrexham, Sat 24 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 25 September; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 29 September; Malvern Theatre, Sat 8 October; Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 9 & Wed 12 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 14 October; Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 29 October

Romesh Ranganathan's transition from maths teacher to stand-up comedian wasn't always an easy one.

"When I was starting out," Romesh recalls, "I'd be performing to one man and his dog in a local pub, and all of a sudden my sixth formers would turn up to watch me die on stage. Telling them off in class the following day was certainly not easy!"

With his support slots having included one for Ricky Gervais, Romesh has become a familiar face on TV, having lent his talents to, among other series, *Live At The Apollo* and *Stand Up For The Week*. He's returning to the Midlands this month with brand new show *Irrational*, in which he'll not only examine the global issues close to his heart but also explain why everybody else is wrong about them...



Six of the best...

Sara Pascoe

Stratford Artshouse, Thurs 22 September

In common with Mitch Benn (opposite page), Sara Pascoe is clear about one thing - there are no off-limit subjects when it comes to comedy.

"People forgive the subject matter when they find something funny," she says, "but that doesn't mean the comedian has no responsibility to question their own material. If they're going to tell a joke about rape, they should first consider how you might feel if you've been a victim of it. If, after that, they still feel it's a joke worth telling, then they'll be doing so with complete faith in their own material, which is great."

Sara first entered the realm of stand-up comedy back in 2007. Since that time she's continued to develop both her act and her CV, with roles in *The Thick Of It* and *Being Human* sitting alongside her live work.



Andrea Hubert

The Glee Club, Fri 23 - Sat 24 September

At a gangly 6ft 2in, Andrea Hubert stands out from the crowd even before she opens her mouth, let alone tells a joke. A second-place finish in all manner of prestigious stand-up competitions offers irrefutable evidence of the consistently high quality of her material.

Her Edinburgh stand-up show this summer took the theme of depression - not a subject that's an obvious bag of laughs but certainly one that's been significant in Andrea's life. Having suffered with the 'black dog' for years, she finally decided to take antidepressants - and hasn't looked back since. She would advise anybody in a similar position to follow her lead - just bite the bullet and swallow the pill. "Do take them," she urges. "Positive feelings will start to creep in. Embrace them the way you would a polite new boyfriend after years of bastards."



Funhouse Comedy Night

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Thurs 22 September

BRMB presenter Tom Binns became former BRMB presenter Tom Binns on Christmas Day 2009. It was on that day that he stopped the Birmingham radio station's broadcast of the Queen's Speech, declared it to be "Two words: Bor-ring", and played the Wham song *Last Christmas* instead... According to Tom, there's plenty more to that story than meets the eye, but the bottom line is that he was subsequently sacked from the station. Not that the dismissal has weighed too heavily on his career in the years which have followed, thanks in no small measure to his impressive comic talent.

He's best known on the circuit for his alter egos, Ivan Brackenbury - an inept hospital radio DJ - and Ian D Montford - a man whose propensity for getting things wrong belies his belief that he's Britain's top psychic. Tom here appears as both characters.





Mitch Benn

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 10 September;
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Thurs 22 September

"I wouldn't say there's an absolutely taboo subject when it comes to comedy," says Mitch Benn, who visits the Midlands this month with his Don't Believe A Word tour, "but there are some things which are just so hard to make funny, you'd probably just upset yourself and everyone else by trying. Sure, I have the right to crack jokes about everything. The question is, do I have the *capacity* to crack jokes about everything? Am I that good that I can take the most abhorrent subjects and make them funny?"

"I've often thought that offensive humour is a bit of an oddity. In my mind, if something's offensive, then it's not funny. I'm also quite suspicious of self-consciously dark humour. My problem with it is that I think it shifts the burden onto the audience. It makes it *their* job to find *me* funny, rather than it being *my* job to make them laugh. As a comedian, I believe it's never the audience's responsibility to find you funny."

Ross Noble

The Place,
Oakengates,
Shropshire,
Thurs 22 - Fri 23
September

Geordie comic
Ross Noble may
not have hit the
heights once

expected of him, but he's undoubtedly one of the UK's most talented funnymen. He also has a nice line in surreal comedy, never gives an audience the same show twice, and boasts hundreds of thousands of followers on Twitter.

He's heading for the Midlands this month to perform a warm-up for his brand new show, Brain Dump, and includes among his jokes, "If the Pope doesn't want to be knocked down, he shouldn't dress up as a skittle".



Bridget Christie

Royal Shakespeare
Theatre, Stratford-
upon-Avon, Sun 18
September

Bridget Christie describes herself as 'a female person' and 'the only stand-up to have been billed alongside both Lionel Blair and Naomi Wolf'. Bridget's appearance at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, alongside comedian and writer Andy Hamilton, is sandwiched between her Edinburgh Festival appearances and numerous London performances of *Because You Demanded It*, her new show about Brexit.

"If you didn't want to leave the EU," says Bridget, "or you did, but now don't because everything's gone to shit, then this is absolutely the show for you."

Gags include: "Every vagina is a unique snowflake... made of gammon", and "Feminism isn't a fad. It's not like Angry Birds. Although it does involve a lot of angry birds. Bad example."



Tape Face

The Core, Solihull,
Sun 18 September;
Royal Spa Centre,
Leamington Spa,
Wed 12 October;
mac, Birmingham,
Thurs 13 - Sat 15
October; Wulfrun
Hall, W'hampton,
Tues 1 November



Otherwise known as The Boy With Tape On His Face, hailed as a modern-day Buster Keaton and described as 'a mad scientist of vaudevillian pranks', there's no question that Canadian comedian Sam Wills brings something to the table that's just a little bit different.

Mime with noise, stand-up with no talking, and drama with no acting are among the novelty numbers he peddles in his shows, which have also been known to draw on a heritage that includes magic, puppetry and Motown.

Oh, and the films of Patrick Swayze...



Isy Suttie

Best known for playing Dobby in Channel Four's Peep Show, comedian Isy Suttie this month visits the Midlands to promote her book, *The Actual One*. What's On recently caught up with her to find out more...

Isy Suttie has been swapping the lights of the stage for the glow of her desk lamp recently, and now that she's completed her book, *The Actual One*, she's back on tour with a new show of the same name. However, it's not exactly like a regular stand-up tour - as she explains: "It's effectively a book tour, but I still want to make it as varied as possible, so there'll be bits of stand-up and songs and I'll be chatting to the audience. The book is an account of me being single and in various relationships in my late 20s/early 30s, but what's come out from the writing of it is a celebration of friendship. What I do generally is quite upbeat, and I'm not about to do a series of one-liners about misery, so it will hopefully be quite spirited and fun."

When she came to deciding how she wanted to structure *The Actual One* (the working title of which was *Glass Half Full*), Suttie took a degree of inspiration from Lena Dunham, the creator of US hit comedy-drama *Girls* and author of *Not That Kind Of Girl*. "Her book is written in essay form where there's no narrative per se or even a thread running through it; it's just chapters about different periods of her life, and that works brilliantly. I'd toyed with doing my book that way, but it felt that the right thing was to write about a concentrated period of time."

One of the main events in this period features the time Suttie was back at her parents' house feeling a little sorry for herself having just witnessed her pregnant best mate moving away. "As a joke, my mum and I set up an internet dating profile for me and she started choosing guys for me and logging in as me. It culminated in a bet where, if I didn't end up with a boyfriend in a month, I'd go on a date with someone she'd chosen. She really got into it. I talk a lot in the book about the nature of relationships according to my experience, and the fact that I know more unhappy people who are in relationships than aren't. This isn't a book that's the equivalent of a romcom, where I'm all Bridget Jonesy and eventually find someone to live happily ever

after with. And nor is it me going about leaving my knickers on rugby posts. It's quite an honest account of me bumbling through life trying to make the best of things."

Certainly, Isy Suttie has made more than the best of things when it comes to her career in comedy to date, with a series of successful Edinburgh Fringe shows under her belt. *Love Lost In The British Retail Industry* was her acclaimed 2007 character-led debut, while her most recent appearance was in 2011, with *Pearl And Dave*. "When I was growing up, I always wanted to be an actress and musician. I never thought I'd go into comedy, although I was always larking about and playing the fool at school. I used to write these serious songs, and around the age of 18, I really thought I could be a folk singer and an actress. I just knew that I'd want to tell stories in my songs."

It would be fair to say that music has been an important element in much of Suttie's work. As a teenager, she was a regional winner in the Daily Telegraph Young Jazz Competition, while a few years later she won the Julian Slade Songwriting Competition. Subsequently, she's been tour support for one of her heroes (ex-Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine leader Jim Bob) and enlisted the help of another idol, The Stranglers' Jean-Jacques Burnel, for a short film she made, *The Best Night Of Roxy's Life*.

TV has also come a-calling for Suttie, with appearances opposite Alan Davies in BBC kitchen drama *Whites*, as a regular character in *Shameless*' 11th season and, in arguably her biggest coup, a recurring role across several seasons as Dobby in *Peep Show*. With that series coming to a close in 2015, it was the right moment for Suttie to reflect on being part of one of Britain's most critically adored sitcoms of recent times.

"When I got on *Peep Show*, I didn't fully realise how big it was. I remember being nervous for the whole of my first series because it felt like a big jump for me. The writing never wavered, and it was so relaxed there com-

pared to some things where you're running out of time and everyone is a bit knackered. But with *Peep Show*, even when we were really up against it, the cast and the director never made it feel like work. A lot of that is to do with the writing; when you know you have a really great script, everyone is more relaxed and you're on a very solid foundation."

Now that Suttie is a published author as well as a TV actress, musical comedian and award-winning radio playwright (her adaptation of *Pearl And Dave* for Radio Four won the Sony Radio Academy Award in 2013), her career's building blocks are rock-solid. And thanks to her aforementioned 'book tour', 2016 is proving to be a big year for her.

"When you're writing a live show, you just have to think, 'Is this funny?' You might say, 'Well, I've done enough funny stuff to earn the right to talk about my dead grandfather for 10 minutes', but when you're writing a book, you can allow yourself a bit of space. You can plunge deeper down in a book than you can on stage. I love doing radio, but you're always a bit confined because you can't talk about sex unless you're alluding to it. With the book, I found I could write about whatever I wanted, with no need to shy away from any of those cringey and sometimes sad moments that feel more honest. I had a rule that I wouldn't write anything in the book that I wouldn't say on stage. I do talk about sex; I mean, it's not Jordan's autobiography or anything, but if I thought it would be good for the reader to know something, then I'd put it in. And the best bit, of course, is that you can't see people's faces when they're reading it."

Isy Suttie brings her *The Actual One* Book Tour to the Glee Club, Birmingham on Friday 23 September.

Hard copies of *The Actual One* are now available from all leading book shops.

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Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Fri 23 - Sat 24 September

It's been six years since the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater last performed in Birmingham, so this return visit is long overdue. Since forming in the late 1950s, the company has bedazzled more than 20 million people across 70-plus countries on six continents and continues to impress with its theatrical style of performance. The ensemble here present a repertoire of seven shows across two days. Their all-too-brief stop-off at the Hippodrome is brought to a close with a performance of Revelations. Choreographed by founding father Ailey and first performed in 1960, the work uses song-sermons, spirituals, holy blues and gospel songs to tell the story of the African-American journey from slavery to freedom.



National Dance Company Of Wales: Folk

DanceXchange, The Patrick Centre,
Birmingham Hippodrome,
Thurs 22 - Fri 23 September



National Dance Company Wales' new artistic director, Caroline Finn, is one of three leading choreographers whose work is being presented in this brand new show. Well known for her quirky style, Finn here presents Folk, a darkly comic piece that explores the theme of social dynamics.

"I wanted to create a community in which the characters could exist that was surreal yet familiar," explains Caroline, "a world that we can all relate to on some level but which isn't immediately identifiable or recognisable. Folk is a piece which features some quite intense moments, but it also has a dash of dark British humour."

Alongside Finn's work, the company also performs Alexander Ekman's *Tuplet* - a witty and high-octane exploration of the simple

notion of rhythm - and Lee Johnston's *They Seek To Find The Happiness They Seem*, a 'heart-wrenching exploration of the separation and disconnection within a relationship'.

Rosie Kay Dance Company Double Bill

mac, Birmingham,
Thurs 15 - Sat 16 September

Rosie Kay's Midlands-based company here present two pieces that perfectly illustrate why the ensemble is so highly regarded on the UK dance scene.

Bach, dubstep and electronica provide the soundscape against which the dancers perform *Double Points: K*, an impressive study of synchronicity and stamina.

Meanwhile, it's the paintings of visual arts duo Huntley Muir that provide the company's inspiration for *Motel* - a 'dark, sexy and exciting' work exploring the spaces in which 'illicit affairs occur and secret relationships play out'.



BRB: The Tempest

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Sat 1 - Sat 8 October

David Bintley's full-length ballet version of *The Tempest* has been a long time coming - 30 years, in fact.

"Thirty years ago I made my first full-length ballet, *The Swan Of Tuonela*," explains David, the artistic director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, the company next month performing the brand new work. "The music was derived from a number of Sibelius's scores, including the overture from his incidental music to *The Tempest*. Later, I acquired a recording of the complete music and was fired to make a ballet.

Unfortunately my excitement was tempered by my feeling that this music, excellent though it was, was not the score for me to make 'my' *Tempest* to, so the idea was relegated to the back burner."

And there it remained - until, that is, David discovered the music of British composer Sally Beamish. "Her output is pictorial in concept," he says, "often lyrical, dramatic, pulse driven and strongly, recognisably structured. Imagine my delight on meeting her and learning that she'd longed to write for dance!"

Bintley's *Tempest* is the highlight of Birmingham Royal Ballet's contribution to *Shakespeare400*, a nationwide festival marking the 400th anniversary of the playwright's death. The ballet will head out on a UK tour following its premiere at the Hippodrome next month.

Sister Act

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 12 - Sat 17 September; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 27 February - Sat 4 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 8 - Sat 13 May

Alexandra Burke stars in this hit show, which is based on the Whoopi Goldberg film of the same name and directed by Craig Revel Horwood.

Packed to the rafters with songs inspired by Motown, funk, soul and disco, *Sister Act* tells the story of disco diva Deloris Van Cartier. After witnessing a murder, Deloris is put in protective custody by the police, in the one place they feel confident she won't be found - a convent, and disguised as a nun...



The Importance Of Being Earnest

The REP, Birmingham, Fri 9 - Sat 24 September



"We're not messing with genius," says Curve Leicester's Artistic Director, Nikolai Foster, in speaking about the venue's new version of Oscar Wilde's classic comedy, a co-production with Birmingham Rep. "People who know and love the play are going to get a very fine reading of it.

"Hopefully it's the best of both worlds: I think young people coming to see it for the first time will love the anarchy of these young people telling porkies and creating alter-egos to escape their overbearing parents and guardians, and people who're a bit older and know the play will get to see something very glamorous and unlike any production they've ever seen before."

Labels

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 30 September

Worklight Theatre came to prominence five years ago with their debut show, *How To Start A Riot*. They've been building a solid reputation for thoughtfully constructed stage work ever since.

Labels, their third offering, is a one-man show that seeks to highlight the dangers of trivialising racism, examining how the use of language reflects people's personal prejudices and those of society in general.

The show uses comedy, storytelling and spoken word to highlight its message, with performer Joe Sellman-Leava warning his audience to expect 'paper planes, racist romances and lots of sticky labels!'

Patrick Marley: Wilde At Heart

The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 16 - Sat 17 September

"The gods had given me almost everything," wrote Oscar Wilde in *De Profundis*, the letter he sent to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, from his cell in Reading gaol, where he'd been imprisoned for acts of gross indecency with other males. "Genius, brilliancy, intellectual daring. Whatever I touched I made beautiful... Along with these things, I had things that were different. I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease... The danger was half the excitement... They were to me the brightest of gild-

ed snakes!"...

Patrick Marley's well-reviewed work is a thoughtfully compiled celebration of the flawed genius that Wilde so colourfully and accurately described himself to be in *De Profundis*. The production visits various points in the writer's life, introducing the people who influenced him and charting the triumphs and tragedies of one of Irish literature's most talented and controversial characters.

A Slave To Love

mac, Birmingham, Fri 16 - Sat 17 September

"My play is set in 1860 Jamestown, Virginia," explains writer and director Nathalie Bazan in talking about her new work. "It tells the story of three slaves sold at auction to Governor John Johnson to work on his small plantation.

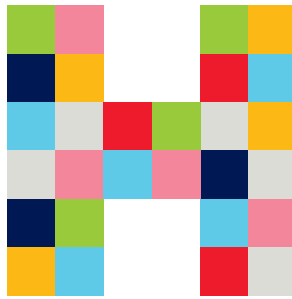
"As the story unfolds, we discover the truth behind the lies, the secrets kept hidden and the sacrifices made for love. A life is at risk for committing the ultimate crime. Falling in love. Or was it destiny all along?"

Containing strong language and scenes of nudity and violence, *A Slave To Love* is presented in association with Lying Lips Theatre Company.





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Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Wed 7 - Sun 18 September

Everybody's favourite flying car makes a welcome return to the Midlands this month, complete with 'sensational' sets, 'stunning' special effects, the Sherman Brothers' memorable score and a high-energy cast headed by Lee Mead, Claire Sweeney and comedian Phill Jupitus.

When eccentric inventor Caractacus Potts (Mead) creates an amazing flying car, he takes his family to the fictional country of Vulgaria. But all is not well in the European barony, where the sinister Baron Bomburst has decided to make children illegal...

Truly Scrumptious, Toot Sweets, Hushabye Mountain and the Oscar-nominated title song feature among the show's best-known musical numbers.



Little Shop Of Horrors

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 20 - Sat 24 September;
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Tues 27
September - Sat 1 October

This cult, tongue-in-cheek show is an affectionate spoof of 1950s science fiction movies. It's probably best known from its 1980s film version, which featured a hilarious turn from Steve Martin as sadistic dentist Orin Scrivello. The show-stealing role is here taken by Welsh baritone and one-time X Factor star Rhydian Roberts, whose musical theatre CV includes productions of Grease, We Will Rock You, The War Of The Worlds, Jesus Christ Superstar and The Rocky Horror Show.



Airswimming

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Fri 23 September

Charlotte Jones may be best known for her 2001 offering, Humble Boy, but this sad-yet-funny story of two forgotten women, written

by the playwright in 1997, is every bit as original and thought-provoking as her later award winner.

Set in the 1920s, it focuses on the friendship between Dora and Persephone, who find themselves incarcerated in a hospital for the criminally insane. Dora is there for wishing to dress and live like a man, Persephone because she bore an illegitimate child.

As the years pass and their desperation intensifies, the friends adopt alter egos and take refuge in a fantasy world of their own creation - a world inhabited by Doris Day, Bolshevik women, a Moulinex hand whisk and airswimming...

The Collector

Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Tues 27
September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
Thurs 29 September - Sat 1 October

When the pro-Western Nazir is offered a job as a translator by the Allies in Iraq's Mazrat Prison, once one of Saddam Hussein's most notorious torture houses, he gratefully accepts. The money he makes will allow him to marry his sweetheart, Zoya. He'll also be able to feel that he's making a positive contribution towards the building of a new Iraq. But when he's recognised by a new prisoner, a psychotic supporter of the old regime, it isn't long before Nazir's life becomes a living hell...

Henry Naylor's highly acclaimed show bagged the prestigious Scotsman Fringe First Award at the 2014 Edinburgh Festival, a success which was followed by a sold-out run at London's Arcola Theatre.

Disco Pigs

The REP, Birmingham,
Thurs 29 September - Sat 1 October

Enda Walsh's fast and furious play, about the fragility of a friendship that asks too much, caused a significant stir when it debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe way back in 1997.

Darren and Sinead have known one another all of their lives, having been born seconds apart in Cork City hospital. They're close - almost telepathically close. So close, in fact, that they've renamed themselves Pig and Runt, developed their very own language and created a special fantasy world in which they can shelter from reality. But as they prepare to enjoy a 17th birthday binge, it's clear that all is no longer well between the pair. Pig needs more from Runt, and Runt needs more from life. When reality violently collides with their fantasy, it isn't too long before their self-created world begins to crumble...



Dial M For Murder

Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham,
Thurs 22 September - Sat 1 October

Frederick Knott's erotic tale of betrayal, passion and murder is best known from its 1954 Alfred Hitchcock-directed film version starring Ray Milland and Grace Kelly.

When Tony becomes convinced that wife Margot is having an affair, he devises a plan to have her murdered...

MON 26 SEP



TUE 27 SEP - SAT 1 OCT



TUE 11 - SAT 15 OCT



SUN 16 OCT



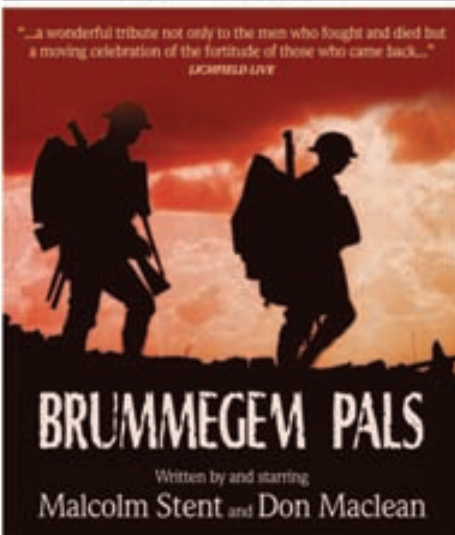
WED 19 - SAT 22 OCT



SUN 23 OCT



TUE 25 - WED 26 OCT



THU 27 OCT



SAT 29 OCT



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The Shawshank Redemption

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 27 September - Sat 1 October

Given that film critics regard *The Shawshank Redemption* as one of the greatest movies of all time, it's hardly surprising to find that its stage version is out on the road and doing good business.

Based on a 1982 Stephen King novella, the story revolves around the character of Andy Dufresne, a man serving a double life sentence at the notorious Shawshank facility. An unlikely friendship with prison fixer Red makes life a little more bearable - but when the warden decides to make Andy's life hell, the nothing-to-lose lifer hatches a daring and ingenious plan to escape...

Paul Nicholls (Joe Wickes in *EastEnders*), Ben Onwukwe (Stuart McKenzie in *London's Burning*) and Jack Ellis (*Prime Suspect*, *Coronation Street*) star.



The Rover

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Thurs 8 September - Sat 11 February

Thirty years after last being staged by the RSC (as part of the Swan Theatre's opening season), this anarchic restoration comedy makes a welcome return to Stratford for a new generation to enjoy. It was written by Aphra Behn, a woman considered by many to be the first ever professional female playwright in England.

Premiering in 1677, *The Rover* presents the story of three wandering cavaliers, exiled from Cromwell's England, who meet up in a Spanish colony as carnival begins.

When three wealthy sisters disappear into the city in search of love, an evening of seduction, intrigue and danger is very much in prospect...

"We're basing it in a kind of reinvented 17th century world," explains director Loveday Ingram. "Essentially, we've taken all the ingredients that make up the play - the carnival, the Catholicism, Spanish colonial rule, the excessiveness, the wonderful, multicultural, dangerous city - and we've created our own version of it. It's very exciting to bring it to life - it should feel hot, steamy and sexy in a way that's not necessarily English, I hope."



Lady Anna: All At Sea

Malvern Theatres,
Mon 26 September - Sat 1 October



"Last year was the bicentenary of Anthony Trollope's birth," says his descendant, the novelist Joanna Trollope, "so what could celebrate it better than a play inspired by his novel about one of the great themes of our own times - that of defying convention and convenience to follow one's heart. Even the title of the play is apt, since he was at sea when he wrote it, on his way to Australia."

Busying himself aboard a steamship by writing a scandal entitled *Lady Anna*, Trollope finds that his story of intrigue, rebellion and social politics proves hugely divisive among his fellow passengers...

Craig Baxter's dramatisation of the 1873 novel was commissioned by the Trollope Society as part of the author's bicentenary celebrations and sees a cast of seven playing multiple roles. Although the production hasn't met with universal acclaim since debuting last summer, it's certainly enjoyed its fair share of exuberant reviews.

Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Sat 17 - Sun 18
September; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs
22 - Sat 24 September

Edward Albee's 1962 play is best remembered from its film version, which starred Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.

The play focuses on a middle-aged couple named Martha and George and examines the spectacular decline of their marriage. As the couple wage war against one another, in the process drawing their young house-party guests into a series of all-or-nothing 'games', it becomes increasingly hard for them to distinguish the line between fact and fiction... This particular staging is presented by local theatre troupe All & Sundry.

The Woman In Black

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 13 - Sat 17 September;
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 18 - Sat
22 October

The Woman In Black, adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from the Susan Hill novel, is a classic ghost story first performed in 1989. It's since become one of the West End's most successful plays and was made into a film starring Daniel Radcliffe in 2012.

Solicitor Arthur Kipp believes that his family have somehow been cursed by a mysterious woman in black. In an attempt to tell his story, and to exorcise the evil curse which he's convinced hangs over him, he hires a young actor to assist him in recounting his experiences...

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Cats

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
Mon 5 - Sat 10 September

A spectacular and captivating adaptation of TS Eliot's Old Possum's Book Of Practical Cats, this Andrew Lloyd Webber production has been performed in over 300 cities in more than 20 countries around the world. It's also widely considered to be the show that redefined the modern musical. As well as paving the way for a seemingly relentless stream of blockbuster hits, it also gave starring roles to Elaine Page, Sarah Brightman and Brian Blessed.

All in all, then, one helluva theatrical experience...



My Big Fat Cow Pat Wedding

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton,
Wed 28 September; Quatt Village Hall,
Bridgnorth, South Shropshire, Fri 30
September

Based on the lives and stories of Midlanders, this three-way co-commission from Black Country Touring, Arts Alive and Kali Theatre garnered plenty of positive reviews on a previous tour of theatre venues and village halls. It focuses on the wedding reception of country girl Clare and city boy Arjun, in the process taking a lighthearted look at mixed marriages and rural weddings. Fast-paced and peppered with neat twists, the show also boasts an end-of-performance disco Bhangra dance, designed to get the audience up on their feet and moving to the beat.



Stick Man

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
Fri 23 - Sat 24 September

"Scamp Theatre send shivers down my spine," reveals Julia Donaldson, the co-creator (along with Alex Scheffler) of the hugely popular children's book on which this show is based. "They're so lively and innovative. I love their production of Stick Man, and so do the audiences."

Julia's not wrong - audiences most definitely do love the show, as a smash-hit season in the West End ably demonstrated. Featuring a trio of talented performers, the production brings together puppetry, songs, live music and 'funky moves' to tell the story of Stick Man's desperate attempts to get back to the family tree.

Suitable for children aged three and older.

Honk! The Musical

The Old Rep, Birmingham,
Wed 14 - Sat 17 September

At the time of writing, Stiles & Drewe's hit musical has been performed in excess of 8,000 times, at venues across the world. It's based on Hans Christian Andersen's The Ugly Duckling and tells the story of an odd-looking baby duck and his quest to find his mother. But while en route, he encounters a beautiful swan tangled in a fishing line and subsequently falls in love...

This quacker of a well-hatched story is here presented by Great Barr Musical Theatre Company.

Giants On The Hill

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
Thurs 29 September

In a fictional rural community, two farming families find their longstanding friendship put under strain when they discover that a large wind farm is to be developed nearby... Centric Theatre Company are the ensemble behind this thought-provoking work, which seeks to take a balanced view in the topical debate about wind turbines and the urgent need to find sustainable energy sources. As befits the subject matter, Centric have been exploring ways to enable their production to function 'off grid', with the three performers generating the energy to power the show.

Romeo And Juliet

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire,
Thurs 8, Sat 10, Mon 12 & Wed 14, Fri 16 &
Sat 17 September

Widely regarded as Shakespeare's fifth tragedy, this story of a forbidden and secret love tends to fair less well critically than the rest of the playwright's high-profile works. Nonetheless, its popularity is ensured by its timeless themes and its regular appearance as a study text on the National Curriculum. This new version of the play, presented by Here To There Productions, sets the action in England in the rock'n'roll era of the mid-1950s. Expect teddy boys, greasers on motorbikes and an original score played by a live band.

THE MANDELA TRILOGY

Cape Town Opera this month return to Birmingham Hippodrome to present an epic operatic tribute to the life of Nelson Mandela...

“
The message is very strong - we need to strive for a non-racial society...
”

On 11 February 1990, 27 years after he was first imprisoned and in the face of considerable political pressure, Nelson Mandela finally regained his freedom. Four years later, at the age of 75, he would go on to become both the oldest and the first non-white president in South African history.

The image of the serene elder statesman, with his careworn eyes, broad smile and awe-inspiring presence, is now ingrained in minds the world over, yet that familiar picture represents just a tiny portion of his life.

Though his long struggle against apartheid has gone down in history, it's easy to forget about the flawed humanity of the man behind the legend.

Written and directed by Michael Williams and performed by the outstanding, world-class Cape Town Opera, *Mandela Trilogy* illuminates a life that spanned almost an entire century, with an innovative score by Mike Campbell and Peter Louis van Dijk.

“Mandela himself said, ‘I am more a sinner than a saint,’” says Michael Williams. “You’ll see that elder statesman in the final section of the piece, but you’re also going to see the brash, eager young man who stole his father’s cattle, high-tailed it out of the village on a train and went to work in a mine. You’ll see the suave, elegant man in a suit, a womaniser with a cigarette in hand as if he’s Cary Grant. You’ll see how he made a lot of mistakes and that he originally called for violence, which he later regretted.”

Divided into three acts, each correlating with different periods in Mandela’s life, the

opera sees three singers - tenor LukhanyoMoyake and baritones Mandla Mdebele and Yamikani Mahaka-Phiri - portray different incarnations of the character.

“We’re three different individuals, and the versions of him are like different characters,” says Mahaka-Phiri. “So every now and then, we might have similar gestures, but mostly Mandela’s power resides in stillness. He doesn’t need to do much. He can command people just with his voice and his presence, and that’s something the three of us really worked on.”

“Nobody can imitate Mandela’s charisma,” Williams adds, “but each performer brings his own, and by having different people interpreting him, you start to get a sense of the whole.”

Alongside the three Mandelas, the show also introduces three of the women in his life - his first wife Evelyn (Pumza Mxinwa), his second wife and partner in politics Winnie (Siphamandla Yakupa), and the jazz singer Dolly Rathebe (Candida Mosoma) with whom he became involved before his second marriage.

“Dolly is a huge icon!” Mosoma explains. “She was an amazing crooner, a beautiful blues and jazz singer, and she was considered to be South Africa’s first black pin-up girl.”

Though her relationship with Mandela has never been widely spoken of, in the 2003 documentary *Sophiatown*, Rathebe intimated that during the time she knew him in the ‘90s, they were close enough that she would have married him if he had asked



her. But there were reasons why that was not to be.

“I think she kept herself quite separate from the politics,” says Mosoma. “She wasn’t that girl - she just wanted to be a singer. I think in the end he needed someone who was ready to be on the front line with him, and he found that partner in Winnie.”

The rule of three that forms both the basic structure of the show as well as the foundation of the casting and character choices is also echoed in other aspects of the production.

“The whole notion of a triad is important as a literary concept - it gives you balance and rhythm,” Williams explains. “There are the three women in his life, the three prisons that he’s in, the three speeches that he makes and three conversations he has with ‘White Man’.”

With each of these three acts composed in a different style, the music matches Mandela’s story in richness and complexity. Though *Mandela Trilogy* is officially an opera, it’s threaded through with songs in accessible styles, from the folk and traditional music of South Africa, to the popular tunes of the jazz scene Mandela encountered in Sophiatown. Williams sees the show as fundamentally a piece of musical theatre that he hopes can be enjoyed by a wide and varied audience.

“It’s such a breath of fresh air!” says Mosoma. “Usually, whether you’re going to a musical or an opera, you know more or less what you’re getting yourself into, but with this you don’t at all.”

“I think it’s a lovely mixture of different genres - like a recipe of music,” says Mahaka-Phiri. “We start with some Xhosa opera, and then we move into a drastically different jazz style, where all these opera singers will be dancing like trained theatre performers. And then in Act Three, we’ve got a more pure operatic style, with 15-minute arias. I think it’s fantastic!”

Xhosa - pronounced with a hard, ‘K’-like click that’s pretty difficult for Brits to wrap their tongues around - is the language of several South African cultures, including Mandela’s own Thembu people. It’s also spoken by many - though not all - of the performers in the company.

“The first act is really a sort of journey into the music of the countryside,” says Williams. “Traditional songs are woven into the score alongside new music. I didn’t know the language beforehand, but with a company that’s about 90% young Xhosa men and women, you do start to get to know it a bit. We have surtitles, so audiences will always be able to understand what’s being sung.”

From the days of his headstrong youth, through his early involvement in politics and a lengthy incarceration from which he was not permitted leave even to attend his own son’s funeral, to his eventual, triumphant release, Mandela’s story makes for an emotional whirlwind of a production.

“One of the sad things I discovered,” says Williams, “was that while he was in prison, they gave him calendars every year full of photographs of white South Africa. You can see all his notes on them over this 27-year pe-

riod. Do you know how many days 27 years is? It’s nearly 10,000 days - that’s how long he was away from society. When they took him out of prison for the first time, four years before his official release, they had to introduce him to things like cell phones - he’d never seen one before. They took him on trips and you can just imagine this old man driving around - at one point in the show he says, ‘I was a tourist in a remarkable land.’ He didn’t even know how to open a can of Coke!”

With a whole new generation born since 1990 having now grown up with only a vague sense of who Mandela was and what he went through, and with racism apparently on the rise in many places, it’s vital that his message of equality and reconciliation continues to be promoted.

“I think his death has made it more poignant and also more important,” Williams continues. “The message is very strong - we need to strive for a non-racial society, to not be afraid of the ‘Other’, and to reconcile with our enemies. What a great opportunity to share that through a rousing, foot-stomping, exciting form such as musical theatre - it’s a gift of a story!”

Mandela Trilogy shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 20 and Wednesday 21 September



Days To Remember

Sunny Afternoon, a hit West End musical charting the highs and lows of The Kinks' career, heads to the region on tour this month. What's On recently caught up with its cast to find out what Midlands audiences can expect...

There's a heavy rumbling deep in your chest, right at the base of your throat, as a thunderous guitar riff tears through the stage and reverberates around the auditorium, shaking seats and rattling bones. This is sound you can feel: raw, visceral and aggressive. It is, insists an adamant young Ray Davies, "the best song [he's] ever written," kicking back against the managers demanding something safer, something saleable. This isn't really Top Of The Pops 1964, but as the iconic roar of You Really Got Me floods the theatre hosting Sunny Afternoon, The Kinks' iconic single sounds as fresh and urgent as ever.

"There are a lot of people who were around to see them at the time who have now got to an age where they want to relive that," says Mark Newnham, who's responsible for recreating Dave Davies' game-changing guitar style on stage. "From our point of view,

we grew up listening to this music, having our dads or uncles or whoever saying, 'You've got to check out this band, they're brilliant!' Learning the guitar became an obvious step for me, and I joined a band while I was at school, so when this came up it was an ideal melting pot for me."

In this, Newnham is not alone among the cast taking The Kinks musical out on its first ever UK tour. Andrew Gallo, who plays the volatile drummer Mick Avory, also spent part of his youth performing in bands, while Ryan O'Donnell, who plays the band's charismatic frontman Ray, boasts a stint as a member of Jethro Tull among his musical credits, as well as an appearance in Quadrophonia on stage.

"Sunny Afternoon is a great show for seeing actor-musicianship," says Gallo. "As the members of the band we play all our instru-

ments, but there are also other people on stage playing trombones and guitars and things, and it's amazing to watch."

"His drum solo is amazing!" adds Newnham. "You should come and see it just for that!"

While The Kinks' blistering early hits might prefigure the distinctive sounds of punk, grunge and metal by several years, Ray Davies, the mastermind behind the band, would soon become best known as a rather more introspective and sardonic observer of 'modern life'. At times sharply satirical, at others wistful and nostalgic, his lyrics contrast an anger bordering on cynicism with an essentially romantic, sentimental heart. Sunny Afternoon casts Ray as its thoughtful and quietly driven protagonist, trying to hold the band together as it threatens to implode around him. Though anyone who's

“ *If there are theatre buffs out there who like a good script and witty gags, then what Joe Penhall has written is bang on the money* ”

ever seen the real Ray Davies live isn't likely to forget his on-stage energy, this more introverted side of him is reflected in the cast's experiences of meeting the man.

"He's very... not exactly quiet," explains Ryan O'Donnell, "but he keeps his thoughts to himself, and whatever he does say is never what you expect. I don't think I've ever asked him for any advice, but he sometimes offers it here and there."

"It was quite strange when he came into the space where we were rehearsing for the first three weeks," says Garmon Rhys, who plays bassist Peter Quaiife. "We all went round and introduced ourselves, and when it came to me, he said, 'Yeah, we've met.' He said it as if I'd forgotten that I'd met him, and in my head I was going, 'Dude, I would remember that. You are Ray Davies.' But it was quite sweet."

"I remember the first time he came to watch me do it," recalls O'Donnell. "I didn't know he was in until about halfway through when I saw him and I just thought, 'Oh my God, this changes everything!' I always think it must be difficult for him to allow some of the details of the story to be put on stage while he's still around to watch it, but what I'm trying to present in my performance isn't necessarily a direct version of Ray. From what I've seen of him, he thinks about things very intensely but doesn't always vocalise those thoughts. Obviously we need to get the story out of him, so in our version he's a bit more brash and loud with more of a physicality, but sometimes when he comes to watch the show, I feel like I should tone it down a bit!"

It's this relative reserve that makes Ray's hedonistic little brother his perfect foil in the production. Dubbed 'Dave the Rave', the guitarist dives head-first into all the deca-

dence that fame and fortune can procure; hardly surprising when one realises that he wasn't yet an adult when The Kinks first made it big. In one outrageous scene, Dave swings from a chandelier clad in a pink negligée he's swapped with a strange woman for his own clothes - nor is this the only time he shows up in a dress. Meanwhile, the homesick Ray, missing his wife and newborn baby, is sent into a deep, depressive funk as the financial and emotional pressures of touring the US grow and his band-mates' constant tiffs erupt in bloody violence on stage. But if Ray is the brooding Yin to Dave's flamboyant Yang, as Sunny Afternoon amply demonstrates, his containment does nothing to dampen his ambition; it's sacking the band's greedy management that eventually gets him back on form.

"I was really shocked by how much these guys took the reins when some of them were still in their teens to begin with," says O'Donnell. "They went over and took America by storm, and when they kept getting used by their management, Ray stood up to them and took the credit back and refused to let anything stop him. When you look back at it, I don't think I could have done now what Ray did when he was 20 years old. Not many people could have done it."

Despite not being directly written for the show, many of The Kinks' songs have a clear narrative, and are so transparently inspired by Ray's personal experiences as to slide neatly into the account of his life as told through Sunny Afternoon's biographical plot.

"Ray is such a good storyteller anyway," says Newnham, "but what's different here is that you have the various characters on stage. For example, in Well Respected Man About Town, you have these well-respected

managers singing it, which works just as well as having Ray narrating it, if you like." "All of the songs work and fit in the right place in the story," Gallo agrees. "One of my favourite songs in the show is Money Go Round, which is the tale of where all the money disappears to, and it's quite specific. It's really overt in naming different people, so when we do it on stage, it feels like it was written for this."

Far from simply being a high-quality tribute act, then, Sunny Afternoon is an intimate domestic drama with touching moments between siblings and spouses, a big-scale band biopic that crosses continents and deals with the giddy whirlwind of sudden success, and a feel-good party that ends with everyone in the audience up on their feet.

"Even without the songs in it, I think it would still be a really good show," says Newnham. "If there are theatre buffs out there who like a good script and witty gags, then what Joe Penhall has written is bang on the money."

"I think the reason it's been so successful," offers Rhys, "is that not only is it a collection of really amazing songs, but it's also got such a strong set of characters and a great story. It's so well written that you feel as though you know them straight away and you really invest in all of them, so by the end of the play it's like you've been on this amazing journey with them."

.....
Sunny Afternoon shows at the New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 September; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tuesday 29 November to Saturday 3 December.

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Bridget Jones's Baby

CERT tbc

Starring Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth, Patrick Dempsey, Jim Broadbent, Gemma Jones, Emma Thompson, Sally Phillips, Celia Imrie, Shirley Henderson

Directed by Sharon Maguire (UK/USA/France/Ireland)

Twelve years on and Bridget is still composing her diaries. And this time she really does have something to write about: her bump. Scripted by the redoubtable triumvirate of Emma Thompson, Helen Fielding and Dan Mazer, the romcom sees Bridget battling with her forties but settling down to a contented routine with her reliable circle of friends. And then a dashing American enters her life... Based on the columns that Helen Fielding wrote for The Independent in 2005, BJB suffered a tumultuous production history with a number of writers dipping their toes in the material until the final script was birthed. Ed Sheeran appears as himself.

Released Fri 16 September



CRITIC'S CHOICE

Film highlights released in September...

Café Society CERT 12a (96 mins)

Starring Jeannie Berlin, Steve Carell, Jesse Eisenberg, Blake Lively, Parker Posey, Kristen Stewart, Corey Stoll, Ken Stott
Directed by Woody Allen (USA)

Woody Allen's 45th feature as writer-director sees Jesse Eisenberg as a young man who leaves New York for Hollywood, where he falls in love with the secretary of his uncle (Steve Carell). Bruce Willis was originally cast as the uncle, but Woody fired him on account of his prima donna behaviour.

Released Fri 2 September



Morgan CERT tbc

Starring Kate Mara, Anya Taylor-Joy, Toby Jones, Rose Leslie, Michelle Yeoh, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Paul Giamatti
Directed by Luke Scott (USA)

Morgan is a suitable case for treatment. An artificial 'being' created in a laboratory, Morgan has got rather out of hand and somebody has to terminate her... The director Luke Scott is the son of director Ridley, so this could be special.

Released Fri 2 September

Sausage Party CERT 15 (89 mins)

With the voices of Seth Rogen, Kristen Wiig, Jonah Hill, Bill Hader, Michael Cera, James Franco
Directed by Greg Tiernan (USA)

In animation, nothing is too weird, apparently. Here, a sausage called Frank (voiced by Seth Rogen), who resides in a supermarket called Shopwell's, discovers the fate of what will happen to him should he be sold to a customer. So he teams up with his girlfriend, a hot dog bun (Kristen Wiig), to escape... Expect what is known as 'adult' humour.

Released Fri 2 September



Film

Ben-Hur CERT 12a (123 mins)

Starring Jack Huston, Toby Kebbell, Rodrigo Santoro, Nazanin Boniadi, Morgan Freeman
Directed by Timur Bekmambetov (USA)

Not so much a remake of the Oscar-winning epic of 1959 as a "re-imagining" of Lew Wallace's 1880 novel. Judah Ben-Hur (Huston) is a Jewish nobleman who, after years of slavery, sets out to avenge his childhood friend who betrayed him. Expect chariots. And CGI. In 3D.

Released Wed 7 September



The Magnificent Seven

CERT 12a (133 mins)

Starring Denzel Washington, Chris Pratt, Ethan Hawke, Vincent D'Onofrio, Byung-hun Lee, Peter Sarsgaard, Manuel Garcia-Rulfo, Martin Sensmeier, Haley Bennett
Directed by Antoine Fuqua (USA)

Who would have thought that Akira Kurosawa's Japanese classic, Seven Samurai (1954), would end up as one of the most beloved Westerns of all time? Well, the 1960 remake with Yul Brynner and Steve McQueen looks pretty stodgy and dated today, so another remake was perhaps inevitable. It's the same old

story: seven gun-toting outlaws are united under the supervision of a bounty hunter to help defend a small town against a ruthless industrialist (Peter Sarsgaard). The original star, the magnificent Japanese actor Toshiro Mifune, was replaced by the Russian-born Yul Brynner in the first remake and has now been transmogrified into a black man. And Denzel Washington is in good hands: the director Antoine Fuqua steered Denzel to an Oscar in his 2001 crime thriller Training Day.

Released Fri 23 September

Anthropoid CERT 15 (120 mins)

Starring Cillian Murphy, Jamie Dornan, Aňa Geislerová, Toby Jones, Harry Lloyd, Charlotte Le Bon
Directed by Sean Ellis (UK/France/Czech Republic)

'Anthropoid' was the code name used by the Czechs for their mission to assassinate SS General Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi behind the Final Solution. This is the (true) story of two soldiers who are parachuted into their homeland in order to carry out the plan.

Released Fri 9 September



Don't Breathe CERT 15 (88 mins)

Starring Jane Levy, Dylan Minnette, Daniel Zovatto, Stephen Lang
Directed by Fede Alvarez (USA)

Rocky and her younger sister need some money fast. So they decide to break into the home of a blind man, who is believed to be pretty well-off. However, they underestimated the ingenuity of the sightless occupant... The reviews in the US were excellent.

Released Fri 9 September

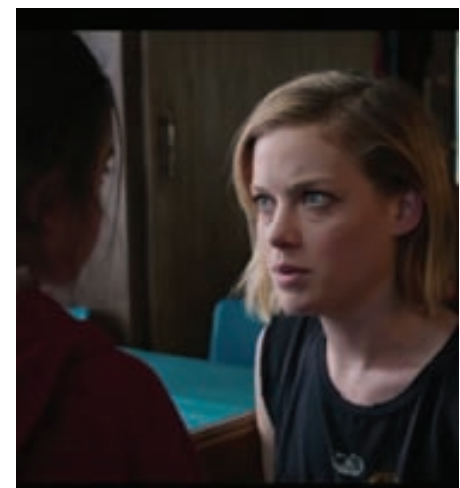
Captain Fantastic

CERT 15 (120 mins)

Starring Viggo Mortensen, Frank Langella, Kathryn Hahn, Steve Zahn, George MacKay
Directed by Matt Ross (USA)

Jason Bourne is not the only one living off the grid. A man called Ben (Mortensen) has managed to raise his six children single-handed in the deepest recesses of the forests of the Pacific Northwest. But when they're forced to attend the funeral of the children's mother in New Mexico, Ben finds out what it's like to be a father in the real world.

Released Fri 9 September



Hell Or High Water

CERT 15 (102 mins)

Starring **Jeff Bridges, Chris Pine, Ben Foster, Gil Birmingham**
Directed by **David Mackenzie (USA)**

Chris Pine has already been through hell and high water this year (in the waterlogged *Finest Hours*), but here the title proves to be a little more metaphorical. He plays a Texan farmer whose business is facing foreclosure, so he and his brother, an ex-con, set about acquiring some major cash by somewhat unorthodox means....

Released Fri 9 September



Kubo And The Two Strings

CERT tbc

With the voices of **Charlize Theron, Art Parkinson, Ralph Fiennes, Rooney Mara, George Takei, Matthew McConaughey**
Directed by **Travis Knight (USA)**

In a small village in ancient Japan, a boy called Kubo looks after his ailing mother. Then a vengeful spirit from the past upsets the status quo and Kubo must go in search of a magical suit of armour once worn by his father, a legendary samurai. Filmed in the painstaking form of stop motion animation. In 3D.

Released Fri 9 September

Blair Witch

CERT 15 (89 mins)

Starring **James Allen McCune, Valorie Curry, Callie Hernandez, Brandon Scott**
Directed by **Adam Wingard (USA)**

The 1999 phenomenon that prompted the craze for cheap “found footage” films now, seventeen years later, returns as a sequel. James, the brother of Heather – who is still missing – decides to retrace her steps in the creepy Black Hills Forest of Maryland. And he brings a documentary crew along with him... This actually got rather good reviews in the US.

Released Thurs 15 September

The Infiltrator

CERT 15 (127 mins)

Starring **Bryan Cranston, Diane Kruger, Benjamin Bratt, John Leguizamo, Amy Ryan, Said Taghmaoui, Olympia Dukakis**
Directed by **Brad Furman (USA)**

Based on the autobiography of US Customs agent Robert Mazur (Cranston), this is the story of Mazur’s undercover operation in which he pretended to be a corrupt businessman. His aim was to expose a Colombian money-laundering drug cartel run by none other than Pablo Escobar.

Released Fri 16 September

The Girl With All The Gifts

CERT 15 (111 mins)

Starring **Gemma Arterton, Paddy Considine, Glenn Close, Sennia Nanua, Anamaria Marinca**
Directed by **Colm McCarthy (USA)**

Adapted by M.R. Carey from his own novel, this is another sci-fi thriller set in a post-apocalyptic dystopian future. When a fungal infection wipes out most of mankind (check your toenails!), a teacher and a scientist set out on a journey of survival – with a young teenage girl (Nanua) unlike normal human beings... Some of the footage of London was actually shot in Chernobyl.

Released Fri 23 September



Deepwater Horizon

CERT tbc

Starring **Mark Wahlberg, Kurt Russell, John Malkovich, Gina Rodriguez, Dylan O'Brien, Kate Hudson**
Directed by **Peter Berg (USA)**

It was, of course, the worst oil spill in US history – when the eponymous rig blew up and sent hundreds of thousands of gallons of crude into the Gulf of Mexico. Wahlberg will be playing the real-life hero Mike Williams, pairing up with director Peter Berg again after their collaboration on *Lone Survivor* (2013). Next, they’ll be teaming up on a film about the Boston Marathon bombing.

Released Fri 30 September

Free State Of Jones

CERT tbc

Starring **Matthew McConaughey, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Mahershala Ali, Keri Russell, Brendan Gleeson**
Directed by **Gary Ross (USA)**

Set shortly after 1862, after the Battle of Corinth in Mississippi, this true-life drama stars McConaughey as Newton Knight, a poor farmer. It was he, during the American Civil War, who gathered together a ragbag of local farmers and slaves and led an armed rebellion against the Confederacy. Gary Ross has only directed three films in the last eighteen years, but they do happen to be *Pleasantville*, *Seabiscuit* and *The Hunger Games*, so we’re expecting great things from this.

Released Fri 30 September



Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children

CERT tbc

Starring **Eva Green, Asa Butterfield, Chris O'Dowd, Allison Janney, Rupert Everett, Terence Stamp, Judi Dench, Samuel L. Jackson** Directed by **Tim Burton (USA)**

Nobody does peculiar like Tim Burton, so he’s a good choice to adapt Ransom Riggs’ 2011 novel for ‘young adults.’ The eponymous home is for orphans with peculiar traits, like a sort of X-Mansion for the young. Appropriately, the screenplay is by Jane Goldman, who co-scripted *X-Men: First Class*.

Released Fri 30 September



Birmingham Big Art Project

Library Of Birmingham,
Mon 5 September - Sun 4 December

This month moving to the Library of Birmingham from the city's Millennium Point, the Big Art Project exhibition features five proposals by five artists for 'the most ambitious public art commission in Birmingham's long history'.

The Birmingham Big Art Project has hired artist-run organisation and gallery Eastside Projects as the initiative's commissioning agents.

The process will create a £2million permanent public artwork to the east of the city centre, at a site that will become a busy arrival point following the construction of Birmingham's High-Speed Railway Station (HS2).

Visitors to the Library of Birmingham exhibition are being encouraged to share their opinions on all five proposals. The winning proposal will be chosen in January.



Mitra Saboury: Pulling Walls

Grand Union, Birmingham,
Fri 2 September - Fri 4 November



Mitra Saboury describes her body as a tool with which to navigate the environment. "I want to touch everything," she says, "to fill every hole in the asphalt, every crack in the granite. To click the rust off the iron fence."

Saboury splits her time between London and Los Angeles and uses performance, video and installation to explore the impact of the built environment on the human body. Pulling Walls is her first solo show outside the US and follows on from a residency at Birmingham's Grand Union in summer 2015. "I didn't have a car but the public transportation in the city was great," she says, "so I was working from the point of view of a pedestrian. I pushed myself against surfaces, and I ruined so many pairs of shoes! Working in Birmingham was great because I could walk the city in a day, and really came to understand it from my feet."

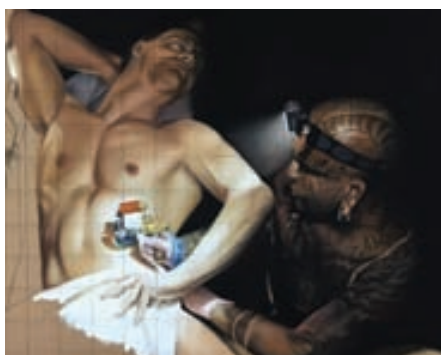
Oliver Jones: Divine

New Art Gallery, Walsall,
until Sun 20 November

Shropshire-born, Birmingham-based, John Ruskin Prize-nominated artist Oliver Jones's photorealist chalk drawings contemplate the ways in which the media advertises, manipulates and exploits imagery of flesh.

Alongside a selection of works from his impressive portfolio, the internationally acclaimed artist is also presenting a new, large-scale, multi-panel work created specifically for the exhibition. Taking the studio of the tattoo artist as its subject, Divine is described by Oliver as 'emblematic of a religious altar-piece'.

"Through the work," explains Oliver, "I'm hoping to prompt questions about the psychology of body modification and the role of extreme procedures in the attainment of physical perfection."



Jeremy Deller: The Battle Of Orgreave

Worcester City Art Gallery,
Sat 17 September - Sat 26 November

"It wouldn't be an exaggeration," says artist Jeremy Deller in talking about his exhibition, "to say that the Miners' Strike, like a civil war, had a traumatically divisive effect at all levels of life in the UK."

Deller's artwork is a spectacular recreation of events that took place on 18 June 1984, when some of the strike's most violent clashes took place at the site of the Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire.

The recreation, which was co-ordinated for Deller by a historical re-enactment expert, featured more than 800 people, including former miners and ex-policemen.

"Families were torn apart by the strike because of divided loyalties," Jeremy continues. "The union movement was split on its willingness to support the National Union of Mineworkers... in all but name it became an ideological and industrial battle between the two sections of British society."

On loan from Tate, the exhibition also includes a documentary film, directed by Mike Figgis, and objects, images and audio recordings from Deller's archive of research materials for his reenactment of the battle.

Lost Generation

Shire Hall Gallery, Staffordshire,
Sat 10 September - Sat 29 October

Artist Andy Farr here exhibits work from a recent project he conducted with students in the Midlands and Yorkshire.

Designed to make the ongoing World War One centenary more relevant to young people, the project provides an insight into the experience of being a teenager living in Britain 100 years ago - an experience which makes for sobering reading.

The grim truth was that a 1914 teenager would have found a third of their friends were dead by the end of the war four years later. And those young people who did survive the ravages of the conflict would have been physically injured and mentally scarred... Lost Generation is an Arts Council-funded initiative.



Heavenly Lights: The Untold Story Of Stained Glass Artist Margaret Agnes Rope

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery,
Mon 12 September - Sun 15 January

The artwork of a Shrewsbury woman who was one of the great female artists of the early 20th century is the subject of this new exhibition. Margaret Agnes Rope - or Marga, as she was known - was born in 1882 and produced stained glass that can be found in churches and cathedrals on three continents. Although her work is collected by museums in the US, she's now largely forgotten here in the UK.

Commenting on Heavenly Lights, Stuart West, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for culture and leisure, said: "Despite her obvious genius, Margaret's name is hardly remembered at all. We hope this exhibition - the first dedicated solely to her work and times - will give her reputation the boost it deserves."


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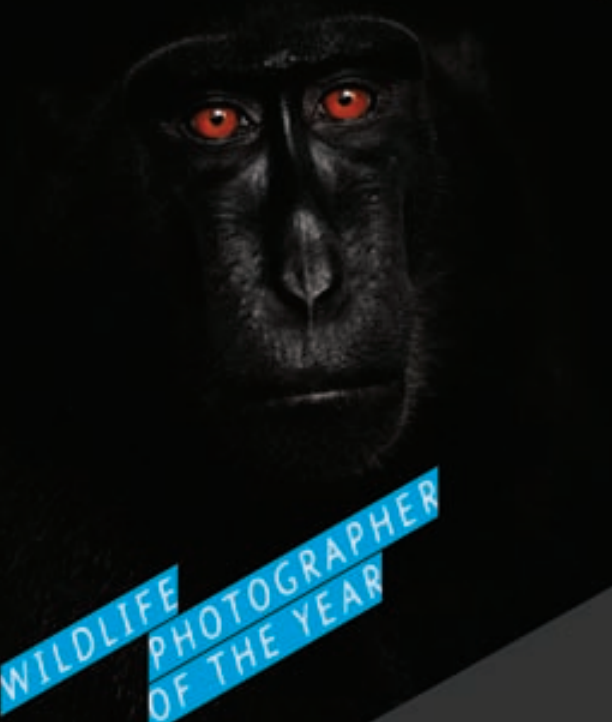
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Attempting the Impossible



Birmingham-based company CircusMASH specialises in the use of circus arts and performance to help people of all ages build their confidence and self-esteem. The company runs circus training events, workshops and classes, youth circus programmes and school workshops across the West Midlands region.

Heather Kincaid visited them to find out more about circus skills - and have a go herself...

I don't drive, which, as far as getting enough exercise is concerned, is probably just as well. For at least the best part of a decade, I've depended on tons of walking and a whole lot of laptop and heavy book-lugging to keep me in reasonably good health. At school, I looked forward to PE about as much as I'd look forward to a kick in the teeth, and even now, the thought of entering a gym sends an involuntary shudder down my spine. As far as balance and co-ordination are concerned, let's just say they're concepts I hope to one day understand in more than theory.

You can perhaps imagine, then, my reaction to being asked to participate in a 'Mixed Aerial' circus skills workshop, even one that did claim to be for beginners. Arranging a date to come along over the phone, I did my best to be enthusiastic and laugh it off - it is, after all, my job - but silently the terror set in. Never mind what I'd do when I got there - I didn't even have anything appropriate to wear. In the end, the best I could come up with at short notice was a pair of harem pants from the music festival where I'd spent the four

preceding days (everything else I owned was jeans or skirts).

After stretches, the very first task I was faced with at the class was vaulting up from a crash mat to straddle a hoop suspended from the ceiling. I think I probably laughed when I first saw it. If this is where we're starting, ran my thoughts, we might as well call it a day now. But the thing that no one ever tells you is that it actually all gets easier from that point on.

Over the last few years, work and various voluntary projects have taken me to see plenty of circus shows - not as many as a die-hard enthusiast would get through, but certainly more than your average person on the street. As I said to one of the leaders at my class, to the uninitiated like me, most of what the pros do, seemingly with no effort at all, always looks like nothing short of magic. The likelihood of me ever doing anything like that seemed about as remote as my chances of becoming prime minister or travelling into space.

The truth is, though, that climbing to the top has never really been the hard part; of course it takes talent to be the absolute best at what you do, but achieving reasonable competence in anything is mostly down to time and dedication. What this means is that the most seemingly insurmountable barrier to learning a new skill is always just beginning.

I'll be honest, I never did quite manage that head-on straddle of the hoop, but once I learned that you could get up from the side instead, I was away, and more or less managed everything else that was thrown at me. It was even (dare I say it?) really fun. Silks are harder. I was fine with all the pretty moves and balances, but the monkey-like shimmy up the drapes proved more of a problem. What was interesting, though, was that I didn't necessarily find things difficult for the reasons that I thought I would. I was definitely stronger than I imagined. Most of my issues were technical. I couldn't get the motion right, but sort of understood what I was doing wrong to the point that, with

maybe a couple more sessions, I felt as though I could be up there with the rest of them.

Reassuringly, too, I wasn't the only one who was finding it tricky - I found myself 'teaming up' with someone else who'd done some similar stuff before, but had been out of practice for a while. The atmosphere of friendly, mutual encouragement is another thing that distinctly marked this out from almost all my past experience of doing anything physical. Competition is easily the most off-putting thing any beginner has to face - there's not much that knocks your confidence more than doing your best and still knowing you are, in a very definable way, the worst. Here were no ranking systems, no fixed goals or winners and losers - just the room to try things out and learn at your own pace.

Plastered on postcards and across their website, CircusMASH's slogan is 'Achieve the impossible' and it suits them. What's so great about their approach is the sense of achievement you'll feel from mastering a few simple steps. To the untrained eye, the results of even the most basic grounding look immediately impressive. At the same time, there's also an acknowledgement that what they do can seem 'impossible'. Here, you'll meet no underlying assumptions that you're bringing with you any prior knowledge, and you can go over things as many times as you like until you get a grip on them. Regardless of your ability when you come in, if it's your first go at it, then by the time you leave, you'll almost certainly have managed something that you've never done before.

Two weeks later, I was invited along to the company's Hullabaloo event at Woodlands Football Pitch in Bournville, Birmingham - a kind of combination showcase and hands-on family fun day for the local community. Free from all the embarrassment and inhibitions that us hopeless grown-ups feel, excited kids packed in, dying to have a go at everything and completely unperturbed when things went wrong. It was a joy to watch them, but what was even more excit-

ing was that, when it came to the aerial hoop act, I realised I could understand a lot of what the performer was doing. Some of the moves were clearly a long way off what I'd attempted, and even those I recognised were done with much more grace and confidence. Nevertheless, what struck me most is that it no longer looked like magic, or something beyond the realms of possibility for the likes of me. I even noticed a sneaky sideways climb onto the hoop - and it actually looked pretty good!

Would I go back? Maybe if I lived in Birmingham - it's quite a long way for me to travel out at present. But if you do and you're even slightly tempted, I'd definitely recommend giving it a go, whether you're a circus enthusiast, someone who wants to learn something new, or just looking for a novel way of keeping fit. Just make sure you dress better than I did.

If you're thinking of going along to one of the sessions, here's a list of dos and don'ts I learned from my first effort!

.....

CircusMASH offers a wide range of classes aimed at various abilities, as well as parties, youth programmes and open space for training. For more information, visit circusmash.co.uk.

Dos and Don'ts

DO wear comfortable clothing. You'll need to be able to move freely, but you might be hanging upside down at times, so you probably don't want anything too loose.

DO ask for help if you're having trouble. The team is very patient at explaining things - several times, if necessary, as I found...

DON'T give up. Some things take a bit of practice, but you'll get there.

DON'T rush your stretches at the end, especially if you're not used to this sort of thing. Trust me, you'll regret it.



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A Place In The Sun

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 23 - Sun 25 September

The official exhibition show of Channel Four's popular overseas travel series returns to the Midlands this month, complete with presenters Amanda Lamb, Jasmine Harman, Jonnie Irwin and Laura

Hamilton, all of whom will be on hand to share their experience and offer advice on buying a property abroad.

Whether it's the idea of finding a place in Spain, France, Portugal or further afield that floats your boat, A Place In The Sun is the perfect event from which to launch an exciting new travel adventure.

Trucking Live Shropshire

Oswestry Showground, Shropshire, Sat 24 - Sun 25 September

Widely considered to be the 'friendliest' event of its kind in the UK, Trucking Live Shropshire features a line-up of main arena entertainment that includes appearances by quad-bike-riding stuntman the Kangaroo Kid.

There's also a display of hundreds of trucks to enjoy, the region's largest showcase of truck accessories, and celebrity guests visiting on both days of the weekend. On the Saturday, it's Coronation Street star Antony Cotton, taking a break from playing bartender Sean Tulley, who joins in the fun.

The Sunday sees fellow Corrie favourite Ryan Thomas (Jason Grimshaw) appearing at the event with his real-life brother Adam, who plays Adam Barton in Emmerdale.



British Superbike Championship

Donington Park, Fri 16 - Sun 18 September

Attracting some of the best-known names in the sport, the Superbike Championship is Britain's biggest motorbike racing series.

This Donington meet is the first round of the crucial 'showdown' phase and promises a weekend of high-quality bike racing.

There's action from the packed-out grids of the National Superstock 1000 & 600 to enjoy, along with the British Supersport Championship, the Motostar Championship and an FIM World Sidecar race.

Donington is once again operating an open-paddock policy, allowing spectators to mingle with the riders and see the teams in action.

Midland Game Fair

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sat 17 - Sun 18 September

If traditional country pursuits are your passion, the well-established Midland Game Fair makes for a rewarding weekend. The premier event of its kind in the country, the show features an impressive selection of attractions, with everything from clay shooting to game and coarse fishing demonstrations. Gun dog competitions, falconry displays, family entertainment, live music, a food festival, fine arts and traditional rural crafts also feature, as do over 700 trade stands catering for a wide range of visitors' countryside shopping needs.





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Events



Glamping Show

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire,
Thurs 22 - Sat 24 September

The Glamping Show is making a welcome return to the Midlands this month. Glamping is a more luxurious form of camping that's become increasingly popular during the last few years and is now a prominent part of the leisure business.

Described as 'a showcase of all that's glamping in camping', the show presents a wide selection of pop-up, temporary and pre-pitched accommodation solutions, including yurts, tipi and safari tents. It also features contributions from experts on subjects such as bushcraft, up-cycling and survival techniques.

Cycle Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 23 - Sun 25 September

With cycling's profile in the UK at an all-time high, this hugely popular show is not surprisingly bigger than ever, with over 280 bike companies in attendance to showcase their latest kit.

The event also features a dedicated eBike area plus test track and a new drop-in lounge-come-theatre especially for female cyclists. And with this year's show coming hot on the heels of the Rio Olympics, organisers are also promising 'a stellar line-up of medal winners, current pro riders and legends of the sport'.



Harvest Festival

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Shropshire,
Sun 18 September

Hymns in the Mission Church, a main service in the Pleasure Gardens (complete with a display of produce) and the opportunity to enjoy an afternoon of morris dancing provide visitors to Blists Hill with the chance to experience a Victorian-style Harvest Festival this month. One of 10 award-winning Ironbridge Gorge museums and populated by friendly and informative costumed characters, Blists Hill is very much an interactive experience. Attractions include numerous shops, among which are a general drapers, a blacksmiths and a pharmacy. There's also a pub and a bank, shire horses (horse-and-cart rides), blast furnaces, the cottage gardens, a doctor's room, a funicular train, a clay mine ride and a funfair featuring carousel, chair-o-planes and game stalls.

Visitors to Blists Hill can get a yearly pass, allowing them to enjoy the town as many times as they wish during a 12-month period and also to check out the other museums managed by the Ironbridge Gorge Trust.

Middle Earth Festival

Sarehole Mill, Birmingham,
Sat 3 - Sun 4 September

If you're a fan of The Lord Of The Rings and The Hobbit but haven't yet checked out this family-friendly festival, then it's fair to say you're missing a Gandalf-sized trick. First taking place in 1998, when it was called Fun At The Mill, the event has proved enormously popular with Tolkien enthusiasts and made a comeback in 2015 following a year's absence due to a lack of volunteers. Attractions at this year's get-together include living history camps, medieval traders, food stalls, weapon displays, children's activities and a costume pageant, not to mention the chance to encounter all manner of characters from the famous fantasy novels, including hobbits, elves and orcs...



Stafford Arts Festival

Stafford Town Centre,
Sat 17 September

Stafford's sixth arts festival sees dancers, musicians and artists taking to the streets to provide passers-by with a range of performances and activities to enjoy. Free-to-participate arts & crafts workshops ensure there's plenty of opportunity for children to get hands-on with a range of activities. Street theatre performers, face painting opportunities and a bubbleologist further add to an extensive programme of entertainment.

Events

Mid-Autumn Festival

Arcadian Centre, Birmingham, Fri 16 September

Musical performances, martial arts demonstrations, high-kicking lion dancing, the culinary delights of a street food festival and a ‘spectacular’ fireworks finale all feature in this popular Chinese event. Taking place on the day of the year when the moon is supposedly at its fullest and brightest, the festival is held in celebration of the harvest.

“It’s a day when families come together to share a meal and celebrate as one,” explains James Wong, chair of Birmingham’s Chinese Festival Committee. “People travel far and wide to be with their loved ones on this special day. We are inviting people of all ages to come together and join us in the celebrations, as we do every year. With the recent events in the US, France and Turkey, the festival is even more vital, allowing communities to come together and celebrate in a safe environment.”



heritage open days

Thursday 8 - Sunday 11 September

Every September over 40,000 volunteers across England organise 5,000 events to celebrate the country’s fantastic history, architecture and culture. These Heritage Open Days offer you a chance to discover hidden places, try out new experiences and learn fascinating facts about some of England’s most interesting visitor destinations - all free of charge. Below we’ve selected a few Midlands highlights from this year’s four-day festival. You can find an extensive list of Heritage Open Days events, both in the Midlands and further afield, at heritageopendays.org.uk

Highlights



Birmingham

ALL THE FUN OF THE COURTYARD FETE Experience how people lived and worked in the courtyard from the 1840s to the 1970s. Join in with the courtyard fete and try your hand at traditional games. Sat 10 September, Birmingham Back to Backs, Birmingham



Warwickshire

POP-UP GARDEN EXHIBITION A drop-in exhibition looking at plants, gardens and gardening in Shakespeare’s time, including children’s activities and illustrated talks from the Head of Gardens. Sat 10 - Sun 11 September, The Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon



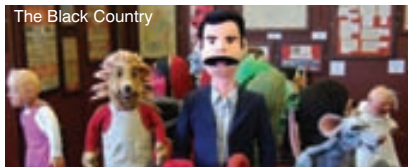
Worcestershire

CONSERVATION AT THE COMMANDERY Featuring talks, tours and demonstrations of conservation skills. Discover how the Commandery’s team care for the medieval building’s special architectural features. Sun 11 September, The Commandery, Worcester



Staffordshire

EDWARDIAN FAMILY DAY Watch performances of the Charleston and demonstrations of Edwardian cookery, and take part in numerous themed craft activities. Sat 10 September, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire



The Black Country

THE DUDLEY GHOST TOUR HISTORY & MEMORABILIA EXHIBITION An exhibition of masks, puppets and costumes used on the Ghost Tour and other projects from local theatres and television. Fri 9 - Sun 11 September, Station Hotel, Dudley



Shropshire

SHREWSBURY FLAXMILL MALTINGS OPEN DAY Discover the history of the grade one listed buildings and their uses over two centuries. There will also be family-friendly activities and entertainment. Sat 10 - Sun 11 September, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, Shropshire

Check **The List** for individual events taking place in your region

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the list

Your week to week
listings guide

September 2016



Spitfire 10k Run at RAF Cosford, Shropshire - Sunday 4 September

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

What's On

Thurs 1 to Sun 11 September



T-Picnic at Telford Town Park
Sat 3 September

Mon 12 to Sun 18 September



The Woman In Black at
Lichfield Garrick
Tues 13 - Sat 17 September

Mon 19 to Sun 25 September



Justin Live! at Wolverhampton
Grand Theatre
Sun 25 September

Mon 26 to Fri 30 September



Pete Firman - comedy musician
at Theatre Severn
Wed 28 August

THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER

Visual Arts

Bilston Craft Gallery

TEMPERED NOT QUENCHED - THE BATTLE FOR BILSTON'S STEELWORKS

Exploring an overlooked chapter in Britain's industrial relations history, until Sat 17 Sept

Dudley Museum & Art Gallery

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU Private collection of everything Star Wars that Lego can produce, until Sat 10 Sept

NEW A BRUSH WITH NATURE The Wildlife Art Society International present a national exhibition of animal illustrations. Includes some recent works from Dudley Zoo, Sat 24 Sept - Sat 19 Nov

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

A BRUSH FOR LIFE Exhibition by Wolverhampton-born illustrator and fine artist Rebecca Cresswell. Rebecca specialises in 'art in health-care' and pet portraits, until Sun 4 Sept

Museum of Cannock Chase

JEAN WALKER: SIGHTSEEING New collection of striking oil paintings focusing on Jean's sightseeing travels, until Fri 14 Oct

New Art Gallery - Walsall

LAND, SEA AND AIR Artists include Frank Bowling, Tiffany Chung, Agnes Denes, Tania Kovats and Cornelia Parker, until Sun 4 Sept

ARTIST TEACHER SCHEME EXHIBITION

The scheme is a continuing professional development course run in partnership between The New Art Gallery Walsall, Ikon Gallery and Birmingham City University, until Sun 25 Sept

NEW EVA ROTHSCHILD ALTERNATIVE TO POWER Irish sculptor Eva Rothschild's first solo exhibition in the Midlands. The new body of work includes a specially commissioned piece using leather, a material at the centre of Walsall's manufacturing industry, Sat 24 Sept - Sun 15 Jan 2017

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-On-Trent

BEATRIX'S ANIMALS Celebration of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Beatrix Potter, until Sat 24 Sept

FIRST WORLD WAR REPLICA TRENCH until Sun 11 Nov 2018

Qube Gallery, Oswestry

NEW OPEN ART COMPETITION Exhibition of shortlisted entries, on the theme of migration, Mon 12 Sept - Mon 7 Nov

Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

OUR HOUSE Interactive family exhibition, until Sun 25 Sept

Shire Hall Gallery, Stafford

COAST Exhibition of paintings, photographs, textiles, glass and ceramics inspired by the coast, until Sun 4 Sept

NEW SWEETHEARTS - MORWENNA CATT

A textile installation of outsized Sweetheart cushions by Morwenna Catt which mimic the pincushions that were often created by wounded soldiers recovering in hospitals during WWI, Sat 10 Sept - Sat 29 Oct

NEW IN:TOWN STAFFORDSHIRE ENJOY ART

Providing a unique insight into how an artist's portfolio of work can change throughout the course of a calendar year, Sat 17 Sept - Sun 23 Oct

Weston Park

NEW GRAHAM COLLING Photographic exhibition showing Weston Park throughout the seasons, Thurs 1 - Thurs 29 Sept

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

WILD AND WACKY ON THE WEB A series of short films and animations inspired by the lives of the weird and wonderful creatures around us, made by a global community of digital artists, until Thurs 1 Sept

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Take in some of the world's most astonishing sights and see nature at its most staggering, until Sun 18 Sept

THE ART OF DRAWING A rare chance to see a large body of drawings held by the art gallery encompassing three themes: the human form; landscape & nature; industry & architecture, until Sun 25 Sept

Other VISUAL ARTS

PRINTMAKERS Showcasing work in etching, collography, lino-cut, woodcut, wood engraving and drypoint, until Sat 3 Sept, Silk Top Hat Gallery, Ludlow

SUMMER EXHIBITION Paintings by artist Stephen Law, along with work from guest artists Christopher Madeley and Lena Jarl Churm, until Sat 3 Sept, The Bear Steps Gallery, Shrewsbury

SUMMER EXHIBITION Reprising some earlier exhibitions of the year and also featuring a selection of new work, until Sat 3 Sept, Silk Top Hat Gallery, Ludlow

CIRCUS POSTER COLLECTION - ANDREW & FRED VAN BUREN Exhibition of colourful posters used to advertise travelling circus groups performing across the country, until Sun 4 Sept, Newcastle Borough Museum and Art Gallery

DESIGN AND DESIRE: THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851 Objects and images, including prints and paintings from the Elton Collection, tell the story of how the Great Exhibition became one of the most influential and renowned events of the 19th century, until Fri 24 Feb 2017, Coalbrookdale Gallery, Telford

Gigs

QUILL Thurs 1 Sept, mac, Birmingham

TIM BURGESS & PETER GORDON Thurs 1 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE HUNNA - LIVE PERFORMANCE AND ALBUM SIGNING Thurs 1 Sept, HMV Bullring, B'ham

CROWDED SCOUSE Thurs 1 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BACK:N:BLACK Fri 2 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

STAFFORD BLUES FESTIVAL Fri 2 - Sun 4 Sept, Lower Drayton Farm, Nr Penkridge

AMELIA CAESAR Fri 2 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

LANY Fri 2 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ADRIAN SHERWOOD Fri 2 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE HARRINGTONS Fri 2 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

TRITONE QUARTET Fri 2 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LIVE/WIRE - THE AC/DC SHOW Fri 2 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

EXHALERS Fri 2 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

MAINLY MADNESS Sat 3 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BEN PORTSMOUTH IS ELVIS Sat 3 Sept, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

JOE LONGTHORNE Sat 3 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE GLITTER BAND Sat 3 Sept, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

BUSTED Sat 3 Sept, Wolverhampton Racecourse

THE SOUTHMARTINS Sat 3 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NIBBS & EDDY Sat 3 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

MOTHERSHIP - LED ZEPPELIN TRIBUTE Sat 3 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

HARRY JORDAN Sat 3 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

LISTENER Sat 3 Sept,

The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

ARCADIA Sat 3 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

IO EARTH Sun 4 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

STU WHISTON Mon 5 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

SUNFLOWER BEAN Mon 5 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NASHVILLE IN THE ROUND: SONGS FROM MUSIC CITY Mon 5 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ELEANOR FRIEDBERGER Tues 6 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LIONLIMB Tues 6 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

DUOTONE Tues 6 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

LUCAS D & THE GROOVE GHETTO Wed 7 Sept, The Jam House, B'ham

MONTPARNASSE Wed 7 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

ROY HARPER Wed 7 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KING GIZZARD AND THE LIZARD WIZARD Wed 7 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GREGORY PECK'S JAZZ, FUNK AND SOUL OPEN MIC NIGHT Wed 7 Sept, The Night Owl, B'ham

SUPERCLOUD GANG + ICEY STANLEY + WILLS Wed 7 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

STICKY FINGERS Thurs 8 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CONNIE LUSH BAND Thurs 8 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

DAVE GILES & JOE MCCORRISTON Thurs 8 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

GOLDIE Fri 9 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

PURPLE ZEPPELIN Fri 9 Sept, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Fri 9 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

ROD STEWART TRIBUTE NIGHT Fri 9 Sept, The Irish Centre, B'ham

HEIDI BROWNE Fri 9 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

LUCIE SILVAS Fri 9 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE ABSOLUTE KINKS Fri 9 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JAMES BURTON Fri 9 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

TUSSK Fri 9 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

PINEGROVE Fri 9 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ATOMIC BLONDIE Sat 10 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DARKSIDE - THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Sat 10 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GO WEST Sat 10 Sept, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

THE FULL SHA BANG Sat 10 Sept, The Irish Centre, Birmingham

THE DESTROYERS Sat 10 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KICK UP THE 80'S Sat 10 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ACDC UK AND SACK SABBATH Sat 10 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

GORDIE MACKEEMAN & HIS RHYTHM BOYS Sat 10 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

QE2 - THE VERY BEST OF QUEEN Sat 10 Sept, The Roadhouse, B'ham

ANDY MILLS Sat 10 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

ELVANA Sat 10 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JUMP Sat 10 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE MOODY BLUES' JOHN LODGE Sat 10 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

ADAM FRENCH Sat 10 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DANIEL KOEK Sun 11 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

MICK FLAVIN Sun 11 Sept, The Irish Centre, Birmingham

MITCH MALLOY - VAN HALEN'S LOST BOY Sun 11 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

REG MEUROSS Sun 11 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

A NIGHT IN NASHVILLE Sun 11 Sept, The Hive, Shrewsbury

Classical Music Theatre

BOURNVILLE STRING ORCHESTRA

Featuring Timothy English (conductor), Caroline Pether (leader), Naina Reddy (voice), Ivy Laugh, Bronagh Lee & Junias Wong (violin soloists), Sat 3 Sept, The Barber Concert Institute, Birmingham

CENTRAL ENGLAND CAMERATA CONCERT

Featuring music by Andrew Downes, including Symphony No.1, Sat 3 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral

BRASS BAND GALA CONCERT Featuring Black Dyke Band, Foden's Band & Cory Band, Nicholas Childs (conductor) Sun 11 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

MANILLA ROAD COMEDY Thurs 1 Sept, The Victoria, Birmingham

SOL BERNSTEIN, TOM WRIGGLESWORTH & LENNY SHERMAN & SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD Thurs 1 Sept, The George Hotel, Lichfield



MARTIN MOR & ALFIE BROWN Thurs 1 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffordshire

ASHER TRELEAVEN, JONNY PELHAM & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 1 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ASHER TRELEAVEN, TOM TOAL, JONNY PELHAM & JONNY AWSUM Fri 2 - Sat 3 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL SINHA, ANDRE VINCENT, STEVE WILLIAMS & COLIN COLE Fri 2 - Sat 3 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

CAREY MARX, COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON & COMIC TBC Thurs 8 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROBIN MORGAN, CAREY MARX, ANTHONY J BROWN & GEORGE EGG Fri 9 - Sat 10 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

RICH WILSON, GEOFF BOYZ, TOM LUCY & RAYMOND AND MR TIMPKINS REVUE Fri 9 - Sat 10 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY Sun 11 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JUNIOR JESTERS #5 Sun 11 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WES ZAHARUK, JAMES COOK, MARKUS BIRDMAN & DAN NIGHTINGALE Sun 11 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NIGHT OF THE BRIDE OF PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE

Tongue-in-cheek homage to one of Tinseltown's most famous yet least talented directors, Ed Wood, until Sat 10 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

MAVERICK The New Vic legend that is Eric returns with his multi-talented, multi-instrumental company of actors, singers and musicians in a dead-or-alive tale of the Wild West, until Sat 10 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

KING LEAR RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran directs Antony Sher in the title role, until Sat 15 Oct, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN Based on Chaucer's The Knight's Tale, The Two Noble Kinsmen is attributed to John Fletcher and William Shakespeare and is best described as a tragicomedy exploring the intoxication and strangeness of love, until Tue 7 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

SPRINKLE OF GLITTER Presents LouiseLive! New show featuring stories about dating, tales of life as an internet sensation, mother and friend, life-confidence tips and fashion successes and failures, Fri 2 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

TORCHER CHAMBER ARKESTRA Craftspace Curates present a performance featuring fire, live and electronic music, and glass blowing, Fri 2 - Sat 3 Sept, mac, Birmingham

SOMEWHERE UNDER THE RAINBOW West End performer Sharon Sexton stars in Cillian O'Donnachadha's one-woman show which, set in the intimate surroundings of Liza's Minnelli's dressing room, shares legendary stories and secrets from a fascinating career, Sat 3 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MORGAN & WEST: PARLOUR TRICKS Time-travelling duo Morgan & West present a show 'chock full of jaw-dropping, brain-bursting, gasp-eliciting feats of magic', Sat 3 Sept, mac, Birmingham

THE AGE OF CONSENT The Green Room Theatre Company present two acutely uncomfortable monologues about childhood, responsibility and the shattering of innocence, Sat 3 Sept, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

CATS Andrew Lloyd Webber's smash-hit musical, adapted from TS Elliot's Old Possum's Book Of Practical Cats, Mon 5 - Sat 10 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD The National Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company present a brand new production of one of G&S's most popular operettas, Tues 6 Sept, Malvern Theatre

SUNNY AFTERNOON Olivier Award-winning musical which tells the captivating tale of how one of Britain's greatest bands, The Kinks, rose to star-

dom, Tues 6 - Sat 10 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Here To There Productions present a re-imagining of Shakespeare's comedy classic, Wed 7 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

ANNIE THE MUSICAL DE Caversmill Theatre Company present an amateur production of the rags-to-riches story of little orphan Annie, Wed 7 - Sat 10 Sept, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG Featuring Lee Mead as Caractacus Potts, Claire Sweeney as Baroness Bomburst and Andy Hockley as Grandpa Potts, Wed 7 - Sun 18 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

MORBID CURIOSITIES A selection of Victorian horror fiction, featuring stage adaptations of The Yellow Wallpaper, John Charrington's Wedding and The Old Nurse's Story, Thurs 8 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

ROMEO & JULIET Here To There Productions transport the world's most famous love story to the era of teddy boys, greasers on motorbikes and Rock'n'Roll, Thurs 8 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

RACHAEL YOUNG: I, MYSELF & ME One-woman show about loneliness, breaking free and bravery, inspired by autobiographical material, Thurs 8 Sept, mac, Birmingham

ROCK OF AGES Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur staging of the popular jukebox musical, Thurs 8 - Sat 10 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE ROVER Aphra Behn's anarchic restoration comedy, set in the topsy-turvy world of the carnival. Loveday Ingram (The Merchant Of Venice, 2001) returns to the RSC to direct, Thurs 8 Sept - Sat 11 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE TAT MAN One-man play featuring the rag-and-tat tales gathered during the tat man's years on the road, Fri 9 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Here To There Productions present a re-imagining of Shakespeare's comedy classic, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST Cathy Tyson stars as Lady Bracknell in Nikolai Foster's contemporary staging of Oscar Wilde's class comedy, Fri 9 - Sat 24 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

ROMEO & JULIET Here To There Productions transport the world's most famous love story to the era of teddy boys, greasers on motorbikes and Rock'n'Roll, Sat 10 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE LADY IN THE VAN Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Alan Bennett's iconic and celebrated memoir, Sat 10 - Sat 17 Sept, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

RICE PAPER TALES Trikhon Theatre

present a collection of beautiful, funny and captivating Vietnamese folk tales, Sun 11 Sept, mac, Birmingham

Talks / Spoken Word

WILLIAM ALEXANDER HARVEY AND LAURENCE CADBURY - HERITAGE TALKS Gillian Ellis and Daniel Callicott present two talks focusing on men who made a significant contribution to Selly Manor, Thurs 8 Sept, Selly Manor, Birmingham

SPECIALIST TALK: ROSSETTI & HIS CIRCLE Relaxed talk followed by a walking tour of the collection, Thurs 8 Sept, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE WAIT (12a) Anna accidentally bumps into her son's fiancée at a villa in Sicily and together they wait for his return, although Anna knows better... Stars Juliette Binoche & Lou de Laâge. Foreign language, subtitled. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 1 Sept

DAVID BRENT: LIFE ON THE ROAD (15) David Brent, you will remember, is the character that Ricky Gervais played in the mockumentary sitcom *The Office* (2001-7). Now, 15 years later, Brent fancies himself a rock star and is followed up and down the country by a camera crew. However, Brent's delusions of grandeur sit uneasily in the real world... Stars Ricky Gervais & Doc Brown. Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton until 1 Sept

SUMMERTIME (15) Two women from entirely different worlds - Carole is a militant feminist teaching Spanish in Paris and Delphine is a farmer's daughter committed to her parents in rural southwest France - fall passionately in love. Stars Cécile de France & Izia Higelin. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Thurs 1 & Sat 3 Sept

STAR TREK BEYOND (12a) How many Star Trek films have there been? Whoops, this is the 13th and the third in the rebooted series. Simon Pegg penned the screenplay (in collaboration with Doug Jung) and takes the USS Enterprise into the furthest reaches of uncharted space where the crew encounters a really nasty piece of work (Idris Elba). Festival Drayton Centre, Festival Drayton, North Shropshire, Fri 2 Sept

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: THE MOVIE (15) Darling, you know everything's going to be fabulous, if not outrageous. The eternally youthful Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley reprise

their small-screen roles as Edina and Patsy and get into awful trouble, forcing them to flee to the French Riviera. At least the champagne will be good there. And let's just say that Kate Moss is a trouper. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 2 - Mon 5 Sept

THE SHALLOWES (15) Just when you thought it was safe... A surfer on a secluded beach in Mexico finds herself the prey of a great white shark, even though she's only 200 yards from the beach. Stars Blake Lively and Óscar Jaenada. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Fri 2 - Thurs 8 Sept

THE BFG (PG) A live-action adaptation of Roald Dahl's story of the lonely giant (played here by Mark Rylance) who kidnaps a little girl (Ruby Barnhill) to help him outwit the man-eating giants that have been plaguing the human world. Also stars Ruby Barnhill & Dame Penelope Wilton. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, South Shropshire, Fri 2 Sept; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Sun 4 - Thurs 8 Sept; mac, Birmingham, until Tues 13 Sept



ICE AGE: COLLISION COURSE (U) It's all getting a bit serious. When Scrat, the single-minded sabre-tooth squirrel, leaves Earth in pursuit of his elusive acorn, he triggers a series of cosmic events that threaten the future of the planet. So Manny, Sid and co. have to move home (again) in order to preserve their respective species. With the voices of Ray Romano & John Leguizamo. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 3 Sept

FINDING DORY (U) Finding Nemo has become the sixth highest-grossing cartoon of all time, with a tidy \$937million in the bank. So, here is the sequel. Dory is the forgetful Pacific regal blue tang (from the first film), which, in case you've been away, is a fish. She (voiced by Ellen DeGeneres) suddenly remembers the events of her childhood and so sets off to find her family. There will be adventure along the way... Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Sat 3 Sept

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT (PG) A tale of a man, a woman and a rabbit in a triangle of trouble. It's a world where laughing can be dangerous, romance can be hilarious, and Toons and people live side by side. Stars Bob Hoskins & Christopher Lloyd. mac, Birmingham, Sat 3 Sept

THE BLUES BROTHERS (15) Direct out of jail, Jake Blues and his Brother

Elwood are off on a "mission from God" to raise funds for the orphanage in which they grew up. The only thing they can do is do what they do best: play music. So they get their old band together and they're on their way - yet not without getting in a bit of trouble here and there. Stars John Belushi & Dan Aykroyd. mac, Birmingham, Sat 3 Sept

GOLDEN YEARS (12a) Fate, the pensions crisis and a steadfast refusal to accept the injustice of old age contrive to force law-abiding retired couple Arthur and Martha into a life of crime. Refusing to take the loss of their pensions lying down, they decide to take back what was theirs in the first place. They decide to start robbing banks. Stars Bernard Hill & Simon Callow. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 5 Sept

GARY NUMAN: ANDROID IN LA LA LAND + DIRECTOR Q&A (15) Filmed with candour, warmth and humour, *Android In La La Land* explores life for Gary and his Numanoid family as they set up home in California and as Gary records his eagerly anticipated new album *Splinter*. With exclusive access to the Numan family as they unpack in California, the story unfolds at home, in the studio and on the road. This screening will be followed by a live onstage director Q&A. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Tues 6 Sept

CAESAR & CLEOPATRA (PG) A witty and seductive comedy about the relationship between a veteran Roman political strategist and an enchanting Egyptian teenage queen. Stars Christopher Plummer & Nikki M James. mac, Birmingham, Thurs 8 Sept

THE REVENANT (15) Leonardo DiCaprio plays Hugh Glass, an 1820s' frontiersman who was left for dead after being mauled by a bear. Incensed by his abandonment, Glass dreams of revenge - but first must find the will to survive in inhospitable terrain. Also stars Tom Hardy & Domhnall Gleeson. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Fri 9 Sept

WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY (PG) Charlie Bucket, whose family is poor, strikes it lucky when he discovers one of the five golden tickets to tour Willy Wonka's mysterious chocolate factory. Gene Wilder stars in this Roald Dahl classic. mac, Birmingham, Sat 10 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Released from Fri 2 September showing at selected cinemas

THE 9TH LIFE OF LOUIS DRAX (15)

BROTHERHOOD (15)

CAFE SOCIETY (12A)

JIM: THE JAMES FOLEY STORY (tbc)

MORGAN (tbc)

ONE MORE TIME WITH FEELING (tbc)

SAUSAGE PARTY (15)

THINGS TO COME (12A)

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Released from Fri 9 September showing at selected cinemas

BEN-HUR (tbc)

ACTOR IN LAW (tbc)

CAFE SOCIETY (12A)

ANTHROPOID (15)

BAAR BAAR DEKHO (tbc)

THE BLUE ROOM (15)

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC (15)

DON'T BREATHE (tbc)

HELL OR HIGH WATER (15)

KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS (tbc)

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH (PG)

THE LAND OF THE ENLIGHTENED (tbc)

THEO AND HUGO (18)

Events

SUMMER FORESTRY ADVENTURE CLUB

Enjoy bug hunts, campfire stories & songs, cooking, crafts and more in this Forestry Adventure Club, until Fri 2 Sept, Arley Arboretum, Bewdley

DINOSAURS AWAKEN MAIZE MAZE

Navigate the 10-acre maize maze in the shape of a huge T-Rex skeleton. Follow the three miles of pathways, bridges and viewing towers, collecting T-Rex bones as you go, until Sun 4 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-on-Trent

GREAT FIRE OF LONDON WEEK

Commemorate 350 years since the Great Fire of London at Blakesley Hall with themed crafts, garden and house trails, quizzes and performances based on the Great Fire, until Sun 4 Sept, Blakesley Hall, B'ham

MISS ELIZABETH BOAT TRIPS Take a gentle cruise along the mile-long, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown-designed lake. Enjoy breathtaking views of the woodlands and gardens on the ecologically friendly, electrically powered, 42-seat catamaran, until Tues 6 Sept, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

FAMILY SUMMER ACTIVITIES until Sat 17 Sept, Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

BATTLE OF THE SOMME GUIDED WALK

Every Sunday join one of the expert guides on a tour around the grounds to discover just some of the memorials which have links to the Battle of the Somme, until Sun 20 Nov, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

MAISY'S MAIZE MAZE until Fri 30 Sept, Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, North Shropshire

KIDS' ADVENTURE DAYS More than 20 outdoor activities, under the supervision of highly qualified staff, Thurs 1 Sept, The Old Vicarage Adventure Centre, Kidderminster

WILD STORYTELLING Folklore, myths and fairytales from Shropshire's best loved storytellers, Thurs 1 Sept, Boathouse Visitor Centre, Ellesmere, Shropshire

SUMMER WORKSHOP - PAPER PLANES

Thurs 1 Sept, Selly Manor, B'ham

NON-DIGITAL GAMES DAY Play board & other traditional games, Thurs 1 Sept, Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath

SUMMER FOREST SCHOOL Create your own name necklace then find out how to use tools safely to coppice hazel and decorate a hill-walking stick. Make a musical instrument called a kazoo to take home with you, Thurs 1 Sept, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

WILD STORYTELLING Folklore, myths and fairytales from Shropshire's best loved storytellers, Thurs 1 Sept, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shrewsbury

FABRIC FLOWER POWER Try rag rug-ging techniques in this drop-in workshop and make a shabby chic organza flower brooch or hair slide to take home with you, Thurs 1 Sept, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

STONE SOUP Hands-on cookery for youngsters, Thurs 1 - Fri 2 Sept, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

SELF-LED DINOSAUR TRAIL Follow the clues around the park and solve the puzzle for a small prize, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Sept, Severn Valley Country Park, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

SEVEN SECRET DOORS Each of the seven doors leads to a magical place in the gardens, Thurs 1 - Sun 4 Sept, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

SUMMER HOLIDAY CANDLE DIPPING WORKSHOPS Thurs 1 - Tues 6 Sept, Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire

WILD STORY TELLING Folklore, myths and fairytales from Shropshire's best loved storytellers, Fri 2 Sept, Whitcliffe Common, Ludlow, South Shropshire

HADEN HILL HOUSE DAY Find out more about the house by joining in with quizzes and trails, Fri 2 Sept, Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath, Dudley

TEDDY BEAR'S PICNIC Fri 2 Sept, Severn Valley Country Park, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

WHITTINGTON COUNTRYSIDE AND CRAFT FAIR Sat 3 Sept, Bit End Field, Staffordshire

THE WRITE TACK: A CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP Sat 3 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

T PICNIC Cultural showcase of music, dance and food from around the world, Sat 3 Sept, Telford Town Park, Shropshire

GLASS PAINTING Ideal for beginners, Sat 3 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

4X4 IN THE FOREST Join the rangers in your 4x4 to explore Cannock Chase. Meet at Birches Valley Forest Centre, Sat 3 Sept, Cannock Chase Forest, Staffordshire

DYEING WITH NATURAL MATERIALS Introduction to the surprising colours of natural dyes, Sat 3 Sept, Fordhall

Thursday 1 - Sun 11 September

Organic Farm, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

HANDSWORTH HERITAGE WALK Sat 3 Sept, Soho House, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM HONEY SHOW Back for a sixth year, a chance to learn all about bees, honey and the craft of bee keeping, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Martineau Gardens, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM BUS TOURS 2016 Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Birmingham City Centre

BEGINNERS BLACKWORK WORKSHOP Have a go at this striking form of 16th/17th century embroidery, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

CRITTERISH ALLSORTS Hands-on animal sessions. Meet the critters and learn all about them, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

CINEMA IN THE CASTLE Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Ludlow Castle, Shropshire

RSPB NATURE EVENT Learn how you can help give nature a home, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, Trentham Monkey Forest, Stoke-on-Trent

SPUDFEST Take the Spud Shuttle Tractor Ride to the potato plot and dig up your own spuds, Sat 3 - Sun 4 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-on-Trent

DOLLS HOUSE FAIR An interesting display of doll houses and miniatures, Sun 4 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Sun 4 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

SHAKESPEARE AND MEDIEVAL BIRMINGHAM BUS TOUR Combined guided walking and bus tour looking at the origins of Birmingham and its medieval past, Sun 4 Sept, Birmingham City Centre

REGGAE CARIBBEAN COOKOUT Sun 4 Sept, Coffin Works, Birmingham

ANTIQUE AND COLLECTORS FAIR Sun 4 Sept, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

SPITFIRE 10K COSFORD Sun 4 Sept, RAF Cosford, Shropshire

ROTARY CLUB COUNTRY FESTIVAL Sun 4 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

MEET THE BEEKEEPER Find out more about bees and beekeeping, Sun 4 Sept, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

KNIGHTS' SCHOOL Medieval mayhem and junior jousting for children, Sun 4 Sept, Eastnor Castle Deer Park, Herefordshire

ON THE BUSES! Vintage buses on display at Bewdley Station, Sun 4 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

PASTRIES AND TARTS WITH MILLY REES Learn how to make rough puff and choux pastry, Sun 4 Sept, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

MIDDLE-EARTH FESTIVAL A celebration of all things Tolkien, Sun 4 - Mon 5 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

TUESDAY TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Tues 6 Sept, Jackfield

Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

GUY DAY'S HINTS & TIPS: GUY'S BRITISH BAKE OFF Guy demonstrates dishes, offers practical advice and reveals tricks of the trade, Tues 6 - Thurs 8 Sept, Weston Park, Staffs

HANDSWORTH HERITAGE WALK Wed 7 Sept, Soho House, Birmingham

MISS ELIZABETH BOAT TRIPS Take a gentle cruise along the mile-long, Lancelot Capability Brown-designed lake. Enjoy breathtaking views of the woodlands and gardens on an eco-logically friendly, electrically powered, 42-seat catamaran, Wed 7 - Sun 11 Sept, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

ARTIST GROUP - HERITAGE OPEN DAY An opportunity to see behind the scenes in a tour of the museum stores. You will then be able to spend some time sketching and taking photographs in the large object rooms, Wed 7 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

STOKESAY CASTLE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE Join conservation architect Robert Tolley for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour, Wed 7 Sept, Stokesay Castle, Ludlow, South Shropshire

BEST'S ANGELS Exploration of the lives of people who lived in the house at the turn of the 20th century, Thurs 8 - Sun 11 Sept, Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath, Dudley

ROMAN VS FOUSEY Join the YouTube sensations for an evening of sketches, stand-up comedy & pranks, Fri 9 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SUMMER NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL: THE GREAT GATSBY Pack your picnic hamper and wear your best 1920s outfits, Fri 9 Sept, Attingham Park, Shropshire

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Fri 9 - Sat 10 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL Find out more on page 13, Fri 9 - Sun 11 Sept, Ludlow Castle, Shropshire

ROALD DAHL'S WAR To celebrate Roald Dahl's 100th birthday, historian Graham Laurie explores the legendary author's life and career, Sat 10 Sept, RAF Cosford, Shropshire

SUMMER NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL: LES MISERABLES Dress up in your best Les Miserables costume, Sat 10 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

KINGS NORTON FARMERS' MARKET Sat 10 Sept, The Green, Kings Norton, Birmingham

ATTIC TOURS Special tours of the Harvington Hall attics, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Harvington Hall, Kidderminster

TAMORTH FOOD GUSTO A chance for local artisans to showcase their artistic flare, Tamworth Gusto also features live entertainment, demonstrations and tastings, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Pleasure Grounds, Tamworth Castle, Staffs

NATIONAL CHRYSANTHEMUM SHOW Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground

BIRMINGHAM BUS TOURS 2016 Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Birmingham City Centre

THE BASIL BRUSH SHOW Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Cadbury World, Bourneville, Birmingham

THE BIRMINGHAM CRUISE SHOW 2016 Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

WAR IN THE VALLEY Churnet Valley is transported back to the 1940s, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

HADEN HALL OPEN DAY Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath

SPUDFEST Take the Spud Shuttle Tractor Ride to the potato plot and dig up your own spuds, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-upon-Trent

OPEN DOORS Entry to the castle, Clive Museum and garden is free of charge to all visitors, Sat 10 Sept, Powis Castle and Garden, nr Welshpool, Powys

WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BOULTON AND WATT Admire fine Georgian and Victorian architecture, a convent designed by Augustus Pugin, a church built nearly 1,000 years ago and magnificent civic buildings, Sat 10 - Sun 11 Sept, Soho House, Birmingham

TRENTHAM FERN TRAIN TRIPS Take a trip on the Trentham Fern, the resident diesel engine that chuffs along the lakeside on a light gauge railway, Sat 10 - Tues 13 Sept, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

TURTLE FEST Unique activities plus fun & engaging creature talks. There'll also be a chance to meet Molokai the Sealife Centre's giant green turtle who turns 40 this year, Sat 10 - Sun 18 Sept, National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham

CLIMB LORD HILL'S COLUMN Sun 11 Sept, Shrewsbury Town Centre

CIRCUS SKILLS WORKSHOP Sun 11 Sept, Eastnor Castle Deer Park, Herefordshire

PADDINGTON VISIT Ride out into the countryside on one of the steam trains to meet a well-known character, Sun 11 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

PROMS IN THE PARK The popular music afternoon returns this year with jazz, easy listening music and the Halesowen Brass Band. Bring your picnic and enjoy the atmosphere, Sun 11 Sept, Haden Hill House Museum, Cradley Heath

COMMUNITY FOOD FESTIVAL AND HERITAGE OPEN DAY Sun 11 Sept, Winterbourne House & Garden, Birmingham

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME FILM SCREENING Imperial War Museums UNESCO-listed film screening, Sun 11 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

BIKE WITH MIKE Join Ranger Mike on a bike ride through Comer Wood, Sun 11 Sept, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

BANKS'S Robin 2
www.therobin.co.uk

THU 1 SEP + SUPPORT RIVER THIEVES
CROWDED SCOUSE WOODFACE

FRI 2 SEP + 3RD DEAR + LIVE AND LET ROCK
BACK:N:BLACK ALL-GIRL AC/DC

SAT 3 SEP + SUPPORT SKA FACE
MAINLY MADNESS

SUN 4 SEP + SUPPORT OCTOPUS
IO EARTH

THU 8 SEP + BURQUES OF SPRING
CONNIE LUSH BAND

FRI 9 SEP
ELVIS'S JAMES BURTON

SAT 10 SEP + THE BRITANNIA BEAT
KICK UP THE 80'S

SUN 11 SEP + SOLLY MOONINGHS + KAZZO
VAN HALEN'S LOST BOY MITCH MALLOY

MON 12 SEP
CELESTIAL FIRE FEAT DAVE BAINBRIDGE (DONA, STRAWBS)

TUE 13 SEP
SHARKS CHRIS SPIDDING, PAUL COOK (EX SEX PISTOLS), STEVE SHEP'S PASSIONS...

WED 14 SEP FROM LIVERPOOL SINGER, SONGWRITER, ACTOR...
RAY QUINN SPECIAL 100 SHOW BEST AND WORST TOURS AUGUST!

THU 15 SEP + KRIS BARRAS BAND
STEVIE NIMMO TRIO

FRI 16 SEP + SUPPORT CORVUS
BIG COUNTRY 'THE SEER' - 30th ANNIVERSARY TOUR

SAT 17 SEP SCREENING OF FILM AND CONCERT
FRED ZEPPELIN 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLASSIC EP FILM 'THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME'

SUN 18 SEP GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY TOUR
LEON HENDRIX WITH SPECIAL GUESTS JOHN CAMPBELL, LEAD GUITARIST WITH ABE YU EXPLOSION!

THU 20 SEP AWESOME US BELLES FROM
JOSH SMITH + SAICHI SUGIYAMA

WED 21 SEP
JO HARMAN & COMPANY

THU 22 SEP FROM JAZZ ROCK BAND SOUNDS
KEE MARCELLO BAND

FRI 23 SEP + THE ASSIST
THE BEAT STARRING DAVE WAKELING

SAT 24 SEP
THE COUNTERFEIT STONES

SUN 25 SEP
A FORIEGNS JOURNEY

MON 26 SEP WITH HIS BAND MEAN MANK
CHRIS HOLMES EX W.A.S.P

WED 28 SEP ALL SEATED SHOW
JUDIE TZUKE SONGS & STORIES

THU 29 SEP UP ON THE ROOF THE MUSIC OF
CAROLE KING & JAMES TAYLOR

FRI 30 SEP + SHAKTSANG
THE SUPERSKAS

BOX OFFICE 01902 401211
MOUNT PLEASANT - BILSTON
WOLVERHAMPTON - WV14 7LJ



Ray Quinn - *The Robin*, Bilston

Gigs

BARBARA DICKSON Mon 12 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

CELESTIAL FIRE FEATURING DAVE BAINBRIDGE Mon 12 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

NASHVILLE IN THE ROUND: SONGS FROM MUSIC CITY Mon 12 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

SHARKS Tues 13 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

DAN WALSH & JOHN DOWLING Tues 13 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

LEVEL UP SEASON 4.5 (FEATURING SOWETO KINCH) Tues 13 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

BLACK PEAKS & HECK Tues 13 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

CLUB KURU + YUNG JIMMY'S BIG IDEAS Tues 13 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

GOSPEL CENTRAL Wed 14 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

RAY QUINN Wed 14 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

BOO HEWERDINE + DAN WHITEHOUSE Wed 14 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

GREGORY PECK'S JAZZ, FUNK AND SOUL OPEN MIC NIGHT Wed 14 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

BACK TO BACHARACH Wed 14 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE ACOUSTIC STRAWBS Thurs 15 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

STEVE KNIGHTLEY Thurs 15 Sept, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

THE BOWIE EXPERIENCE Thurs 15 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MADISON VIOLET Thurs 15 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

STEVIE NIMMO TRIO Thurs 15 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ALBERT HAMMOND Thurs 15 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THEE MVPS Thurs 15 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

BIG COUNTRY Fri 16 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

B'SPOKE Fri 16 Sept, - Sat 17 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

FLATBUSH ZOMBIES Fri 16 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SMALL FAKERS Fri 16 Sept, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

NIBBS & EDDY Fri 16 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

MOTOWN AND SOUL NIGHT WITH DJ PAUL KELLY Fri 16 Sept, The Irish Centre, B'ham

NOAH GUTHRIE Fri 16 Sept, O2 Institute,

Birmingham

ALAN BRAXE Fri 16 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE FORTUNES Fri 16 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BONSAI & REDFACES Fri 16 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

SARAH MOULE Fri 16 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

TOMMASO STARACE & MICHELE DI TORO Sun 11 Sept, The Hive Shrewsbury

THE ULTIMATE EAGLES Sat 17 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

FRED ZEPPELIN Tribute band to Led Zeppelin Sat 17 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

WILLIAM CONTROL Sat 17 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

THE PHONICS Sat 17 Sept, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

DAN PAGE Sat 17 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

ASHA BHOSLE Sat 17 Sept, Genting Arena, Birmingham

THE FALL OF TROY Sat 17 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

KING GOAT Sat 17 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

SAM LEE AND THE ROUNDHOUSE CHOIR Sat 17 Sept, mac, B'ham

GOSKINO Sat 17 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE MAGNIFICENT MUSIC HALL Sat 17 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE MOVE Sun 18 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

LEON HENDRIX Sun 18 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

DILLY DALLY Sun 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Shrewsbury

SOUL CITY Sun 18 Sept, The Roadhouse, B'ham

GUTTERDÄMMERUNG Sun 18 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WHISPERED & COUNTLESS SKIES Sun 18 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

THE MOODY BLUES' JOHN LODGE Sun 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

ORGAN CONCERT BY JOHN SCOTT WHITELEY Fri 16 Sept, Wellington Methodist Church, Shropshire

COLD CALLING: THE ARCTIC PROJECT Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, Birmingham Repertory Theatre

ORGAN PROM WITH MARTYN NOBLE Programme includes works by Franck, Mozart, JS Bach & Handel, Sat 17 Sept, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

B.A ZIMMERMANN: SONATA FOR SOLO CELLO BCMG cellist and founding musician Ulrich Heinen performs Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Sonata for solo cello, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

Comedy Gigs

LOUDEEMY SOUP COMEDY NIGHT Mon 12 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

KAREN BAYLEY, JULIE JEPSON, MANDY MUDEN & MAUREEN YOUNGER Wed 14 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

GARY DELANEY Thurs 15 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

MICK FERRY, GORDON SOUTHERN & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 15 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL SINHA, INGRID DAHLE, TAMAR BROADBENT & CHRIS PURCHASE Fri 16 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

SEAN PERCIVAL, MARKUS BIRDMAN & KAREN BAILEY Fri 16 Sept, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton



MICK FERRY, GORDON SOUTHERN, JOHN LYNN & PRINCE ABDI Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MANDY KNIGHT, ALEX BOARDMAN, MIKE WILMOT & RHODRI RHYS Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

Theatre

ROMEO & JULIET Here To There Productions transport the world's most famous love story to the era of teddy boys, greasers on motorbikes and Rock'n'Roll, Mon 12 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SISTER ACT THE MUSICAL Alexandra Burke stars in Craig Revel Horwood's

staging of the hit musical, based on the film of the same title, Mon 12 - Sat 17 Sept, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THAT'LL BE THE DAY A musical romp through the youthful days of Rock'n'Roll in the '50s, on through the Swinging '60s and into the taste-free days of the 1970s, Tues 13 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

OLIVER! The Mellow Dramatics present an amateur staging of Lionel Bart's musical version of Charles Dickens' novel, Tues 13 Sept, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Here To There Productions present a re-imagining of Shakespeare's comedy classic, Tues 13 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

JOAN COLLINS The actress, philanthropist and best-selling author shares stories and secrets from her celebrated life and career, Tues 13 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE WOMAN IN BLACK Stephen Mallatratt's ingenious stage adaptation of Susan Hill's acclaimed ghost story, Tues 13 - Sat 17 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

ROMEO & JULIET Here To There Productions transport the world's most famous love story to the era of teddy boys, greasers on motorbikes and Rock'n'Roll, Wed 14 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

HONK! THE MUSICAL Amateur production of Stiles & Drewe's hit musical, Wed 14 - Sat 17 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS Possibly the best-known circus in the world here presents its latest production, Zhelaniy, transporting its audience to 'a wondrous and mysterious enchanted garden', Wed 14 - Sun 18 Sept, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

ROGER MCGOUGH AND LITTLE MACHINE Thurs 15 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Here To There Productions present a re-imagining of Shakespeare's comedy classic, Thurs 15 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS Amateur production presented by Cannock Chase Drama Society, Thurs 15 - Sat 17 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

JUKEBOX MUSICALS IN CONCERT Featuring hits from popular jukebox musicals, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

ROMEO & JULIET Here To There Productions transport the world's most famous love story to the era of teddy boys, greasers on motorbikes and Rock'n'Roll, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

COLD CALLING: THE ARCTIC PROJECT Musicians and artists unite against a backdrop of beautiful Arctic landscapes for a powerful exploration of

love, loneliness and loss. World premiere presented by Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

A SLAVE TO LOVE Lying Lips Theatre Company present the 19th century story of three slaves sold at auction to work on a small plantation, Fri 16



- Sat 17 Sept, mac, Birmingham

UNCLE'S STORY SHOP Unique interactive theatre experience which encourages young audiences to help create new stories, Sat 17 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Here To There Productions present a re-imagining of Shakespeare's comedy classic, Sat 17 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

TEN LETTERS New piece of intergenerational poetry theatre about Birmingham, featuring the best in local poetry talent. Produced by Giovanni 'Spoz' Esposito and Lorna Meehan, and incorporating multimedia and live music, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, mac, Birmingham

THE MAGIC OF THE MUSICALS Concert-style show featuring hit songs from some of the biggest names in musical theatre, including Andrew Lloyd Webber, Stephen Sondheim, George Gershwin and Rodgers & Hammerstein, Sun 18 Sept, Lichfield Garrick



Dance

ROSIE KAY DANCE COMPANY Double bill of athletic, intelligent and technical dance routines. The featured shows are Double Points: K - a study of synchronicity and stamina set to a soundtrack of Bach, dub step and electronica - and Motel, a 'dark, sexy and exciting' piece inspired by the paintings of visual arts duo Huntley Muir, Thurs 15 - Sat 16 Sept, mac, Birmingham

Talks / Spoken Word

ROUND THE FOOTLIGHTS: THE UNOFFICIAL THEATRE TOUR Join author Mick Escott as he discusses his latest book, which gives a candid insight into a life spent in the arts, Sat 17 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

TEN LETTERS A new piece of intergenerational poetry theatre about Birmingham, starring the best in local poetry talent, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, mac, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

JOY (12A) Based on the true story of Joy Mangano, who invented a household cleaning device and went on to establish a business dynasty. Stars Jennifer Lawrence & Robert De Niro. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 12 Sept

THE TRENCH (15) Covering 48 hours in the days leading up to the Battle of the Somme in 1916, this film retells the story of war through the eyes of 17-year-old Billy McFarlane. Stars Paul Nicholls, Daniel Craig. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Tues 13 Sept


I WISH (PG) Film by acclaimed Japanese director Hirokazu Koreeda looks at the life of two young brothers who try to reunite their family as, after their parents' divorce, they're forced to live in separate cities... Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 14 Sept

MEN & CHICKEN (15) Gabriel and Elias are two very different brothers. Their father is dead. Things take a turn when the brothers learn, through a videotape recorded by their now late father, that he in fact wasn't their biological dad... Stars David Dencik & Mads Mikkelsen. Foreign language, subtitled. Stoke Film Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 15 Sept

JASON BOURNE (12a) Jason Bourne is beginning to remember stuff. And so he sets about trying to uncover the truth about who he really is... The good news is that Paul Greengrass returns as the director of this hopelessly addictive franchise (he directed the best in the series, The Bourne Supremacy and The Bourne Ultimatum). Stars Matt Damon & Julia Stiles. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, South Shropshire, Fri 16 Sept


SHREWSBURY
theatresevern

THU 15 SEP



ALBERT HAMMOND

Having written songs for over 50 years, Albert has written for Johnny Cash, Whitney Houston and many more. Hear the songs and the stories behind them. Songs like *The Air That I Breathe*, *Down By The River* and *One Moment In Time*.

FRI 16 SEP



THE STARS FROM THE COMMITMENTS

STARS FROM THE COMMITMENTS

This dynamic 9-piece band features cast members & musicians from the film 'The Commitments', performing Dublin's finest mix of gritty soul with irresistible Irish charm, and featuring all the hits from the multi million selling soundtrack.

MON 19 - WED 21 SEP



ALL OR NOTHING

The 'Mod' Musical, celebrating the sixties, the culture and the unique sound of the iconic band The Small Faces, including an arsenal of brilliant hits like *All Or Nothing*, *Tin Soldier*, *Lazy Sunday*, *Here Comes The Nice* & *Itchycoo Park*.

THU 22 SEP



TONY CHRISTIE

A night of music and song with one of the greatest performers & legendary voices of our time. With the hits *Is This The Way To Amarillo?*, *I Did What I Did For Maria*, *Avenue And Alleyways*, *Walk Like A Panther* and many more....

MON 26 SEP



MINISTRY OF SCIENCE

Definitely NOT your ordinary science show! Hovercrafts and Human Cannons, anarchic experiments, and colourful scientists! Fingers in ears are advised because this manic & madcap science show comes with a BANG!!

THU 29 SEP - SAT 01 OCT



THE COLLECTOR

Born out of the writer's own experiences, one of the most highly acclaimed shows at the 2014 Edinburgh Festival, a compelling tale of murder, evil, betrayal, and raw human emotion set in occupied Iraq.

BOX OFFICE 01743 281281
www.theatresevern.co.uk

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released Fri 16 September, showing at selected cinemas

- BRIDGET JONES'S BABY** (tbc)
- THE BROTHER** (tbc)
- THE CLAN** (tbc)
- EL SUR (THE SOUTH)** (PG)
- HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE** (tbc)
- THE INFILTRATOR** (15)
- THE NEIGHBOUR** (tbc)
- BLAIR WITCH** (tbc)

Events

BAKE AND MAKE - THE ART OF BREAD AND BUTTER Find out how people in the 17th century ran their home, bake a loaf of bread and make butter, Mon 12 Sept, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

CARRIE HOPE FLETCHER - TALK, Q&A AND BOOK SIGNING Mon 12 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TUESDAY TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Tues 13 Sept, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

FLAVOURED BREADS WITH KATHLEEN CORFIELD Tues 13 Sept, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

MEET SIR THOMAS HOLTE: A BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK TOUR Wed 14 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

MOSCOW STATE CIRCUS Wed 14 - Sun 18 Sept, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

MISS ELIZABETH BOAT TRIPS Take a gentle cruise along the mile-long, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown-designed lake. Enjoy breathtaking views of the woodlands and gardens from an ecologically friendly, electrically powered, 42-seat catamaran, Wed 14 - Sun 18 Sept, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

SPECIALIST TALK - THE PRERAPHAELITES - SEX, DRUGS AND POETRY Tongue-in-cheek evening tour with a definite adult slant, Thurs 15 Sept, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

VOLUNTEER OPEN DAY Whether you're an experienced gardener, or just have an interest and want to learn more, Trentham needs you!, Thurs 15 Sept, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

WOMEN'S WORK: A BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK TOUR Find out about the lives of women who lived at Aston Hall, Thurs 15 - Fri 16 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

THE MACMILLAN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CORACLE RACE Fri 16 Sept, Shrewsbury Town Centre

INTRODUCTION TO POLE LATHE TURNING Fri 16 Sept, Brockhampton Estate, Herefordshire

CRONKHILL OPEN DAY See a major restoration project in action on one of the first and finest examples of

John Nash's Italianate villa designs, Fri 16 Sept, Attingham Park, Shropshire

A TASTE OF HISTORY - A BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK TOUR Exclusive culinary evening tour of Aston Hall. Explore the art and theatre of dining through the ages, Fri 16 Sept, Aston Hall, Birmingham

OPEN COCKPITS EVENING Climb on board a selection of historic aircraft and sit in the pilot's seat, Fri 16 - Sat 17 Sept, RAF Cosford, Shropshire

BIRMINGHAM CHILLI FESTIVAL Sat 17 Sept, Brindleyplace, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAY See orchards full of fruit and pick your own harvest of damsons and apples, Sat 17 Sept, Brockhampton Estate, Herefordshire

SECRET LIFE OF OLD HOUSES 1: CONSTRUCTION Focusing on the construction and welfare of old buildings - understanding bricks and mortar, architectural features, conservation and general maintenance, Sat 17 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

WILDLIFE WATCH GROUP: HARVEST BONANZA Activities and walks for children, Sat 17 Sept, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

SILVER RING WORKSHOP Join local designer-maker Grace Page to create your own silver ring, Sat 17 Sept, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

MEREFEST Featuring Farmers Market, crafts, free activities, pop-up restaurant, live music & more, Sat 17 Sept, Ellesmere, Shropshire

MIDLAND GAME FAIR Country pursuits event, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Weston Park, Staffordshire

VOLUNTEER WEEKEND Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Fordhall Organic Farm, Market Drayton, Shropshire

HERITAGE WEEKEND AT CADBURY WORLD Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM BUS TOURS 2016 Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Birmingham City Centre

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY... Join in with the insect-themed activities, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

BATTLE OF CROGEN MEDIEVAL WEEKEND - WITH CWMWD IAL A look at life in the early medieval period with re-enacting groups Cwmwd Ial and Les Miles des Marches, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Chirk Castle, nr Wrexham

AUTUMN WATCH WEEKEND Focusing on everything from wild birds to mammals and insects, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, Lower Drayton Farm, Stafford

SPUDFEST Take the Spud Shuttle Tractor Ride to the potato plot and dig up your own spuds, Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-on-Trent

5TH ANNUAL CHILLI FESTIVAL Sat 17 - Sun 18 Sept, The Dorothy Clive Garden, Shropshire

TRENTHAM FERN TRAIN TRIPS Take a



Chilli Festival

Brindleyplace, Birmingham, Sat 17 September

Temperatures are set to rise in Brindleyplace mid-month with the welcome return of the almost-too-hot-to-handle Birmingham Chilli Festival. The event is now in its sixth year and as usual features numerous food stalls selling a wide range of chilli-influenced street cuisine. Plenty of live music and family entertainment is also on the bill, as is the always-popular chilli-eating competition.

trip on the Trentham Fern, the resident diesel engine that chuffs along the lakeside on a light gauge railway, Sat 17 - Tues 20 Sept, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

CRONKHILL OPEN DAY See a major restoration project in action on one of the first and finest examples of John Nash's Italianate villa designs, Sun 18 Sept, Attingham Park, Shropshire

HSBC BIKEFEST 2016 Now in its second year, BikeFest is completely free and aims to inspire Birmingham people to get active, Sun 18 Sept, Victoria Square, Birmingham

Dudmaston Estate, Shropshire

ANTIQUE & VINTAGE FAIR Sun 18 Sept, Maws Craft Centre, Telford, Shropshire

STAFFORDSHIRE WEDDING SHOW Sun 18 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground

TUDOR THREADS AND STUART SEWING Meet the costumed volunteers as they sew, embroider and stitch their way back to the 17th century, Sun 18 - Mon 19 Sept, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

Stafford Bingley Hall

QUALITY 3 DAY ANTIQUES FAIRS

At the County Showground,
Stafford ST1 8 OBD on A518, 5 mins J14, M6
Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays

23rd/24th/25th SEPTEMBER

10am-5pm each day Ample free parking

Up to 400 STANDS INCLUDING ART, FURNITURE, CERAMICS,
GLASS, CLOCKS, FASHION, SILVER & JEWELLERY.

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the
brewhouse
arts centre & café bar

COMING SOON...



13-17 September, 7.30pm
Sat Mat 2.30pm
The Mellow Dramatics
Oliver!
Tickets: £12, Tues & Sat Mat £10



22 September, 8pm
Funhouse Comedy Club:
Ivan Brackenbury & Ian D Montfort
Tickets: £8



24 September, 8pm
the mAdHoUSe Presents
Megson plus support
Tickets: £15 otd, £12 adv



30 September, 7.45pm
Into The Shadows
Tickets: £11



1 October, 8pm
Gordie MacKeeman & his Rhythm Boys
Tickets: £14 otd, £12 adv



6 October, 4.30pm & 7.30pm
Zest Theatre presents:
Thrive
Tickets: £9 (18+) £6 (13-17 +Students)



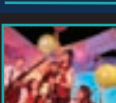
7 October, 8pm
Mark Watson: I'm Not Here
Tickets: £17



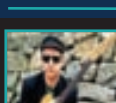
11 October, 8pm
O'Hooley & Tidow: Shadows
Tickets: £12.50



12 October, 8pm
Tony's Last Tape
Tickets: £12, £10 concessions



18 October, 1.30pm & 5.30pm
MishMash: Hubbub
Tickets: £8, £6 Concessions, £25 family of 4



22 October, 8pm
Henry Priestman + Les Glover (support)
Tickets: £15 otd, £12 adv

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Union Street,
Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 1AA
Box office: **01283 508100**
BOOK ONLINE AT
www.brewhouse.co.uk



LICHFIELD GARRICK
Theatre & Studio

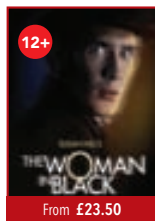
SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



SAT 10 SEPT,
7.30PM,
THE MOODY BLUES' JOHN LODGE PLUS SUPPORT

John will be performing his favourite Moody Blues songs as well as tracks from his solo albums.

£26 - £28.50



12+

TUES 13 - SAT 17
SEPT, 7.30PM,
MATS, 2.30PM
THE WOMAN IN BLACK

Susan Hill's acclaimed ghost story comes dramatically alive in Stephen Mallatrat's ingenious stage adaptation.

From £23.50



SUN 18 SEPT, 7.30PM
THE MAGIC OF THE MUSICALS

10 Musicians, 3 West End Vocalists, 1 Great Performance.
Expect Lloyd Webber, Sondheim, Gershwin, Rogers and Hammerstein and everything in-between with a spectacular Les Miserables finale.

£23.50, £18.50 Students



12+

THU 20 - SAT 24 SEPT,
7.30PM, MATS, 2.30PM
Sell A Door Theatre Presents
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

A charming, kooky and hilarious musical based on the cult film and one of the longest running off-Broadway shows of all time
Starring Rhidian Roberts as the sadistic dentist.

From £21.50



FRI 30 SEPT, 7.30PM
R.C. SHERIFF'S JOURNEYS END

A harrowing insight into the humanity of the First World War based on R.C. Sheriff's own experiences in the trenches.

£17 - £19



SAT 1 OCT, 7.30PM
NICHOLAS PARSONS

Join raconteur Nicholas Parsons for an evening of anecdotal entertainment based on his experience of life and working in the various media of an unpredictable and always fascinating profession.

£21.50



SUN 16 OCT, 7.30PM
LET'S TWIST AGAIN

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SUNDAY 11th SEPTEMBER



DANIEL KOEK

WEDNESDAY 14th SEPTEMBER



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MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER



JANE SIBERRY

SUNDAY 25th SEPTEMBER



THE LEISURE SOCIETY

THE AWARD WINNING MUSIC & COMEDY VENUE IN SHROPSHIRE

Gigs

DEAD SEA SKULLS Mon 19 Sept, The Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

HALEY REINHART Mon 19 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BLUE OCTOBER Mon 19 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LOTTERY WINNERS TOUR Mon 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE MAYBYS Mon 19 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

WALK OF FAME (ROLLING STONES) Mon 19 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

JANE SIBERRY Mon 19 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

THE SHERLOCKS Mon 19 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

DAVE MCPHERSON Mon 19 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE THREE DEGREES Tues 20 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, B'ham

DANIEL O'DONNELL Tues 20 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SUNDARA KARMA Tues 20 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MEGSON Tues 20 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

JOSH SMITH Tues 20 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

MOON HOOCH Tues 20 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

SEAFOAL + ANAVAE Tues 20 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

ALEXANDER O'NEAL Wed 21 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

MCFLY Wed 21 Sept, - Fri 23 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CAVERN OF ANTI MATTER Wed 21 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GREGORY PECK'S JAZZ, FUNK AND SOUL OPEN MIC NIGHT Wed 21 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

JORDAN MACKAMPA Wed 21 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

MEADOWLARK Thurs 22 Sept, Hare & Hounds,

Birmingham

TONY CHRISTIE Thurs 22 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KEE MARCELLO BAND Thurs 22 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ANGRYFISH Thurs 22 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

MIKE BLADEN Thurs 22 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

MILBURN Thurs 22 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

TANGERINES + THE AMERICAS + RISCAS Thurs 22 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

HANSU-TORI Fri 23 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BLOSSOMS Fri 23 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

TONY MORTIMER Fri 23 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HANNAH & BRIAN Fri 23 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

LIZZIE AND THE BANSHEES Fri 23 Sept, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

DESPERADO - THE VERY BEST OF THE EAGLES Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

MIKE SKINNER & MURKAGE PRESENT TONGA Fri 23 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

LENNON: THROUGH A GLASS ONION Fri 23 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

POPE OF CHILLITOWN Fri 23 Sept, The Slade Rooms, W'hampton

KINGBIRD Fri 23 Sept, Ludlow Brewery, South Shropshire

MUSIC LIKE LEMONS Fri 23 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Sat 24 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

KILLERSTREAM Sat 24 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

XVII Sat 24 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

WILD IRISH Sat 24 Sept, The Irish Centre, Birmingham

ONE NIGHT OF ELVIS: LEE 'MEMPHIS' KING Sat 24 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ONLY SHADOWS Sat 24

Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

JOE SEAGAR Sat 24 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

RAT BOY Sat 24 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

MEGSON Sat 24 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

ONE NIGHT OF ELVIS Sat 24 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

A R RAHMAN Sat 24 Sept, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

ANNIE MAC PRESENTS ALL DAY RAVES Sat 24 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH JUSTIN HAYWARD Sat 24 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TWEET Sat 24 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

IVO NEAME AND MACIEK PYSZ Sat 24 Sept, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

MIKE SILVER & JOHNNY COPPIN Sat 24 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, W'hampton

MUSICIANS AGAINST HOMELESSNESS Sat 24 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

STAN TRACEY LEGACY OCTET Sat 24 Sept, mac, Birmingham

A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY Sun 25 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE LEISURE SOCIETY Sun 25 Sept, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

SEAN WILSON Sun 25 Sept, The Irish Centre, Birmingham

MIC LOWRY Sun 25 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE GLOAMING Sun 25 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

TONY CHRISTIE Sun 25 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

US THE DUO Sun 25 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

COLLEEN GREEN & CASSIE RAMONE Sun 25 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE KAZ HAWKINS BAND Sun 25 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

Classical Music

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Edward Gardner (conductor) & Steven Osbourne (piano). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Butterworth & Walton, Thurs 22 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



CBSO CENTRE STAGE: QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME Featuring artist in residence Steven Osbourne (piano) & the CBSO musicians. Programme comprises Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time, Fri 23 Sept, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CBSO: NOTES FROM A SMALL ISLAND Featuring Michael Seal (conductor) & Catherine Aridge (presenter), Sat 24 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MUSIC MAZE WITH FLAUTIST TONY ROBB Sun 25 Sept, CBSO Centre, B'ham

Comedy Gigs

TOADALLY FREE COMEDY! Mon 19 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

MITCH BENN Thurs 22 Sept, Wolverhampton Art Gallery

ROSS NOBLE Thurs 22 - Fri 23 Sept, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

LLOYD LANGFORD, MICHAEL FABBRI & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 22 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ISY SUTTIE Fri 23 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LLOYD LANGFORD, MICHAEL FABBRI & ANDREA HUBERT & COMIC TBC Fri 23 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE NOISE NEXT DOOR, MATT WELCOME, WAYNE DEAKIN & ALLYSON JUNE SMITH Fri 23 Sept, The Comedy Loft, B'ham



TIM FITZHIGHAM AS WILL KEMPE, SHAKESPEARE'S STAND-UP Fri 23 Sept, St Leonards Church, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

COMEDY IN THE MET Sat 24 Sept,

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LOL COMEDY CLUB Sat 24 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

JEREMY HARDY Sat 24 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LLOYD LANGFORD, MICHAEL FABBRI, ANDREA HUBERT & RORY O'HANLON Sat 24 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

WAYNE DEAKIN, ALLYSON JUNE SMITH, IVAN BRACKENBURY & IAN D MONTFORD Sat 24 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

TIM FITZHIGHAM AS WILL KEMPE, SHAKESPEARE'S STAND-UP Sat 24 Sept, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

NINA CONTI Sun 25 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE LAUGHING SOLE COMEDY FOR KIDS Sun 25 Sept, mac, Birmingham

Theatre

ALL OR NOTHING: THE MOD MUSICAL Carol Harrison's homage to the life and music of The Small Faces, Mon 19 - Wed 21 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GHOST THE MUSICAL Stage version of the award-winning movie, Mon 19 - Sat 24 Sept, New Alexander Theatre, Birmingham

MANDELA TRILOGY Cape Town Opera's epic operatic tribute to the life of Nelson Mandela, Tues 20 - Wed 21 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS Rhidian Roberts stars as Orin Scrivello in a new staging of the hit musical sci-fi spoof, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

ANIMAL FARM George Orwell's allegorical 'fairy story', boldly retold in a production suitable for audiences of all ages, Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

GIRLS Talawa Theatre Company, HighTide and Soho Theatre present Theresa Ikoko's 'funny and fiercely passionate new play', Tues 20 - Sat 24 Sept, The REP, Birmingham

SHOOTING WITH LIGHT Idle Motion use innovative staging, physicality & multimedia to piece together the life on an exceptional woman, glimpsed through the lost photographs she risked her life to take, Wed 21 Sept, mac, Birmingham

THE TIME MACHINE Nunkie Theatre Company present HG Wells' science fiction classic, Wed 21 Sept, The Walker Theatre, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BLACK COFFEE Amateur production of the only play that Agatha Christie ever wrote about her famous Belgian sleuth, Hercule Poirot, Wed 21 - Sat 24 Sept, Dudley Little Theatre

WOS DOES DISNEY Walsall Operatic Society present a concert-style performance featuring songs from classic Disney movies, Thurs 22 - Sat 24 Sept, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

DIAL M FOR MURDER Blue Orange Arts present Frederick Knott's erotic tale of

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What's on...




Friday 16th September
ALEXANDER O'NEAL
Time: 7.30pm


18+



Tuesday 4th October
MUMS THE WORD 2
Time: 7.30pm




Wednesday 5th October
THE UNIQUE KOMEDY UKULELE ORCHESTRA
Time: 7.30pm




Sunday 9th October
MONSTERSAURUS
Time: 2.00pm

3+




Thursday 13th October
RICHARD HALL
Time: 8.00pm


14+




Thursday 14th October
BASIL & CO - THE DINNER SHOW
Time: 7.30pm



Sunday 16th October
GRIMETHORPE COLLIERY BAND
Time: 3.00pm




Friday 21st October
LEE MEAD
Time: 7.30pm



Thursday 3rd November
BYE BYE BABY
Time: 7.30pm

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betrayal, passion and murder - best known from its 1954 Alfred Hitchcock-directed film version starring Ray Milland and Grace Kelly, Thurs 22 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

A GAMBLER'S GUIDE TO DYING Traverse Theatre present Gary McNair's inter-generational tale of what we live for and what we leave behind, Fri 23 Sept, mac, Birmingham

LENNON THROUGH A GLASS ONION Part concert, part biography, this off-Broadway success celebrates the genius and music of one of the world's most treasured icons. West End performer Daniel Taylor stars, Fri 23 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



SPINE Award-winning performance which charts the explosive friendship between a ferocious, wise-cracking teenager and an elderly East End widow, Fri 23 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

STICK MAN Scamp Theatre present a stage adaptation for children, based on Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler's popular children's book, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE LAST FIVE YEARS Tony Award-winning composer Jason Robert's intensely personal look at the relationship between a writer and an actress, presented with the accompaniment of a six-piece orchestra, Fri 23 - Sat 24 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE KITCHEN SINK Tom Wells' funny and huge-hearted play about marriage, families, making ends meet - and dodgy plumbing, Fri 23 Sept - Sat 8 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

ONE NIGHT OF ELVIS Lee Memphis King portrays Elvis during his Vegas comeback years, Sat 24 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

JUSTIN LIVE! Interactive show featuring CBeebies favourite Justin Fletcher, Sun 25 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

NINA CONTI: IN YOUR FACE Expect the unexpected as Nina and her sidekick monkey unleash some 'hilarious witchery', Sun 25 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS Phileas Fogg and his faithful manservant race to beat the clock. Presented by the Crescent Theatre Company, Sun 25 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

LEARNING TO DRIVE (15) When her husband leaves her, Manhattan writer Wendy Shields decides to capitalise on her independence by learning to drive. Her instructor, an Indian Sikh, is facing a very different nuptial prospect: an arranged marriage. They're as different as chalk and paneer, but they form a very special bond over the wheel. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 19 Sept

CHEVALIER (18) In the middle of the Aegean Sea, six men on a fishing trip decide to play a game, which rapidly scales into a broader contest - an addictive, tragicomic series of tests to answer the question: Who is the best? Foreign language, subtitled. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 19 Sept

STAR TREK BEYOND (12a) How many Star Trek films have there been? Whoops, this is the 13th and the third in the rebooted series. Simon Pegg penned the screenplay (in collaboration with Doug Jung) and takes the USS Enterprise into the furthest reaches of uncharted space, where the crew encounters a really nasty piece of work (Idris Elba). Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 19 - Tues 20 Sept



CHICKLIT (15) A comedy drama about four men who decide to write a steamy novel under a female pseudonym in order to raise the money to save their local pub. Stars Christian McKay & Dakota Blue Richards. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 19 Sept

JASON BOURNE (12a) Jason Bourne is beginning to remember stuff. And so he sets about trying to uncover the truth about who he really is... The good news is that Paul Greengrass returns as the director of this hopelessly addictive franchise (he directed the best in the series, The Bourne Supremacy and The Bourne Ultimatum). Stars Matt Damon & Julia Stiles. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 21 - Thurs 22 Sept

THE BFG (PG) A live-action adaptation of Roald Dahl's story of the lonely

giant (played here by Mark Rylance) who kidnaps a little girl (Ruby Barnhill) to help him outwit the man-eating giants that have been plaguing the human world. Also stars Ruby Barnhill & Dame Penelope Wilton. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 24 Sept

RAMS (15) In a remote, windswept corner of Iceland reside two prize rams, Garpur and Sproti. Coincidentally, they belong to Gummi and Kiddi, who happen to be neighbours - and brothers - who haven't spoken to each other in 40 years... Anybody who 'gets' Icelandic humour should relish the doleful, under-stated and straight-faced portrait of rivalry, competition, loneliness and sheep. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Fri 23 Sept

NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

Released from Fri 23 Sept, showing at selected cinemas

400 DAYS (tbc)

ALMOST HOLY (PG)

ASTERIX AND OBELIX - MANSION OF THE GODS (U)

BEHEMOTH (tbc)

COSMOS (tbc)

DAVID BRENT: LIFE ON THE ROAD (15)

LIGHTS OUT (15)

SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS (tbc)

Events

ATTINGHAM RE-DISCOVERED TOUR: RE-CREATING A BOLD DESIGN Tues 20 Sept, Attingham Park, Shropshire

TREE ID FOR ALL THE FAMILY An interactive learning experience to identify different trees around the farm, Tues 20 Sept, Fordhall Organic Farm, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

TUESDAY TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Tues 20 Sept, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

MISS ELIZABETH BOAT TRIPS Take a gentle cruise along the mile-long, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown-designed lake. Enjoy breathtaking views of the woodlands and gardens from an ecologically friendly, electrically powered, 42-seat catamaran, Tues 20 - Sun 25 Sept, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

PACIFIC POWER - CHARITY DAY Flying Scotsman make its debut, courtesy of the Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust, Wed 21 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

ANTIQUÉ VALUATION DAY Thurs 22 Sept, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

THE GLAMPING SHOW Thurs 22 - Sat 24 Sept, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire

CAMRA REAL ALE & CIDER FESTIVAL

Featuring more than 60 ales, 25 ciders and perries, and a programme of live entertainment on the Friday and Saturday, Thurs 22 - Sat 24 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE CYCLE SHOW The UK's biggest cycling event, Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

EGX Thurs 22 - Sun 25 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

PACIFIC POWER Flying Scotsman and Tornado, two world famous steam locomotives, meet at the Severn Valley Railway for the first time, Thurs 22 - Mon 26 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Kidderminster

MURDER-MYSTERY DINNER EXPERIENCES Performed by the Creative Arts Theatre Company, Fri 23 Sept, Shugborough Historic Working Estate, Staffordshire

LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS Fri 23 Sept, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

WOLVERLEY BEER FESTIVAL 2016 The Saturday is dedicated to beer and music, the Sunday to families, with a funfair on the field and beer and live music in the Memorial Hall, Fri 23 Sept, Wolverley Memorial Hall, Kidderminster

LOCKDOWN II - SANCTUM Fully immersive zombie experience, Fri 23 Sept, The Dana Prison, Shrewsbury



BOWMAN'S ANTIQUE FAIR Fri 23 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground

BRIDGET JONES'S BABY PREMIERE Supporting Ladies Fighting Breast Cancer, Fri 23 Sept, Electric Cinema, Birmingham

A PLACE IN THE SUN LIVE The official exhibition of the hit overseas property TV show, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

BOWMAN ANTIQUES Comprising up to 400 stalls, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground

PARKHEAD CANAL FESTIVAL Popular biennial boat festival organised by Dudley Canal Trust and the Worcester/Birmingham and Droitwich Canal Society at Parkhead Locks, Fri 23 - Sun 25 Sept, Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines

DISCOVER RAG RUGGING Sat 24 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

MOSELEY ARTS MARKET Featuring locally produced artwork, Sat 24 Sept, Victoria Parade, Moseley, Birmingham

INTRODUCTION TO JEWELLERY MAKING Learn the traditional techniques of bead and chainmail jewellery-making, Sat 24 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

DIESEL DAY A selection of locomotives

tives operating a varied service along both the Churnet Valley and Cauldon Lowe lines, Sat 24 Sept, Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

NEWCOMEN ENGINE IN STEAM See the only full-sized working replica of Newcomen's steam engine of 1712 in steam, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

THE SOOTY SHOW: SOOTY IN SPACE Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM BUS TOURS 2016 Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Birmingham City Centre

FORGE EXPERIENCE DAY Hands-on experience of blacksmithing, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SVARTLAND VIKING WEEKEND Experience the life of a Viking, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

SUTTON RECORD FAIR Sat 24 Sept, The Carpenter's Arms, Sutton Coldfield

A SPOTLIGHT ON: THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY AND WOMEN'S TIMBER CORPS Sat 24 Sept, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

MIGRANT MUSIC FESTIVAL Sat 24 Sept, Soho House, Birmingham

FAMILY-FRIENDLY NATURAL PAINTING

Mix colours for painting and printing, using natural ingredients that can be found in the garden and kitchen, Sat 24 Sept, Fordhall Organic Farm, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

BAVARIAN EVENINGS Complete with Bavarian Oompah band and a Bavarian buffet feast, Sat 24 Sept, West Midland Safari and Leisure Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

TRUCKING LIVE SHROPSHIRE Find out more on page 45, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Oswestry Showground, Shropshire

AUTUMN STEAM GALA Featuring the Knotty Heritage Train, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Foxfield Railway, Stoke-on-Trent

APLEY HARVEST & CRAFT FAIR Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Apley Farm Shop, Shifnal, Shropshire

APPLE HARVEST FAIR Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

SPUDFEST Take the Spud Shuttle Tractor Ride to the potato plot and dig up your own spuds, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton-on-Trent

CASTLE COLLECTIONS WEEKEND Featuring items in the castle's collection not normally available to view, Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Tamworth Castle



Bavarian Evenings - West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

EUROPEAN CITY OF SPORT TRIATHLON Sat 24 - Sun 25 Sept, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

TRENTHAM FERN TRAIN TRIPS Take a trip on the Trentham Fern, the resident diesel engine that chuffs along the lakeside on a light gauge railway, Sat 24 - Tues 27 Sept, Trentham Gardens, Stoke-on-Trent

FAMILY AUTUMN ANTICS Press apples, produce leaf art, make elf homes and participate in bush craft, Sun 25 Sept, Eastnor Castle Deer Park, Herefordshire

WOODLAND SKILLS DAY Sun 25 Sept, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth,

Shropshire

SHOW BUS INTERNATIONAL Colourful, themed display of buses old and new, Sun 25 Sept, Donington Park Racing Circuit, Derby

AUTUMN EVENT Apple pressing, seasonal produce, children's wildlife activities and live music from local bands, Sun 25 Sept, Martineau Gardens, Birmingham

CLASSIC CAR RALLY Members of the Black Country Classic Car Club show off their vehicles around the site, Sun 25 Sept, Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge



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Gigs

WATSKY Mon 26 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham
RONAN KEATING Mon 26 - Tues 27 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham
JIMMY OSMOND Mon 26 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
MICHELE STODART Mon 26 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham
CHRIS HOLMES EX W.A.S.P WITH HIS BAND MEAN MAN Mon 26 Sept, The Robin, Bilston
PEGGY SEEGER Tues 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
PRETTY VICIOUS Tues 27 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham
G4 BACK FOR GOOD UK TOUR Tues 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
THE ACOUSTIC SESSIONS Tues 27 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham
MODERAT Tues 27 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham
HANNAH GRACE + GRETA ISAAC Tues 27 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham
YUNG Tues 27 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham
LISA MILLS Wed 28 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs
JUDIE TZUKE Wed 28 Sept, The Robin, Bilston
KESTON COBBLERS CLUB Wed 28 Sept, The Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham
MEILYR JONES Wed 28 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham
KATE RUSBY Wed 28 Sept, Stafford

Gatehouse
BETH ORTON Wed 28 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham
TOSELAND Wed 28 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent
THE TUTS & TACO HELL Wed 28 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
A.J. CROCE Wed 28 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
6IX 7EVEN Wed 28 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham
GREGORY PECK'S JAZZ, FUNK AND SOUL OPEN MIC NIGHT Wed 28 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham
BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIME Wed 28 Sept, The Spotted Dog, Birmingham
HYPNOTIC BRASS ENSEMBLE Thurs 29 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham
DEL CAMINO Thurs 29 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham
DEREK RYAN IN CONCERT Thurs 29 Sept, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham
UP ON THE ROOF Thurs 29 Sept, The Robin, Bilston
TOSELAND Thurs 29 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
EMAROSA Thurs 29 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham
THE BRIAN HUMPHERSON TRIO Thurs 29 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
ARRIVAL UK - ABBA TRIBUTE Thurs 29 Sept, Lichfield Garrick
MING CITY ROCKERS Thurs 29 Sept, The Spotted Dog, B'ham

GROUPEE Fri 30 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, The Jam House, Birmingham
REN HARVIEU Fri 30 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham
OF MICE & MEN Fri 30 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham
BEE GEES FEVER Fri 30 Sept, The River Rooms, Stourbridge
ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE Fri 30 Sept, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham
DURAN: THE TRIBUTE Fri 30 Sept, The Roadhouse, B'ham
JOE STILGOE Fri 30 Sept, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham
THE SUPERSKAS Fri 30 Sept, The Robin, Bilston
FROM THE JAM - THE A & B SIDES Fri 30 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham
FLATLANDS Fri 30 Sept, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury
MIVVI Fri 30 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham
RUTH GRAHAM Fri 30 Sept, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham
THE REEL HOT CEILIDH PEPPERS Fri 30 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall
PSYCHOSTICK + GREEN JELLY Fri 30 Sept, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton
THE MOODY BLUES' JOHN LODGE Fri 30 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall
BRONCHO Fri 30 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

Classical Music

ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN FEAT LAURA VAN DER HEIJDEN (CELLO) David Curtis conducts. Programme includes works by Haydn & Mozart, Wed 28 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall
NOAH STEWART Wed 28 Sept, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock
BEETHOVEN'S FOURTH Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Richard Farnes (conductor) & Jack Liebeck (violin). Programme includes works by Wagner, Sibelius & Beethoven, Wed 28 - Thurs 29 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham
TRIO SEVERN Featuring Zoe Beyers (violin), David Powell (cello) & Robert Markham (piano). Programme includes Sterndale Bennett's Chamber Trio in A major, Op26 & FE Bach's Piano Trio in D Minor, Op25, Fri 30 Sept, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

GRIFFITH & ALLYSON SMITH Fri 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham
THE NOISE NEXT DOOR, PAUL MCCAFFERY, GARETH RICHARDS & KANE BROWN Fri 30 Sept, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham



SEAN PERCIVAL, ISZI LAWRENCE, SEZAR ALKASSAB, CARMEN ALI & JACK CAMPBELL Fri 30 Sept, National Brewery Centre, Burton-upon-Trent
ANDY HAMILTON Fri 30 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE LIVE New production taking an anarchic approach to science communication and looking at the inventors and engineers who've shaped and inspired the modern world, Mon 26 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
JOAN COLLINS The actress, philanthropist and best-selling author shares stories and secrets from her celebrated life and career, Mon 26 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall
THE TEMPEST Presented by four-actor company Thick As Thieves, Mon 26 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
PSYCHIC SALLY Evening of mediumship, Mon 26 Sept, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire
DEAD SHEEP Steve Nailon and Graham Seed star in Jonathan Maitland's tale of love, honour, loyalty and revenge which charts Mrs Thatcher's demise at the hands of one-time friend and political soul-mate Geoffrey Howe, Mon 26 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, The REP, Birmingham
DALLOWAY Dyad Productions present

Comedy Gigs

FAT PENGUIN COMEDY Wed 28 Sept, The Patrick Kavanagh, Birmingham
PETE FIRMAN Wed 28 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



PAUL TONKINSON, PHIL NICHOL & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON Thurs 29 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham
STEVE BUGEJA & COMICS TBC Thurs 29 Sept, Station Pub, Sutton Coldfield
JONATHAN PIE Fri 30 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham
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an adaptation of Virginia Woolf's celebrated map of hearts, minds and memories, Tue 27 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS Rhydian Roberts stars as Orin Scrivello in a new staging of the hit musical sci-fi spoof, Tues 27 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION Based on Stephen King's 1982 novella, Rita Hayworth And Shawshank Redemption, and the classic Tim Robbins/Morgan Freeman 1994 movie version, Tue 27 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ONE MORE SHOW! Brand new musical comedy from the creators of What's All The Fuss About? and The Magnificent Seven, Tues 27 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre

MY BIG FAT COW PAT WEDDING Based on real people's experience of mixed marriages or rural weddings attended by city dwellers out of their comfort zone, this is a lighthearted exploration of relationships across the rural/urban, race and gender divides, Wed 28 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THAT'LL BE THE DAY A musical romp through the youthful days of Rock'n'Roll in the '50s, on through the Swinging '60s and into the taste-

free days of the 1970s, Wed 28 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SWINGING AT THE COTTON CLUB Step back in time with the Lindy Hop Dance Company & The Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra, Wed 28 Sept, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE SHAHNAMEH - THE EPIC BOOK OF KINGS Adventure and romance combine in a production inspired by a masterpiece of world literature, Thurs 29 Sept, mac, Birmingham

GIANTS ON THE HILL Set against the backdrop of the debate about wind turbines and the urgent need to find sustainable energy sources, three actor-musicians tell the story of a fictional rural community and the public and personal conflicts caused by the proposed siting of a windfarm in its vicinity, Thurs 29 Sept, Arena



Theatre, Wolverhampton

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS The ancient Australian art of genital origami, live on stage, Thurs 29 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MACBETH - BLOOD WILL HAVE BLOOD The bard's famous tragedy, reinvented for young audiences, Thurs 29 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

DISCO PIGS A 'furious, funny and violent dash' through a friendship too close to survive, Thurs 29 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, The REP, Birmingham

THE COLLECTOR Henry Naylor's compelling tale of murder, evil and betrayal, set in occupied Iraq, Thurs 29 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LABELS Worklight Theatre's award-winning exploration of issues surrounding mixed heritage and immigration, Fri 30 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

JOURNEYS END RC Sheriffs's harrowing insight into the humanity of the First World War, based on the author's own experiences in the trenches, Fri 30 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

MY BIG FAT COW PAT WEDDING Based on real people's experience of mixed marriages or rural weddings attended by city dwellers out of their comfort zone, this is a lighthearted explo-

ration of relationships across the rural/urban, race and gender divides, Fri 30 Sept, Quatt Village Hall, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

Talks

AN EVENING WITH BARRY FRY & RON ATKINSON An evening of behind-the-scenes football anecdotes from two of the Midlands' most colourful former managers, Mon 26 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

Film

INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

THE CARER (15) Appointed to care for terminally ill theatrical legend Sir Michael Gifford, Dorottya secretly hopes to become his pupil. The cantankerous actor bullies and exploits her until an impromptu exchange from Hamlet reveals a mutual love of Shakespeare. Stars Brian Cox & Coco Konig. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 27 - Wed 28 Sept; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Tues 27 & Thurs 29 Sept
SWEET BEAN (PG) Sweet bean paste is

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the filling of the dorayaki pancakes that Sentaro (Masatoshi Nagase) sells from his bakery every day. A lonely and remote man, Sentaro cooks with skill but little enthusiasm. Then he hires eccentric 76-year-old Tokue (Kirin Kiki), who brings with her a new, secret recipe for bean paste. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 27, Thurs 29 - Fri 30 Sept

AVE (15) A free-wheeling road-movie in which two teenage hitchhikers constantly reinvent themselves. Stars Angela Nedalkova & Ovanes Torosian. Foreign language, subtitled. The Hive, Shrewsbury, Wed 28 Sept

CHICKEN + DIRECTOR Q&A (15) Richard, 15 years old with learning difficulties, longs to put down roots, but his restless and destructive brother Polly needs to keep moving. When the land they live on is bought by a new landowner, and the electricity supply to their caravan is cut, their already precarious living conditions get even worse. Then a chance meeting with the new landowner's daughter, Annabel, leaves Richard besotted, while Polly befriends the guys who run a seedy travelling fair. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Wed 28 Sept

THE LADY IN THE VAN (12a) Inspired by

the true story of a homeless woman who moved into a Bedford van in the drive of Alan Bennett's Camden home. Based on Bennett's 1999 play of the same name. Stars Maggie Smith & Alex Jennings. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Thurs 29 Sept

DAVID BRENT: LIFE ON THE ROAD (15) David Brent, you will remember, is the character that Ricky Gervais played in the mockumentary sitcom *The Office* (2001-7). Now, 15 years later, Brent fancies himself a rock star and is followed up and down the country by a camera crew. However, Brent's delusions of grandeur sit uneasily in the real world... Stars Ricky Gervais & Doc Brown. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 30 Sept

Events

TUESDAY TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Tue 27 Sept, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

MISS ELIZABETH BOAT TRIPS Take a gentle cruise along the mile-long, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown-designed lake. Enjoy breathtaking views of the woodlands and gardens from an ecologically friendly, electrically pow-



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ered, 42-seat catamaran, Wed 28 Sep - Sun 2 Oct, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

THE NATIONAL FRANCHISE EXHIBITION Showcasing a huge range of national franchise opportunities, Fri 30 Sept - Sat 1 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Featuring more than 300 wedding specialists, from bridal boutiques and

florists to jewellers and photographers, Fri 30 Sept - Sun 2 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

STONE FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL Fri 30 Sept - Sun 2 Oct, Westbridge Park, Stone, Staffordshire
HEAVYCON New three-day event held in Birmingham, 'the birthplace of heavy metal', Fri 30 Sep - Sun 2 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

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	Sunday 16th	
	Sunday 23rd	Tom Woodman Band
	Sunday 30th	Ben Poole Band
NOVEMBER	Friday 11th	Fred Zeppelin
	Sunday 13th	Sheelanagig
	Saturday 19th	Ian Siegal Band
	Sunday 20th	Sarah Gillespie Quartet

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