

Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 452 SEPTEMBER 2024

What's On

FILM | COMEDY | THEATRE | GIGS | VISUAL ARTS | EVENTS

wolverhamptonwhatson.co.uk



THERE IS LIFE AFTER ROMEO!

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RANJ SINGH

MATT CARDLE
GERARDINE SACDALAN
LARA DENNING and SANDRA MARVIN
JORDAN BROATCH KYLE COX JACK DANSON
with RANJ SINGH

WOLVERHAMPTON
GRAND
THEATRE

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inside:

WORKING WONDERS

innovative new play Wonder Boy stops off at the Grand



TO THE MOON...

Female empowerment at the heart of BRB's new ballet



LOVE IN THE 80S

An Officer And A Gentleman returns to the Midlands



DIRECT FROM LONDON

THE MUST SEE SHOW RETURNS



'OUTRAGEOUSLY
FUNNY'

BROADWAY BABY



'THE BEST COMEDY
SHOW'

SUNDAY EXPRESS



'THIS EXPERIENCE IS A
MUST'

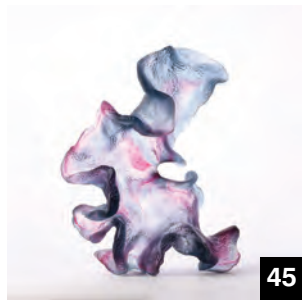
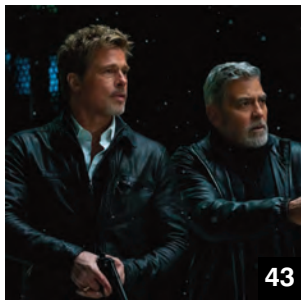
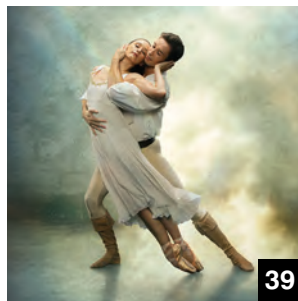
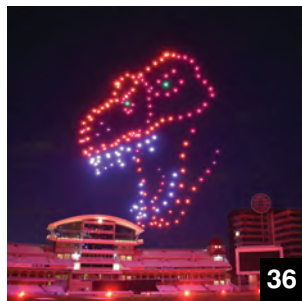
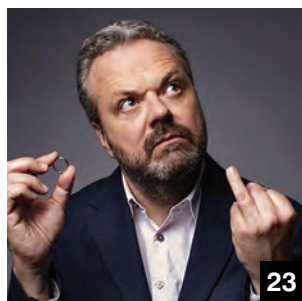
THEATRE AND ARTS REVIEWS



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What's On

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Panto favourites to make a spring return in Lichfield

Lichfield Garrick pantomime favourites Sam Rabone and Ben Thornton will be making an earlier-than-usual reappearance at the venue in 2025.

Fans of the popular duo won't need to wait until the festive season to catch up with the pair, as they're set to star in *The Pocket Dream* - a reimagining of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - from Thursday 24 April to Saturday 3 May.

Other upcoming shows at the Garrick include Floella Benjamin's *Coming To England* (pictured, Wednesday 2 - Sunday 6 October), Thomas Hardy's *Far From The Madding Crowd* (Thursday 20 February) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (Wednesday 16 & Thursday 17 April). To check out the venue's whole programme, visit lichfieldgarrick.com

A tale of creeping terror at Stourbridge Town Hall...

A tale of creeping terror, written by Dracula creator Bram Stoker, is visiting Stourbridge Town Hall just five days before Halloween (Saturday 26 October).

Performed by West Midlands-based theatre company NeuNoir, *The Judge's House* takes place in a desolate and fortified Jacobean manor once owned by a cruel and merciless 'hanging judge'.

For further information about the show, visit the website: neunoir.wordpress.com



Walsall to host MakerFest celebration of creativity

Walsall is this month hosting a festival of creativity, showcasing diverse talents from across the borough.

Taking place on Saturday 7 September, Walsall MakerFest features live music, dance, storytelling, hands-on workshops, pop-up shops, fashion shows, street food and a makers' market... For further information about what's happening on the day and for festival updates, visit the Walsall MakerFest Instagram page @MakerFestWalsall

New theatre to open with Shakespeare In Love

A brand-new theatre in Stone, Staffordshire, will open in November with an in-house production of *Shakespeare In Love*.

The stage adaptation of the 1998 Oscar-winning film will run at Crown Wharf Theatre from Friday 8 to Saturday 16 November.

Tickets for the show are available at crownwharftheatre.org.uk

Cameo role for BBC newsreader in new show

A brand-new musical telling the comical story of four senior-citizen pub regulars, who dream of stage success with their 1960s/70s-style songs, will premiere at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn next month.

Taking the title *Man Band*, the production features a guest appearance by BBC Midlands Today presenter Joanne Malin and shows at the venue from Thursday 10 to Saturday 12 October. For further information and to buy tickets, visit theatresevern.co.uk



Popular Shrewsbury venue in bid to stay open

A young people's creative arts & wellbeing charity faces closure due to mounting pressures to attract funding.

Based in the heart of Shrewsbury, The Hive has announced a campaign called *Save The Hive* in a bid to raise £50,000 to keep its Belmont base open. Anybody wishing to make a donation to the cause can do so at justgiving.com/thehivehmmartsld

Sponsorship continues for Memory Cafes

Water safety specialist Nant Ltd is continuing its support for Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's dementia-friendly Memory Cafes and care home tours.

Over the last two years, the company has been a headline sponsor of the Grand's Memory Care Home tour, delivering performances to 40 care and residential homes.

With Nant having extended its support for another year, the tour has now been expanded to include a further eight such facilities.

Cranford in The Potteries

Stoke Rep Players are presenting a stage adaptation of Elizabeth Gaskell's episodic novel *Cranford* next month.

The amateur production runs at Stoke Repertory Theatre from Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12 October. Tickets are available by visiting stokereplayers.co.uk

Russell to tour historic buildings

Russell Watson will this autumn perform shows in some of the country's most stunning and historic abbeys and cathedrals - including three in the Midlands.

The popular tenor will be taking his Magnificent Buildings Tour to Stoke Minster (Friday 27 September), Warwick St Mary's Church (Saturday 16 November) and Shrewsbury Abbey (Friday 22 & Saturday 23 November). To find out more about the tour and book tickets, visit russellwatson.com



Fizzogs in Wicked Wizard return

Multi-award-winning company Fizzog Productions are making a welcome return this autumn with their brand-new show, The Return Of Wicked Wizard Of Fizzog.

Promising belly laughs, jaw-dropping special effects, singing and dancing, the production is a parody of Wicked and The Wizard Of Oz. It shows at Halesowen Town Hall on Thursday 3, Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 October.

To find out more and book tickets, visit thefizzogs.com



West End thriller Ghost Stories to visit the region in 2025

Critically acclaimed West End show Ghost Stories will visit the Midlands next summer as part of a UK tour.

The hit production, which promises to be 'a fully sensory and electrifying encounter', stops off at

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 July and Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Tuesday 15 to Saturday 19 July. For further information and to book tickets, visit ghoststoriesplay.com



Disco Inferno as Claire Steps out in the Midlands

Claire Richards is bringing 'the ultimate disco party' to Birmingham Town Hall this autumn (Sunday 3 November).

Taking the title Everybody Dance!, the show sees the Steps star and a company of 'dynamic dancers' perform 'the greatest dance and disco hits of all time'. For further information and to book tickets, visit bmusic.co.uk

Political podcast on tour

A popular political podcast is stopping off in Birmingham as part of an autumn tour.

The Rest Is Politics brings together former Downing Street Director of Communications & Strategy, Alastair Campbell, with one-time cabinet minister Rory Stewart. The show takes to the stage at the city's Utilita Arena on Wednesday 9 October. To find out more and book tickets, visit utilitaarenabham.co.uk

Strictly star in the Midlands

International champion and Strictly Come Dancing star Nikita Kuzmin is heading out on his first-ever solo tour next year. Nikita will bring his Midnight Dancer show to Stoke's Regent Theatre on Fri 2 May, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday 11 May and Birmingham Hippodrome on Saturday 17 May.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the venue's websites.



Come to the fair(s)...

Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park in Warwickshire is this month hosting The Print Fair (Saturday 14 & Sunday 15 September), a celebration of the best in print design, illustration and paper-based crafts. Later-season highlights of the venue's autumn programme include The Textile Fair (Friday 8 - Sunday 10 November) and The Gift Fair, making its Christmas debut from Friday 6 to Sunday 8 December. To find out more, visit comptonverney.org.uk



New clay pigeon venue to open in the Midlands

Premier clay shooting destination Clays is opening its third venue this autumn, in Birmingham's historic Piccadilly Arcade. Clays Birmingham will be home to eight traditional shooting pegs, four of which will be in private rooms. Each of the pegs will have their own designated area, allowing plenty of space for shooting, eating and entertaining, with guests able to order food & drink direct to their peg, from their very own kiosk. The venue will open in November. To find out more, visit clays.bar

We Love Tamworth event makes a welcome return

Annual festival We Love Tamworth makes a welcome return this month, presenting a packed programme of activities in the town's Castle Grounds.



Taking place on Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 September, the event features, among other attractions, numerous commercial, community and charity stalls, performances by various local artists, bands and groups, the Streets, Eats & Beats food festival and the Tamworth Castle Heritage Open Day oracle-making workshop.



SIX The Musical heading to Shrewsbury in 2025

Smash-hit musical SIX is coming to Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn. The show sees the six wives of Henry VIII take to the microphone to tell their tales, 'remixing 500 years of historical heartbreak

into an 80-minute celebration of 21st-century girl power'. The award-winning production stops off in Shrewsbury from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 22 February. Tickets for the show can be purchased at theatresevern.co.uk

Arts centre reopens with autumn programme

Much Wenlock's Edge Arts Centre has reopened after a four-year closure. The popular performing-arts venue, which is attached to William Brookes School, was forced to close before the pandemic but is now under new management and once again up-and-running.

Forthcoming shows at the centre include Sarah McQuaid in concert (Friday 13 September), a production of Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* (Saturday the 14th) and a performance by pianist Sultan Stevenson (Saturday the 28th).

To check out the venue's complete autumn programme, visit edgeartscentre.com

Railway's 'resilience fund' raises £73,000

The Severn Valley Railway's (SVR) Resilience Fund - set up in May to access widespread support to meet the visitor attraction's ongoing costs - has so far received donations totalling £73,000.

Commenting on the news, SVR's managing director, Jonathan Dunster, said: "The response from the public to our appeal really has exceeded our expectations. We're

hugely grateful to everyone who's responded. It's heartening to see that they clearly understand the sheer expense of running a heritage railway like the Severn Valley." To make a donation, visit svr.co.uk

Story of love and war on stage at Midlands theatre

Birmingham Repertory Theatre will present a brand-new stage adaptation of *Birdsong*, Sebastian Faulks' international bestselling novel, early next year.

Telling the story of one man's journey through an all-consuming love affair and into the horrors of the First World War, the production shows at the venue from Monday 27 January to Saturday 1 February. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: birmingham-rep.co.uk



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Sarah Millican: Late Bloomer
Various Dates | Symphony Hall



**Toscana Strings: Little Red Ridings
H.O.O.D & Monkey Puzzle**
01 Sept | Symphony Hall



**Tim Peake: Astronauts - The Quest
to Explore Space**
04 Sept | Symphony Hall



The Horne Section's Hit Show
11 Sept | Symphony Hall



**Celebrating Meat Loaf ft The
Neverland Express & Caleb Johnson**
13 Sept | Symphony Hall



**Professor David Wilson & Marcel
Theroux: Killer Books**
13 Sept | Town Hall



**Rob Lamberti
Presents Perfectly George**
14 Sept | Symphony Hall



Marc Almond
16 Sept | Symphony Hall



Little Big Town
17 Sept | Symphony Hall



Paul Carrack
22 Sept | Symphony Hall



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**B:Eats at Symphony Hall for fresh,
seasonal & delicious meals & snacks**
11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show

bmusic.co.uk

There's something for
everyone this September!

Water's Edge Festival returns to Chetwynd Park

The fourth Water's Edge Festival takes place at Shropshire's Chetwynd Deer Park this month.

Featuring nine hours of live music, pop-up street-food outlets and a range of activities for younger visitors to enjoy, the event is being held on Saturday 14 September. You can find out more at watersedgefest.co.uk

Plenty of muscle on display in Wolverhampton

If you like your entertainment to be of the 'seriously muscle-bound' variety, then be sure to catch the Strongman Champions League 2024 tour when it stops off at The Hangar in Wolverhampton this month (Saturday 28 September).

The show features five epic feats of strength and a world-record attempt by Welsh strongwoman Rebecca Roberts. Tickets to the event are available via eventbrite.co.uk

New exhibition celebrates Shrewsbury Pride event

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery is this month hosting an exhibition celebrating the town's 2024 Pride festival, which takes place from Friday 27 to Sunday 29 September. We Are Proud shows in the Museum Shut from Monday 2 to Monday 30 September. More information about the exhibition is available at shropshiremuseums.org.uk

Music, wellness, kids' activities and more...

Shrewsbury's West Mid Showground is hosting a two-day music & wellbeing event this month.

Taking place on Friday 20 & Saturday 21 September, Heal Festival includes performances by more than 100 acts, including Embrace (pictured) and Tom Meighan.

Dance tents, a funfair, a yoga & wellbeing zone, and a selection of street-food traders also feature.

To find out more about the event and book tickets, visit healfestival.co.uk



08 whatsonlive.co.uk



Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery set to reopen

Birmingham Museums Trust has announced the next stage in its phased reopening of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

Several gallery spaces will reopen to the public on Thursday 24 October, after essential maintenance work to the heating, electrics, lifts and roofing was completed on

schedule across the whole Council House complex.

The Round Room Gallery, Industrial Gallery, Bridge Gallery and Edwardian Tearooms are among the spaces which will be reopening in time for October's school half-term week.

Wolverhampton to get new Superbowl UK venue

Superbowl UK is set to open a premises in Wolverhampton.

The new venue, which will be located in the city's Mander Centre, will feature bowling lanes, a soft play area, interactive darts, a SEGA Prize Zone Arcade and a bar & diner. The unit, which will be the 15th Superbowl UK site in England & Wales, is expected to open in early 2025.

Podcast launched for the visually impaired

The day-to-day experience of visually impaired people in Sandwell is being explored in a new documentary-style podcast.

Produced by Black Country Touring in collaboration with Sandwell Visually Impaired, Blathering With SVI features 'a warm-spirited review and discussion of a given theme' every week. It can be found on all major podcast platforms, as well as at bctouring.org.uk

New ale trail launches in Shropshire town

The Shropshire town of Shifnal is hosting a new Ale Trail this month.

A joint venture by Shifnal Town Council and

Love Shifnal - and organised by Shropshire Festivals - the event takes place on Friday 6 & Saturday 7 September.

Commenting on the new attraction, Beth Heath, Director of Fun at Shropshire Festivals, said: "You can complete the trail at your leisure over the two days. Ticket holders can collect a glass tankard, a trail booklet and tokens from the Shropshire Festivals stand on the High Street on either day.

"There will be some live music on the High Street to kick off proceedings from Saturday lunchtime until the evening."

Post Office scandal revisited in new musical

Critically acclaimed Midlands theatre company Pentabus are touring a new musical about the Post Office scandal. Titled Make Good, the show has been directly informed by conversations with sub-postmasters affected by the miscarriage of justice.

The production is being presented at three Midlands venues: Ludlow Assembly Rooms (Friday 18 & Saturday 19 October); Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn (Tuesday 5 November); and Hereford College of Arts (Wednesday 27 November).

To find out more and book tickets, visit the company's website at pentabus.co.uk

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ATG TICKETS

Regent Theatre



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Peppa Pig's Fun Day Out

Wed 18 & Thu 19 Sep



The theatrical event of its generation

An Inspector Calls

Wed 25 – Sat 28 Sep



A Tale of love, dreams, and rock 'n' roll

Stage Productions presents Rock of Ages

Thu 10 – Sat 12 Oct



Set to take audiences back to the glory days of Disco

Disco Inferno

Sat 21 Sep



David Walliams' hilarious story come to life!

Awful Auntie

Thu 3 – Sat 5 Oct



Experience the Chateau like never before

Dick and Angel: Forever Home

Sun 13 Oct

Victoria Hall



Pay tribute to Reggae royalty

An Evening of Classic Reggae

Fri 6 Sep



Get ready for the biggest Motown party of the year

The Magic of Motown

Thu 26 Sep



The ultimate tribute to Moulin Rouge

Come What May

Fri 27 Sep



Access-all-areas conversation

An Evening with Guenther Steiner

Wed 2 Oct

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Image by The Unloved



NEW VIC

The return of Heritage Open Days...

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, taking place every September and involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations. Stories are told, traditions explored and histories brought to life. The festival provides members of the general public with the chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences. And what's more, it's all absolutely FREE. The event returns this year from Friday 6 to Sunday 15 September - and here are just some of the venues you can explore around the region...

Black Country

Aldridge Transport Museum

Aston Manor Road Transport Museum, Shenstone Drive, Aldridge, WS9 8TP

Take advantage of free entry to the Aldridge Transport Museum, housed in a former manufacturing unit and featuring buses, smaller commercial vehicles, two-wheeled bicycles and motorbikes.

For the most part, the vehicles on display were either built or operated in the West Midlands, and visitors can enjoy the exhibits up close. There are a number of buses that you can climb aboard, and if resources allow, short trips around the Aldridge area will run on both of the days.

Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept | 10.30am-4pm, no pre-booking required

Dudley Zoo & Castle

Zoological Drive, Discovery Way, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 4AL

Enjoy a late afternoon at the 11th-century castle in the heart of Dudley Zoo.

The venue is opening its doors for free, with members of the general public able to access the castle courtyard, keep, undercroft and visitor centre.

Although guided tours aren't available, the castle's historian will be happy to answer any questions.

Thurs 12 & Fri 13 Sept | 5pm-7.30pm, pre-booking required



Galton Valley Pumping Station

Galton Valley Pumping Station, Old Mainline Canal, Off the bridge on Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick, B66 1AQ

Take a walk along the canal and discover Galton Valley Pumping Station, which once regulated the water levels between the old mainline and new mainline canals in Smethwick. It's now a small museum, telling the story of life and work on the canals and its own role as a pumping station.

Attractions on the day include a guided walk to the Old Engine House, once the home of the Boulton & Watt steam engine.

No need to pre-book for the tour - just book on site. Free-flow entry to the engine house.

Sat 14 Sept | 11am-3pm, no pre-booking required

Stourbridge Glass Museum

Stourbridge Glass Museum, Stuart Works, High Street, Wordsley, DY8 4FB

Stourbridge Glass Museum is opening its doors for Heritage Open Day, giving visitors the opportunity to check out two floors of historical and contemporary glass exhibitions, live hot glassmaking and glass engravers demonstrating their skills.

The main event begins at 2pm, with a live auction hosted by Simon Cottle, chair of the Glass Society.

Sat 14 Sept | 10.30am-4.30pm (live auction 2-2.30pm), no pre-booking required

Wightwick Manor & Gardens

Wightwick Manor, Bridgnorth Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 8BN

Wightwick Manor & Gardens is granting free entry on two Heritage Open Days, inviting families to experience the charm of a home filled with Pre-Raphaelite art and William Morris interiors. The De Morgan Gallery will be open from 11am to 4pm.

Visitors can walk off their tearoom lunch and ice cream by taking a stroll around the garden, with 19-acres available to explore.

Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept | 10am-5pm, no pre-booking required

Staffordshire

Dancing Through Time - English Folk Dance

Bader Hall, King Edward VI School, Upper St. John Street, Lichfield, WS14 9EE

Find out about the development of dancing in England - from 1651 to the present day - by attending this special dance workshop.

The session will be led by Kathryn and David Wright, who have an extensive knowledge of the history of the English Country Dance.

Music is provided by Rod Stradling.

The dances, which will be taught by means of a clear walk-through, have been chosen to appeal to people of all levels of experience and ability.

Mon 9 Sept | 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start, pre-booking required

Moorcroft

Sandbach Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 2DQ

Operating out of the original brick factory in Stoke-on-Trent - and coming complete with its own Grade II listed bottle oven - museum & heritage visitor centre Moorcroft uses the distinctive slip-trailing methods pioneered by William Moorcroft at the end of the 19th century.

The site is throwing open its working factory doors for three days, with all production departments available to visit.

Wed 11 - Fri 13 Sept | 10.30am-4.30pm, no pre-booking required



FOLK at the NAC
Experience Newhampton Arts Centre's Autumn season of captivating live folk performances right here in Wolverhampton.

MEGSON
Sat 14th Sep - 8pm

KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAKEMAN
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CARRIVICK SISTERS
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A WINTER UNION
Sat 14th Dec - 8pm

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<p>MUSIC</p> <p>GLAM ROCK SHOW 12 SEP</p>	<p>MUSIC</p> <p>AN EVENING WITHOUT KATE BUSH 13 SEP</p>	<p>MUSICAL</p> <p>CHICAGO TEEN EDITION 17-21 SEP</p>	<p>FAMILY</p> <p>THE GRUFFALO 24-25 SEP</p>

lichfieldgarrick.com | **box office 01543 412121**

The return of Heritage Open Days...

Staffordshire Heritage & Archives

**Unit G, Beacon Business Park,
Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0WL**

Go behind the scenes and check out Staffordshire Archives & Heritage's fascinating stored collection. Although this is a self-guided visit, staff and volunteers will be on hand to highlight treasures, explain their conservation and heritage roles, direct visitors around the site and answer questions.

Tues 10 Sept | hourly slots from 10.30am - 2.30pm, pre-booking required



St Editha's Church Tamworth Tower

**St. Edithas Close, Tamworth,
Staffordshire, B79 7DA**

A chance to climb the rare double helix staircase of St Editha's Church in Tamworth, built around 1400. The double helix construction means that two staircases twist around one central post, similar to DNA. Visitors can ascend the outer staircase, walk around the battlements, then descend the inner staircase to view the bells and ringing room.

**Sat 14 Sept | 11am-2pm,
no pre-booking required**

V&A Wedgwood Collection

V&A Wedgwood Collection, Wedgwood Drive, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9ER

Take a look behind the scenes of the Unpacking Project at V&A Wedgwood Collection, courtesy of a guided tour around the storage space.

The team are currently in the midst of a project to unpack and catalogue all stored collections of more than 65,000 objects. Visitors can learn about how the collection is cared for and the creativity behind the objects that are being unwrapped.

**Wed 11 - Fri 13 Sept | 11am-12pm,
pre-booking required**

Shropshire

Dudmaston Hall

Dudmaston Hall, Bridgnorth, WV15 6QN

Take advantage of free entry to this lived-in family home at the heart of a working Shropshire estate.

A much-loved home for over 875 years, the family rooms are scattered with photos. The unexpected galleries create a total contrast, with their crisp and formal lines designed by the last owner, Lady Labouchere. Meanwhile, the gardens provide amazing vistas, while the orchard is the perfect place to relax and enjoy watching your children let off steam.

Sun 8 - Thurs 12, & Sun 15 Sept | 10.30am-4.30pm, no pre-booking required



Haughmond Abbey

**Haughmond Abbey, Haughmond,
Uffington, Shrewsbury, SY4 4RW**

Join an expert team of English Heritage volunteers for an exclusive tour of Haughmond Abbey.

The popular visitor attraction includes extensive remains of the Augustinian abbey, including its abbots' quarters, refectory and cloister. The substantially surviving chapter house has a frontage richly bedecked with 12th- and 14th-century carving and statuary, and a fine timber roof from around 1500.

**Mon 9 - Thurs 12 Sept | 11am,
pre-booking required**



Iron Bridge guided tours

The Iron Bridge, Telford, TF8 7JP

The world's first iron bridge was erected over the River Severn in Shropshire in 1779. This pioneering structure marked a turning point in English design and engineering; after it was built, cast iron came to be widely used in the construction of bridges, aqueducts and buildings.

Join knowledgeable volunteers to find out more about this fascinating site and its history.

**Sat 7 - Thurs 12 Sept | 11am & 1pm,
pre-booking required**

Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

Spring Gardens, Shrewsbury, SY1 2SZ

Visit Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings' Mill exhibition for free across a mid-month Heritage Open Days weekend. Learn all about the first iron-framed building, why it was built in iron, and the lives of the people who worked in the buildings.

**Sat 14 & Sun 15 Sept | 10am-4pm,
pre-booking preferred**



Shropshire Museums Collections Centre

**Ludlow Library, 7 - 9 Parkway, Ludlow,
SY8 2PG**

Take advantage of a behind-the-scenes tour, with the curators presenting a selection of hidden gems from the vast collections of Shropshire Museums. Highlights include costumes, paintings of Ludlow and the surrounding area, Shropshire fossils, stuffed birds and animals. Visitors will also have the chance to check out the archaeology store. The tour will last an hour and is suitable for anybody aged six or older.

Sat 7 Sept | 10am, pre-booking required



WORKING WONDERS

**Director Sally Cookson talks about Wonder Boy -
a play striving to give young people a voice...**

Wonder Boy, written by Ross Willis, visits the Midlands this autumn as part of a UK tour. An innovative production using humour, creative captioning and original music, it tells the sometimes difficult story of Sonny, a young boy living with a stammer. Director Sally Cookson here talks about how her involvement with the play began, the positive impact theatre can have on young people, and how she has brought Sonny's story to life on stage...

How did your production of Wonder Boy originally come about, Sally?

I was invited to a new writing festival at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School pre-pandemic, in which Ross Willis' play was presented. It jumped out at me as a piece of unique writing, and I was attracted to the way Ross combined an absurd world with the very real. It made me laugh and cry. I contacted him and went to see his production of Wolfie at Theatre 503, which I loved. Tom Morris - then artistic director of Bristol Old Vic - agreed to programme Wonder Boy the following year, but that got postponed because of Covid. Ross and I got to know each other during the pandemic via delightful phone calls where we'd just talk about anything and everything. Chatting with Ross is like being in one of his plays. Wonder Boy finally got performed in 2022, a couple of years later than intended, by which time we'd had a chance to dream up ideas together about the show.

The play is about Sonny, a young boy who stammers. Ross Willis has written about the frustration that can come with that. How did you bring that into the show?

This is at the heart of the piece. Ross calls it 'the great inner operatic pain that comes from not being able to be seen or express yourself'. It was essential that we found a way of bringing all elements of the production together to illustrate and highlight Sonny's plight. Music is especially important in helping with this, and Benji Bower's composition manages to get right inside the character's head. But casting an actor who is able to portray the character's trauma is key. Understanding what causes Sonny to behave in the way that he does, and identifying every moment of his thought process, is vital. Some of Sonny's darkest moments happen when there is no text, so being able to identify how his pain manifests physically is important, too. Ross has written it into the structure of the show; those big, absurd moments when Shakespeare comes to life to torment Sonny, or when vowels and letters attack him, are all moments that tap into his inner operatic pain.

The production uses creative captioning. How has this influenced the play?

The play is about what happens when a person communicates differently, and the challenges they face when fluent speech is the expected societal norm. It felt entirely natural to include creative captions as part of the overall design of the show, to tap into the major theme of communication. Creative captioning involves incorporating the entire text into the world of the play. We don't just display the words on a small digital strip positioned either to the left or right of the stage, we ensure that all the words spoken are visually central to the piece. Designed by Tom Newell (video designer), the captions provide another creative layer. They're not only an access tool for Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing people; they're an important part of the imaginative world created in the play.

Wonder Boy deals with quite difficult topics around mental health, including suicide. Why is theatre the right vehicle for this story?

My experience is that theatre is a wonderful place to interrogate the stuff that frightens us as humans. And to ask those questions safely in a rehearsal room, and to share that with an audience, is what theatre does best. In Wonder Boy, the protagonist, Sonny, experiences complicated feelings of guilt, shame, grief and anger as a result of his mother's death by suicide. A lot of plays written for young people shy away from themes such as this, but Ross approaches the subject with honesty and integrity. He understands what young people endure and gives voice to their suffering in an imaginative way. Theatre is a space to gather together to explore human behaviour.

The play is clearly for young people - it's also very sweary...

Oh, we had so many discussions about the sweariness! It's taken us around and about and back to where we started, which is why we've changed very little of it. Ross is quite right - most young people swear a lot. It's

become part of the way they communicate. Some adults get quite upset about the amount of swearing in the show - no young people do. And the play really is for teenagers. Getting teenagers into the theatre is very difficult, and I think Ross has absolutely found a way of engaging them - by telling a beautiful and important story and using an extreme version of the language they identify with.

This show illustrates the impact that art, and theatre in particular, can have on young people. Is that something you're passionate about?

Yes - that's what helped me. I hated school. I was really miserable - then my mum sent me to the local youth theatre. That's where my journey into the arts started. It's where I suddenly felt valued, and where I had a voice, so I feel very strongly about it. And now more than ever - with a curriculum starved of the arts (hopefully this will soon change), theatre is essential in engaging young people's imaginations and allowing them space to dream and think big.

What can theatre give to a young person who's struggling to be heard or find a voice?

So many things. It's not just about encouraging young people to work in the arts. By joining a youth theatre, being part of an audience regularly, partaking in drama, it can make you feel more connected, less alone. It can inspire your imagination, make you think bigger, think differently. It can encourage empathy by helping you understand why other people behave like they do. It can tap into your own artistic talents and help you find things out about yourself that you never knew. It can also just be a good laugh. The list is endless.

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Wonder Boy shows at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Monday 30 September until Wednesday 2 October, and then at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Thursday 3 to Saturday 5 October

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Classical music from across the region...



CBSO: Kazuki conducts Beethoven 9

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Thurs 19 September

Inspired by Friedrich Schiller's 1785 poem, Ode To Joy, and premiered in Vienna 300 years ago, Beethoven's ninth - his final completed symphony - is widely considered to be his greatest-ever composition. The work is here presented in a programme

of music that also features Stravinsky's Symphonies Of Wind Instruments and Strauss' Metamorphosen. CBSO Music Director Kazuki Yamada leads the orchestra in a concert which also features the CBSO Chorus.

CBSO: Mozart & Shostakovich

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 25 September

This Fabien Gabel-conducted concert kick-starts with ballet music from Idomeneo, Mozart's story of kings, queens and gods. The evening is brought to a close by Shostakovich's ninth symphony, a work which has been described as going from sprightly to feverish to downright raucous. The programme is completed by Mozart's Concerto For Bassoon - featuring the CBSO's Nikolaj Henriques - and the UK premiere of Mark Simpson's Concertino For Trumpet & Orchestra, performed by the CBSO's Jason Lewis.



The Dante Quartet

St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 20 September

Held in high regard for their imaginative programming, Dante are widely considered to be one of the UK's finest classical music ensembles. Comprising Zoe Beyers (violin), Richard Jenkinson (cello), Ian Watson (violin) and Carol Ella (viola), the quartet this month return to the Midlands to present a programme featuring works by Britten, Shostakovich, Brahms and Elizabeth Maconchy.

Kidderminster Male Choir & Aled Jones

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 6 September

Having notched up 120 glorious years, Kidderminster Male Choir's 'men in red' here team up with Aled Jones for an anniversary concert.

The boys are joined for the occasion by all-female choir the Kidderminster Valentines. By comparison with the Male Choir, the Valentines are veritable spring chickens - they've been making beautiful music together for a mere 36 years!



Valentin Magyar Piano Concert

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 11 September

The Assembly Rooms' popular Wednesday Concert Series continues with a performance by Budapest-born rising-star pianist Valentin Magyar. The concert features works by Schubert, Beethoven, Scriabin and three by Liszt.





N'famady Kouyaté

Lichfield Guildhall, Fri 6 September

N'famady Kouyaté's instrument of choice is the balafon - a traditional wooden xylophone sacred to West African culture - and he's extremely good at playing it! Producing a sound that's been likened to

'unfettered joy', the Guinea-born, Cardiff-based master musician creates arrangements that fuse Mandingue African with western jazz, pop, indie and funk influences. A rising star who last year won the Glastonbury Emerging Talent Competition, N'famady is playing the Guildhall as part of an autumn tour.

Terrorvision

KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton, Thurs 26 September

Spawned back in the 1980s from the remnants of glam rockers Spoilt Brats, Terrorvision busted their proverbial guts on the touring circuit and played support slots for long-time heroes The Ramones and Motorhead. They finally found their place in the sun in the early 1990s with breakthrough album *How To Make Friends And Influence People*. If you love sledgehammer singalong hits and shameless live-rock thrills, this smash-hit band from Bradford deliver in spades. They visit Wolverhampton in support of new album *We Are Not Robots*, a 37-minute riot of shiny pop hooks and in-your-face hard rock.

Lazy Habits

The Robin, Bilston, Wed 11 September

Gritty yet soulful songs are genre-bending band Lazy Habits' stock-in-trade. Creating a potent blend of contemporary and classic, they beautifully marry orchestral strains with heavy hip-hop drums and brooding bass lines. The band's Bilston gig forms part of a short tour they're undertaking in support of their new EP.



Megson

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 14 September

Since releasing first album *On The Side* in 2004, husband-and-wife team Stu and Debbie Hanna have gone on to develop an enviable reputation on the English folk-music circuit. Hailed as fresh and innovative (a description which is hardly surprising, given that Debbie is classically trained and Stu's a former punk!), the multi-award-winning duo specialise in self-composed melodies which bring together intimate harmony singing and multi-instrumental acoustic playing.

Lloyd Cole

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 18 September

One-time lead singer with The Commotions, with whom he released three albums in the 1980s, singer-songwriter Lloyd Cole has also enjoyed plenty of solo success.

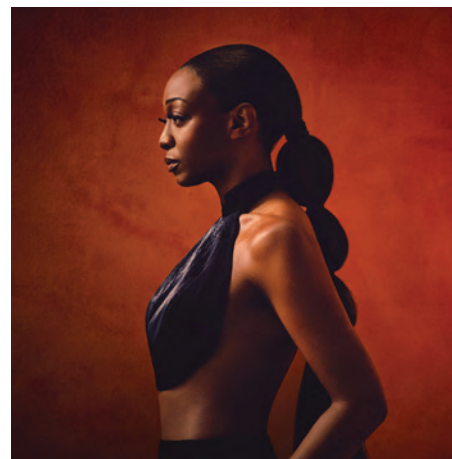
"I'm excited to still be finding new methods, new perspectives, new sounds," he says. "The album may be nearing commercial death, but my career has been in that state for almost 30 years, and here we are still; and I still want to make albums. I still want to be heard."



Beverley Knight

Civic Hall at The Halls Wolverhampton, Tues 24 September

Beverley Knight returns to her home town to perform a concert in celebration of turning 50. Beverley's long been labelled the UK's Queen of Soul - and with her influences including the likes of Sam Cooke and Aretha Franklin, it's easy to see why. The Civic Hall concert forms part of a tour which has followed on from the release last autumn of *The Fifth Chapter*, her first new studio album in seven years.





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Comedy previews from across the region...

Fern Brady

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 24 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 4 October

Feminism and existential despair are among the subjects which Fern Brady contemplates during her stand-up shows. Along the way she deploys her acerbic wit to recount highly personal stories about her mental-health issues, her sexuality and even her interest in amateur pornography. She stops off in the Midlands this month with latest touring show I Gave You Milk To Drink.



Katherine Ryan

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 28 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 31 January; The Civic at The Halls, Wolverhampton, Sat 8 February; Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sat 10 May

Taking a wry, warped and witty look at the world around her, Katherine Ryan often writes and performs material which proves that even the darkest of subject matter can have a funny side.

Katherine hits the road this month with a brand-new stand-up offering. “My new show is called Battleaxe, because it means a tyrant and a loud, outspoken feminist,” Katherine recently told BBC TV’s The One Show. “And those are all positive terms for me, not negative ones. And I like reclaiming words; especially words about women that are negative.”



Sarah Keyworth

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 28 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Fri 11 October

What does acceptance look like? From whom does it matter? Is it okay to dance around your family kitchen with your new nipples out?

These questions and others sit at the heart of non-binary comedian Sarah Keyworth’s brand-new show, a 100-minute presentation (including interval) titled My Eyes Are Up

Here.

The tour seems likely to further enhance Sarah’s fast-growing reputation. The Nottingham-born comic has previously made a significant splash on numerous television shows, including Mock The Week, 8 Out Of 10 Cats and Live At The Apollo.



Robin Morgan

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 27 September

Cheeky and engaging Welsh comedian Robin Morgan is back on the road with a brand-new offering.

“His previous shows have dealt with a proposal, marriage, kids and a vasectomy,” reads the publicity for this latest outing, “but this show focuses on ‘the spark’. It’s about how to keep the spark alive in marriages, and how to keep the spark alive in you.”

Shaparak Khorsandi

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Thurs 19 September

A regular contributor to radio and television programmes, Iranian-born comedian Shaparak Khorsandi describes herself as a ‘spit and sawdust’ stand-up comic, happily pulling on her wellies and trudging through muddy fields to perform at any and every music festival that boasts a comedy tent. She visits the region this month with latest show Scatterbrain.



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Comedy previews from across the region...

Simon Brodtkin

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sat 8 September; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 6 November

Former medical doctor Simon Brodtkin is perhaps best known as the creator of comedy character Lee Nelson, a bling-wearing Stella-swiggling South London geezer. Simon has also hit the headlines for his unwavering commitment to the business of being a top-quality prankster: he famously handed Prime Minister Theresa May her P45 at the Conservative Party Conference. This latest tour sees him ripping into celebrity culture, social media, the police, Putin, Prince Andrew and God.



Hal Cruttenden

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 24 September

If you're thinking of heading along to a Hal Cruttenden gig but don't quite know what to expect from the experience, fear not - the man himself is a past master at describing his act. "It's funny, obviously," says Hal, "but it's also catty, surprising, angry, cleverish and chubby!"

Hal performs in Shrewsbury this month alongside two support acts, neither of whom had been announced at the time of writing.



Tez Ilyas

The Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 12 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 16 & Sat 19 October

Silly, smart and subversive humour is the name of Tez Ilyas' comedy game. And as the rapid growth of his fanbase ably illustrates, he's extremely good at what he does. Tez's political stand-up has been likened to candyfloss with a razorblade hidden inside, while his television work has brought him to the attention of a whole new audience. The fact that he's been able to hit the right notes with so many people comes as no surprise to Tez himself: "It doesn't matter what walk of life we're from, I think we're all united by the British sense of humour. "Whatever creed, colour, sexual orientation or gender type we are, we have a connection based around a mutual appreciation of that sort of comedy."



Gary Meikle

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 1 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 4 September; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 21 September

Cold showers, mosquitoes on holiday, rejection issues, and how it's okay for men to be overtly feminine nowadays are just some of the topics under consideration in Gary Meikle's currently touring stand-up show. Gary's fast-paced delivery and playfully dark style of humour have seen him score a massive hit with audiences, most notably online, where numerous video rants about subjects including eyebrows, hair extensions and 'dick pics' have gone viral.



Dom Joly

The Regal, Evesham, Sun 22 September; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 28 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 11 October; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Tues 15 October

From a launchpad provided by Trigger Happy TV, Dom Joly has led an intriguing and extraordinary life. Some of his more memorable experiences include world

drinking, skiing down volcanoes, holidaying in Chernobyl, and trying to fly across the Grand Canyon strapped to an eight-foot rocket...

...Oh, and he's also eaten from the pants of Dr Gillian McKeith (remember her?) while imprisoned in the Australian jungle during a series of I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!... Some guys have all the luck.

Lloyd Griffith

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 17 September; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Tues 24 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 25 September; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Tues 8 October

A fire-engine fanatic and classically trained one-time choirboy, Lloyd Griffith loves being a stand-up comedian. "It allows me to sit at home in my Grimsby Town shorts all day," he explains, "eating soup and writing jokes. What's not to like?"

Lloyd visits the Midlands this month with brand-new show Baroque And Roll.



TAKING ON THE BARD

Matt Cardle talks about starring as the world's most famous playwright in a touring production of hit musical & Juliet...



Matt Cardle first found fame winning the seventh series of The X Factor in 2010. A Christmas number one and UK Platinum album followed, as did other well-received records. Roles in musicals Jesus Christ Superstar, Strictly Ballroom and Memphis (opposite the Midlands' very own Beverley Knight) took his career in another direction and earned him significant acclaim. Now, he's playing William Shakespeare in hit musical & Juliet. What's On recently caught up with him to find out more...

If there's one person who epitomises theatre, it's William Shakespeare - and singer Matt Cardle is delighted to be portraying the Bard in the current touring production of hit West End musical & Juliet.

Matt's Shakespeare is slightly different from the one we're used to. In the show, the bard has written the most tragic of endings for his play Romeo & Juliet - but then his wife, Anne, dares to suggest maybe a slightly more optimistic finale would be a better option!

And so the musical, which comes to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in October, tells a different story of Juliet, a woman who decides she can actually survive without Romeo and sets off on her own journey, both in love and life.

Premiered in 2019, featuring a string of hits by Max Martin - including Baby One More Time, Since U Been Gone, It's My Life, I Want It That Way and Roar - & Juliet has gone on to become a massive success across four continents, picking up three Olivier Awards and six WhatsOnStage Awards during its West End run.

Matt couldn't resist having a go at playing Shakespeare. He's joined in the cast by Gerardine Saccalan as Juliet, Lara Denning as Anne and Dr Ranj Singh as Lance.

"Shakespeare is such an icon, so just to get the opportunity to play him in any format was amazing. Then I could see what an amazing role it was and what an amazing show it was."

Matt says audiences needn't worry if they're not Shakespeare aficionados; the play is a totally new take on Juliet.

"People will have assumptions because the show is about Juliet. If you like Shakespeare and his plays, then great, you'd come along, but if you have any fear that it might be Shakespearean and you're not into that, then that's fine because it's not anything to do with Shakespeare. It's spawned from one of his plays, but that's as far as it goes. There's a mention of it at the beginning, but the rest is absolutely brand new - and a joy.

"Throughout the rehearsal period you have to find your Shakespeare. I have to find how he sits in my body and how he sits in my voice and all those kinds of things, which is so much fun. We get to play and have a lot of fun finding out who he is within the

guidelines of the script. I didn't want to delve too deep into researching the real Shakespeare because this is a comedy. The show is so far removed from anything Shakespearean that it's good to have a fresh take on everyone."

In the role, Matt has the chance to perform some hit pop songs.

"The first song I sing is Larger Than Life by the Backstreet Boys. There's a lot of Shakespeare's ego at play during that first song, and I don't feel that I have much of an ego, if at all, so shooting off like I have one is probably the biggest challenge for me in that song.

"Then I sing Backstreet's Back by the Backstreet Boys, which is part of the boy band scene, which is absolutely hilarious. I never thought I'd be doing that, but it's an amazing song. Then I sing Can't Stop The Feeling by Justin Timberlake.

"The way the production seamlessly uses the music of Max Martin is really quite something. Two or three of the songs come in almost as if they were the punchline of a joke. I'd never thought that would happen with Oops!...I Did It Again or I Kissed A Girl. It's hilarious."

Matt first shot to fame when he won television talent show The X Factor in 2010. His first single, When We Collide, charted at number one and has sold more than a million copies. In 2015 he branched out into acting, taking the role of DJ Huey Calhoun in the musical Memphis alongside Wolverhampton's Beverley Knight.

"It was very much a baptism of fire when I did Memphis. It's an incredible show, and it was an incredible role. It was ginormous! I was barely ever off stage in that show. I'd done little bits of acting along the way as I was growing up - not in a professional sense or barely in an amateur sense - so it was something that I didn't know I had in me. I absolutely fell in love with it - the acting is one of the, if not *the*, most important parts of this whole process for me."

Going on to play Wally Strand in Strictly Ballroom and Pontius Pilate in Jesus Christ Superstar, Matt is keen to try his hand at more stage or screen work in the future.

"I love musical theatre, but I also love theatre as a whole, and I definitely would do a straight play or drama. I would love to do

anything like that, but the opportunity has to be right and has to fit right with what I'm doing at the time."

Alongside acting, Matt has continued his musical career and has been working on a new recording.

"My fifth studio album will be out on January the 10th and I can't wait! It's my best album by far to date, and I'm just really excited for people to hear it."

Matt is thankful for the opportunities his X Factor win has provided. "The X Factor has done many wonderful things for me, and I look back with great fondness. It's a tough industry, and I would say to anyone that if it really is all you've ever wanted and all you can do, then go for it - but you need that 'never ever give up' mindset. It's really tough, but when it works out, it's the best thing you can imagine."

For now, Matt is looking forward to the next few months on the road with & Juliet.

"I've toured all over the UK and Ireland and Europe so much in my life. I usually tour with just a band and a crew and people from the management and the label - and that's like a small family - but with & Juliet, this is like a ginormous family coming with us. It's lovely to get round and be with that family unit.

And it's great to be with this show. It was so successful in the West End and around the world. It's won so many awards and gained so much of a following - it has a huge fan base unlike any other I've known.

"This is one of the most joyous two hours you'll spend in a long time. It will have you laughing, it will have you crying, it will have you up dancing. The message that runs through the show is that love is love - you can love whoever you want, you can be whoever you want - set to the most iconic pop tunes of the last 20 years. I defy anyone not to have the best time ever."

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& Juliet shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 7 to Saturday 12 October. The hit musical then returns to the region in 2025, showing at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 22 April to Saturday 3 May, and then at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from Monday 12 to Saturday 17 May



Hairspray Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 16 - Sat 21 September; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 3 - Sat 8 February

Theatre-goers looking for a memorable night of singalong fun should definitely catch this high-energy bubblegum musical when it stops off in the region this month.

A show which has retained its popularity despite doing the rounds for many a year now, *Hairspray* is set in 1960s Baltimore and follows the trials and tribulations of the lovable Tracy Turnblad, a young girl whose dreams of dancing on national TV lead her somewhat

unexpectedly to fighting a battle against racial segregation. Boasting hit numbers including *Welcome To The 60s*, *You Can't Stop The Beat* and *Good Morning Baltimore*, this latest touring version of the show features former *Strictly Come Dancing* star Joanne Clifton as *Velma von Tussle* and is directed by *Hairspray* veteran Brenda Edwards.

Here You Come Again: The Dolly Parton Musical

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 10 - Sat 14 September

'Rollicking and joyous new musical' *Here You Come Again* features the music of Dolly Parton and centres around the character of diehard Dolly fan Kevin, who finds solace in his own imagined version of the woman herself.

"The show is very funny," says Steven Webb, who plays Kevin. "It's a really touching journey of self-discovery and self-healing, and comes with the awesome back-catalogue of Dolly Parton's songs. It's not a 'jukebox musical'; it's just me and Dolly Parton in an attic, listening to her music."



Wonder Boy

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 30 Sept - Wed 2 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 October;

Life is tricky for 12-year-old Sonny. Struggling with a stammer in a world of confusing consonants, vicious vowels and sometimes super-slick small talk, he's certainly not living his best life. Indeed, he's so socially compromised that his one and only friend is Captain Chatter, a comic-book hero of his own creation. Things certainly need to change - but will his headteacher casting him in a school production of *Hamlet* prove to be a welcome turning point or a nightmare of unimaginable proportions?...

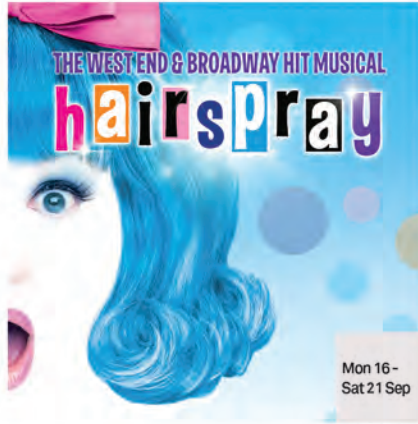
Olivier Award-winning director Sally Cookson helms this heartwarming and well-reviewed Bristol Old Vic production.





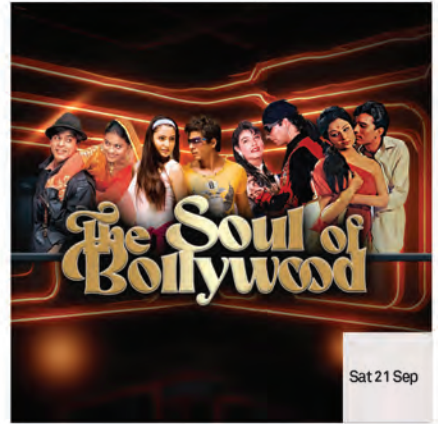
Tue 10 - Sat 14 Sep

CAP



Mon 16 - Sat 21 Sep

CAP



Sat 21 Sep



Wed 25 - Sat 28 Sep



Thu 26 - Sat 28 Sep



Wed 2 - Sat 5 Oct



Thu 3 - Sat 5 Oct



Wed 9 Oct - Sun 3 Nov

CAP R



Fri 11 Oct



Sat 12 Oct



Tue 29 - Thu 31 Oct



Wed 6 - Sat 9 Nov

CAP



An Officer And A Gentleman The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Tues 23 - Sat 28 September

If you're a nostalgia buff with a soft spot for the 1980s, this is a night out at the theatre not to be missed.

Based on the same-named Academy Award-winning film starring Richard Gere and Debra Winger, Leicester Curve's well-reviewed show tracks the heady romance that develops between Zack Mayo - a United States Navy Aviation Officer Candidate - and a young, captivating and seriously fiery woman named Paula Pokrifki.

The story unfolds against a backdrop of classic 1980s pop songs from the likes of Blondie, Bon Jovi, Cyndi Lauper and Madonna. It also features the Oscar-bagging hit, Up Where We Belong, which was recorded by Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes.

Boy Out The City

The Rep, Birmingham,
Wed 4 - Sat 7 September

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

...And not everything that he recalled made for a comfortable memory...

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



Please Do Not Touch

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 11 - Sat 21 September; Attingham Park, Nr Shrewsbury, Tues 24 September; Upton House & Gardens, Warwickshire, Fri 27 - Sat 28 September

The Belgrade here teams up with China Plate to present an ambitious play which not only shines a light on the criminal justice system but also aims to ask important questions

about colonial legacy, contested heritage and how stories are told.

Written by former Birmingham Poet Laureate Casey Bailey - who previously made a splash as a playwright with the critically acclaimed Grimeboy - Please Do Not Touch follows the fortunes of committed activist Mason. A young man who finds himself incarcerated, he determines to keep fighting injustice, even as the system against which he rails seeks to shut him down...

The Enfield Poltergeist

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton,
Wed 4 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 14 September

When single mother Peggy Hodgson contacted police in the summer of 1977 to claim that she and her daughters were experiencing paranormal activity in their council house in Enfield, she kickstarted a news story which, almost half a century later, continues to capture the imagination.

This new presentation follows the fortunes of troubled characters - thrown together within the walls of the supposedly haunted house - who must not only solve the mystery of the poltergeist but also come to terms with their own tragic pasts...



Hancock's Half Hour: The Lost TV Episodes

Malvern Theatres, Sat 21 September; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Thurs 3 October; Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 4 October; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent, Wed 6 November

The extraordinary mid-20th-century success of Hancock's Half Hour is hard to convey some 70 years after it premiered on BBC radio. Suffice to say that with scripts supplied by an early-career Galton & Simpson, and with its star, Birmingham-born comedian Tony Hancock, at the very peak of his powers, the show quickly became the stuff of legend - and particularly after it transferred to television in 1956...

Award-winning theatre company Hambleton Productions here pay homage to the show by recreating, live on stage, three 'lost' episodes from the original TV series: The Bequest, The Auction and The Russian Prince.

The Very Best Of Tommy Cooper (Just Like That)

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 4 September; Halesowen Town Hall, Thurs 19 September; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Fri 20 September

With his comedy fez and dodgy magic tricks, Tommy Cooper was one of Britain's best-loved entertainers - and this 90-minute one-man show pays loving tribute to him. Starring West End performer Daniel Taylor as Tommy, the production is out on tour having made a big impact at last year's Glastonbury Festival.

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What will you see next?



THU 3 - SAT 5 OCT '24
WONDER BOY



MON 7 - SAT 12 OCT '24
& JULIET



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Theatre previews from around the region



An Inspector Calls

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 25 - Sat 28 September, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 4 - Sat 8 February; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 4 - Sat 8 March; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 6 - Sat 10 May

When Inspector Goole calls unexpectedly on the prosperous Birling family, his startling revelations not only shatter the foundations of their lives but also challenge them to examine their consciences...

Anybody who's seen a production of JB Priestley's classic 1945 play will have no trouble understanding why it's been such a long-time worldwide hit.

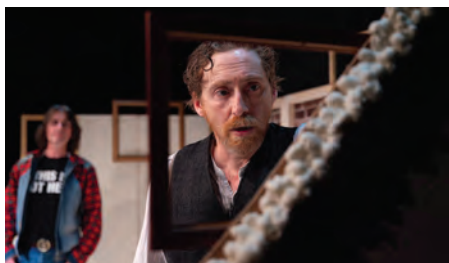
Presented by the National Theatre, Stephen Daldry's epic production has won 19 major awards and been seen by more than five million theatregoers worldwide.

When Vincent Met John

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 18 September; Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 25 & Thurs 26 September; Coach House Theatre, Malvern, Sat 28 September

An intriguing new play by Nick Wilkes, When Vincent Met John imagines a meeting between two hugely famous and widely celebrated artists.

Vincent van Gogh and John Lennon both experienced profound change during their final years, with the former renouncing his religious ambitions and the latter, sex, drugs and rock & roll. With the clock ticking, and with each man straining for something, is there a way forward for either of these passionate, unpredictable, temperamental and volatile artists?



Krapp's Last Tape

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 22 September

This memorable one-act offering explores the character of a 69-year-old man who is described by the play's writer, Samuel Beckett, as 'filled up to his teeth with bitterness'.

Listening to a tape he made on his 39th birthday, Krapp revisits fragments of his own life and contemplates how the fires of

passion which he felt as a young man have been transformed into a simple "burning to be gone".

National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company actor David Westhead plays Krapp in a production directed by Academy Award nominee Stockard Channing. The pair will take part in a 30-minute post-show Q&A



Rita Sue And Bob Too

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 21 September

When best friends Rita and Sue are given a lift home by married-man Bob after they've spent the evening babysitting his kids, they find themselves embarking on a sexual adventure that swiftly spirals out of control... By the time Andrea Dunbar was 20, she had written two critically acclaimed plays - The Arbor, at the age of 15, and the wickedly funny Rita, Sue And Bob Too, four years later. Hailed a genius straight from the slums, Dunbar spent time in a Women's Aid refuge, had three children by three men, developed a serious addiction to alcohol and died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of 29. Both of her plays, but particularly Rita..., are shining examples of an extraordinary talent that burned brightly for all too short a time...

Play On!

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 23 September - Sat 5 October; Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 6 - Sat 9 November

As retellings of Shakespeare plays go, this one is seriously jazzed up - literally!

A clever reimagining of Twelfth Night that brings together street dance choreography with the music of Duke Ellington, Talawa theatre company's Play On! focuses on the character of songwriter Vy as she looks to make it big in the male-dominated world of 1940s Harlem.



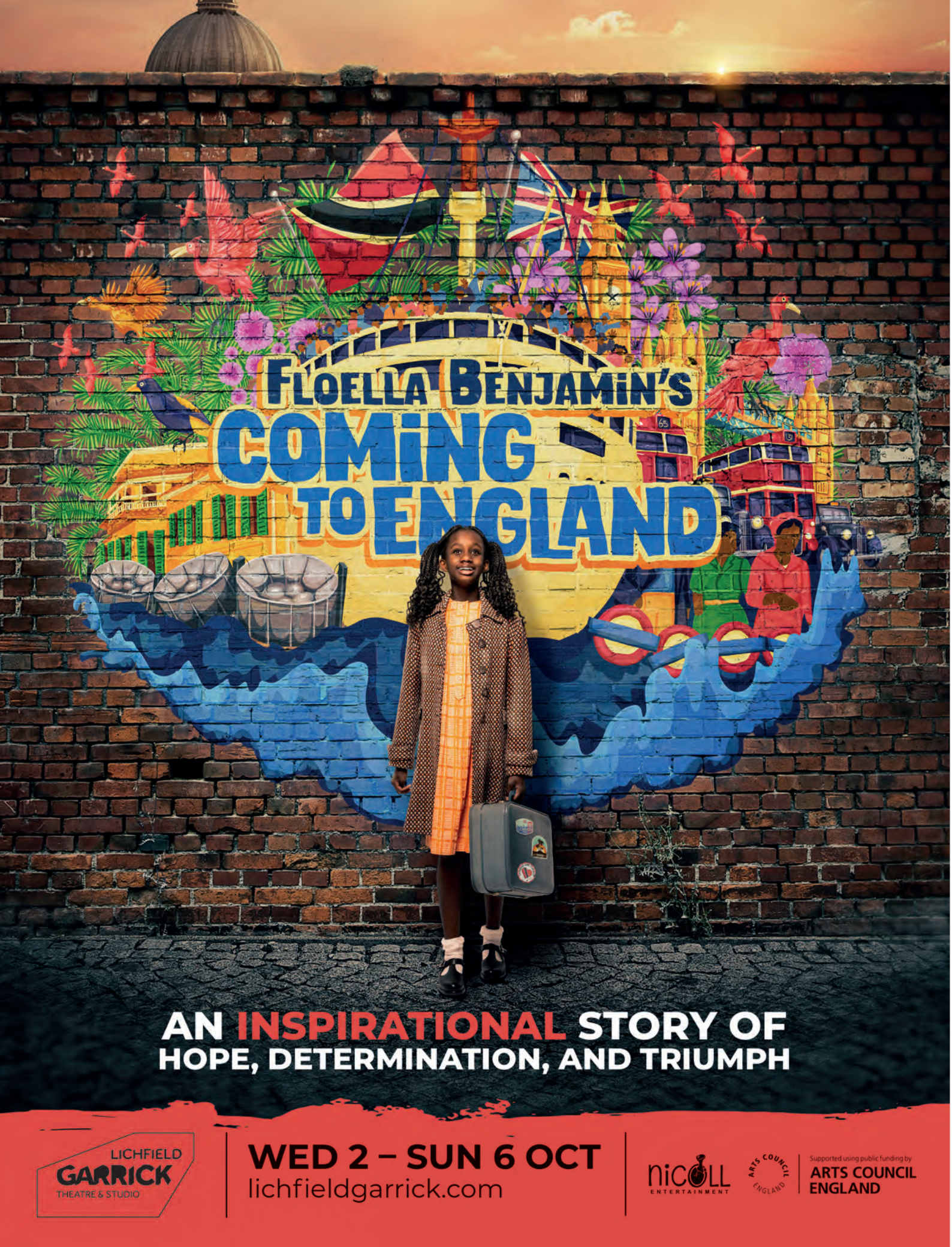
Pericles

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sat 21 September

A rarely performed Shakespeare play - perhaps in part because of questions over its authorship - Pericles sees the title character fleeing for his life after learning of an incestuous relationship between King Antiochus and his daughter...

This new Royal Shakespeare Company production is helmed by Tamara Harvey, who last year became the RSC's co-artistic director.





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Theatre for younger audiences



In The Night Garden Live

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 September

Youngsters who are big fans of much-loved CBeebies television series In The Night Garden are certain to adore this live version as well. And it's not only kids who love the stage shows; according to audience surveys and parents' reviews, nine out of 10 adults consider In The Night Garden Live to be a five-star theatrical experience. The show lasts for 55 interval-free minutes, sees Igglepiggle looking for his friends in the Night Garden (by following their funny sounds), and features a very special visit from 'the amazing flying Pinky Ponk'.

The Magic Flute

The Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 5 September

The highly talented Wild Arts return with a new production of Mozart's final work. The Magic Flute tells the story of Prince Tamino, who, having fallen in love with Pamina - the kidnapped daughter of the Queen of the Night - must battle the forces of darkness and light in order to rescue her... Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne and Opera North regular James Hurley directs.



The McDougalls In Toyland: A Singalong Adventure

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 21 September

Scottish music & theatre favourites The McDougalls are bringing their Toyland train to the Midlands. The highly rated creatives, who cleverly blend education and entertainment in their shows, are here inviting audiences to join them in 'a magical land over the rainbow, full of talking teddies, jolly jigsaws and dancing dollies'... Sounds like an opportunity not to be missed...



Charlie Cook's Favourite Book

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 27 - Sun 29 September; Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 18 - Sun 20 October; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 26 & Sun 27 October

Given the success of so many other stage adaptations of Julia



Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's hugely popular stories (see, for example, The Gruffalo, elsewhere on this page), it's a real no-brainer to mount a live version of Charlie Cook's Favourite Book. Presented via the ever-popular combination of clever puppetry and enchanting songs, the show follows Charlie's attempts to get his sister to read.

Peppa Pig's Fun Day Out

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 18 & Thurs 19 September; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 September; Malvern Theatres, Wed 16 - Thurs 17 October

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

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

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

Dear Zoo

Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 28 & Sun 29 September; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 2 November

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

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



The Gruffalo

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 24 & Wed 25 September

Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's delightful children's book is once again brought vividly to life, this time



to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its publication. The stage show is presented by award-winning theatre company Tall Stories, who've garnered an excellent reputation in terms of performing Donaldson & Scheffler's work. Their imaginative retelling of the much-loved story comes complete with talented cast, catchy songs and magical characters.

TELLING STORIES

Former Birmingham Poet Laureate Casey Bailey talks about his new play, *Please Do Not Touch*, which is making its debut at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre this month...



Whenever Birmingham writer Casey Bailey visited historic houses, he would see signs saying, 'Please do not touch'. But these signs were often on artefacts which had been plundered from other nations over the centuries. Which set him to thinking - when is it okay to touch, when is it forbidden, and what happens when you break the rules? It was these strange juxtapositions which sparked his latest play, *Please Do Not Touch*, which premieres at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre this month.

"My wife and I would go to National Trust houses or English Heritage houses, and I started to become conscious of the fact that I would walk into these houses, these spaces, these galleries, and would see things that would have signs saying 'Please do not touch'. But at the same time, they were things which should never have been touched *in the first place*.

"It was seeing these signs on plates from China, furniture from India, artefacts from Africa - that got me to thinking: what are the real stories of these things? How have they ended up here? And why are they still here?" In having such thoughts, Casey was tapping into the current international debate about the restitution of items taken from across the world by Western explorers, archaeologists and historians in previous centuries. Many such items now feature in the collections of museums, galleries and historic houses.

"As you can imagine, that is a huge thing all over the country and all over the world. It's the Benin Bronzes, the Koh-i-Noor diamond - once you start looking, you just see it everywhere."

Casey, who grew up in Nechells in Birmingham and was Birmingham Poet Laureate from 2020 to 2022, first explored these ideas in his verse collection, *Please Do Not Touch*, which was published in 2021. Then, together with Jade Samuels, the associate producer of Birmingham-based theatre-producing studio China Plate, he began developing the ideas within the poetry collection into a drama featuring a central character named Mason, a social justice TikToker who asks these questions.

"The play is about a boy who's in prison because he challenged the system. We then try and look at the parallels and the layers of the criminal justice system, layered on top of colonialism, layered on top of the prison system, with this idea of heritage and legacy filtering through it all.

"So a boy goes into a house where a man travelled all round the world and took millions and millions of pounds worth of things and became a hero. How then does a boy go in there and touch something and become a criminal? At what point did the rules change, or who are the rules different for?"

A co-production by the Belgrade and China Plate, *Please Do Not Touch* is directed by award-winning theatre maker Gail Babb. The role of Mason is taken by Tijan Sarr, who most recently played DC Jason Kennedy in two series of UKTV's *The Marlow Murder Club*.

Casey researched the work through interviews and workshops with different organisations and people.

"We've worked with a variety of heritage organisations, including Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, different heritage houses and the National Trust. That work was done in workshop-based settings where we would present parts of the play, we would tell the story, we would take questions and answer questions, and we would talk about the crux of this issue that the play is getting at. Those conversations were challenging at times but really useful.

"Then I spent some time in Winson Green Prison. I went into Swinfen Hall and did some work with the young men there, and I went to Felton and did some work there.

"Those sessions were perhaps the most inspirational sessions, and they really helped me to focus in on the story of this young man. He's not the vehicle for the story; he is the story.

"I grew up around Winson jail. Lots of people I grew up around went to jail, so I was confident I had an idea of what that was like. But going in and talking to some really articulate, really well-measured and thoughtful young men who are going through a difficult time gave me an insight that I couldn't have got elsewhere. That was really important.

"The final factor, outside the creative team, has been community. We've done some work with Free@Last, which is an amazing charity based in Nechells. They just tap into that community where the young people might not normally go to the theatre; they might not engage with these kinds of houses and places. I wanted the perspective of people who sit totally outside of this world that I'm creating and the things I'm writing about.

"So I got the young people to come in and hear some readings, ask questions, interrogate the piece. It was a blessing. It's always good to work with Free@Last, and their insight has been really useful."

Alongside being a successful writer, Casey is also a teacher. Having previously worked at Coundon Court School in Coventry, he is currently assistant headteacher at Idsall School in Shifnal, Shropshire.

His previous drama, *GrimeBoy*, played to sell-out houses at Birmingham Rep, and he very much enjoys the process of theatre-making.

"For me, especially being a poet turned playwright, for years I have written things and performed them, or written and



published them, and it's just me doing that. "In this theatre world, I write these things, and then I watch Tijan, the actor, bring them to life and I'm like, 'How does this feel so much better than the thing I wrote down?'"

"It's really exciting to see. And with the production, there's a whole process around how does the lighting work to tell the story, how does the physical aspect of the stage tell the story?"

Casey feels that the Belgrade is the perfect venue in which to premiere *Please Do Not Touch*.

"I have a good relationship with the Belgrade's creative director, Corey Campbell, and I really love the venue. I love Coventry. I used to teach in Coventry and pass the Belgrade every day, and I've been there to perform before.

"I think that where the Belgrade is - in terms of their genuine openness to explore beyond the surface, and to ask difficult questions, and to put on new and inspiring work - means that it is *absolutely* the theatre where I see a play like *Please Do Not Touch* - which is challenging and asks lots of questions - being performed."

After the premiere, Casey hopes the play will find additional audiences.

"I would love to see it tour or have a run at another venue. I think it's a story for Birmingham, for Manchester, for London, for Liverpool or for Bristol. I would love to see it in some of these places and see what people make of it.

"But at the moment, I'm working with an amazing team, and the key thing for us is that we make this the best play we can for the audiences at the Belgrade."

.....
Please Do Not Touch shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Wednesday 11 to Saturday 21 September



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Light entertainment from around the region



Come What May

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 27 September; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 10 October

As films go, 2001's *Moulin Rouge* might be considered a real 'Marmite' movie; cinemagoers tended either to love it with all their heart or hate it with an unbridled passion... If you're a fully paid-up member of the former category, this currently touring show is definitely a night out at the theatre well worth catching! AJ and Curtis Pritchard top the bill in a production which aims to transport its audience 'to the dazzling world of the *Moulin Rouge*'. Alongside iconic songs from the film, the two-and-a-half-hour extravaganza (including interval) also features a selection of 'timeless hits from other modern movie musicals'...

Su Pollard: Still Fully Charged

The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 12 September; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 29 September; Stourbridge Town Hall, Tues 1 October; Malvern Theatres, Sat 5 October; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 22 March 2025

Nottingham-born actress & singer Su Pollard shot to fame in the early 1980s when she scored a huge hit as chalet maid Peggy Ollerenshaw in the popular BBC TV sitcom *Hi-de-Hi!*.



Well known for her eccentric personality and quirky dress sense, she's out on the road this autumn with a production in which she looks back at her 50 years in the entertainment industry. Expect songs from the shows, backstage secrets from her diaries, and maybe even the appearance of one or two familiar characters!

The Noise Next Door

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 28 September; The Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 26 October; Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, Sun 10 November

Praised for presenting their audiences with 'a superior kind of chaos', *The Noise Next Door* is a quartet of improvising comedians who've been garnering critical praise for a good few years now. Big in Edinburgh at festival time, they pride themselves on their originality and quick-wittedness (the latter being pretty much essential in the world of

improvisational comedy!). Their previous on-stage endeavours have included a mini-musical embracing the uncomfortable bedfellows of pantomime, folk music and death-metal, and a surreal adventure in which the *Magic Roundabout's* Zebedee leads the forces of good against Darth Vader, who's holed up in Worcester Cathedral. Check 'em out.

An Evening Without Kate Bush

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 13 September; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 28 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 27 October

With Kate Bush less than enthusiastic about performing live, cabaret stalwart Sarah-Louise Young has stepped into the breach to present this lively stand-in offering. It's not a tribute show in the conventional sense of the word, but it certainly has more than enough for Bush lovers to enjoy, including impressive renditions of their idol's greatest hits.



Defying Gravity: West End Women

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 13 September; Malvern Theatres, Sat 16 November

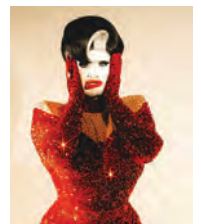
This celebration of talented women who've made their mark on the West End stage sees a cast of exceptional vocalists being joined by

an all-female band. Expect an evening filled with backstage anecdotes, fascinating insights and - perhaps most importantly - showstopping songs from award-winning productions, including *Wicked*, *Les Miserables*, *Mamma Mia!* and *Waitress*.

Danny Beard

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Fri 6 September

"He's high fashion, hilarious and hairy," says Graham Norton in talking about *Danny Beard*. "What's not to love?" Former *Drag Race UK* winner Danny is stopping off in Birmingham this month with a show that's being publicised as 'a five-star night of killer vocals, snappy comedy, put-downs and pick-me-ups'.



The Choriza May Show

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Wed 11 September; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Fri 20 September

Big drag energy. Lots of laughs. Breathtaking lip syncs. Dazzling costumes. Fruitilicious music. Yep, that's right, *Choriza May* is painting the town red this month and inviting an ever-growing army of fans to join in the fun. There may even be an appearance from everybody's favourite owl...





ALL THE SKY'S A STAGE

An epic drone light show featuring hundreds of animated drones will debut at Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium this autumn (Saturday 26 October). Created by local experiences company, Yuup, and Celestial - a multi-award-winning company specialising in drone entertainment - Evolution: The Drone Light Show promises to take audiences on a wild journey through time and space, telling the story of the birth of the universe and the beginnings of life on Earth.

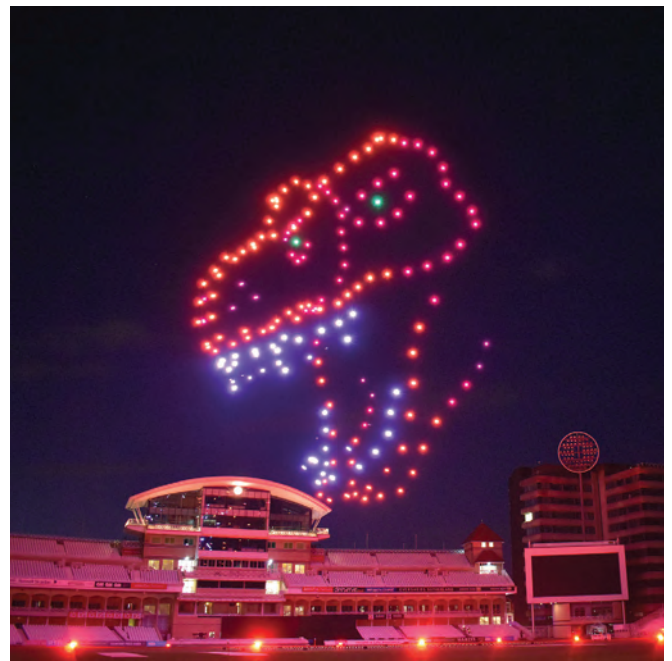
What's On recently caught up with Ella Hogan from Edgbaston Stadium and Dominic Mills from Yuup to find out more about this innovative form of entertainment, and what audiences can expect...

What makes Edgbaston the perfect venue to host Evolution: The Drone Light Show?

Edgbaston Stadium is ideal due to its spacious layout and state-of-the-art facilities, which can comfortably accommodate large crowds while ensuring everyone has a clear view of the show. The venue's history of hosting major events also means it is well-equipped to handle the logistical demands of a large-scale drone show, providing amazing food and drink along the way.

What's behind the venue's decision to move away from traditional firework displays in favour of this form of entertainment?

The decision aligns with growing trends towards sustainability and innovation. Drone light shows offer a visually stunning, eco-friendly alternative to fireworks, reducing noise pollution and the environmental impact of smoke and debris typically associated with pyrotechnics.



Environmentally friendly • Good for people with sensory needs • Both educational and entertaining

Tell us about the audience experience. What can they expect?

This is a fantastic evening for all the family. The food village will provide a wide range of food and drink options to enjoy before the show, and then it's time to take your seats for a spectacular evening of entertainment like nothing you've experienced before. The audience will watch an extraordinary story from the dawn of time. Evolution is the very latest in creative entertainment, with an epic celebration of life on Earth told through hundreds of animated drones. The show recreates monumental moments in history - from the Big Bang and reign of the dinosaurs, right through to the modern-day moon landings and life as it is today. Expect cutting-edge technology and immersive storytelling of epic proportions, along with a powerful cinematic soundtrack.

“ A wonderful experience that drew on the imagination of all ages ”

How long does the performance last?

This is a 45-minute experience comprising an 18-minute pre-show entertainment and a 27-minute drone light show.

What else can visitors see and do on the night?

The host for the evening will be Ed James, from Heart FM's Drivetime show. During the build-up to the event, Ed will be getting the audience excited with music, conversation and lots of interaction before the countdown to the start of the show itself. Immediately before the main show, there will be a short intro to Celestial, the show's creators, and an exciting new pre-show experience featuring drone racing.

Any new additions to the show for 2024?

Yes, the drone show itself has doubled in length (now 27 minutes of flight time) and features a new voiceover and many more drone animations than the original iteration of the show first performed in 2023. Plus, there's the brand-new pre-show drone racing.

Is it a seated or standing event?

Edgbaston will provide all spectators with seats for the show, with every seat having an amazing view of the entertainment. Wheelchair-accessible seating is available, and the venue is fully equipped to accommodate guests with disabilities, offering flat ground seating in designated areas. We also have sensory rooms to offer an interactive safe space for our guests.

How many drones make up Evolution?

The show features hundreds of drones, with multiple drone swarms launching throughout the show.



How inclusive is the event for audiences with sensory needs and people with physical disabilities?

Edgbaston is a fully accessible venue and tickets are available for wheelchair users in dedicated areas. Blue badge parking is available but must be pre-booked. Complimentary tickets are available for carers. Sensory Rooms are available for children and adults with sensory processing issues so that they can watch the show in a calm environment. More information about these facilities is available by contacting Edgbaston Customer Services.

What measures will the venue put in place to ease footfall/traffic flow as people enter and exit the show?

We open the gates two hours before the pre-show, giving spectators plenty of time to arrive, grab food and drinks, and find their seats. To ensure a safe arrival and exit for all guests, road closures will be in place, with parking available just a short walk away. Multiple entry points will be available, with stewards and staff on hand to ensure everyone can enter quickly and safely. A shuttle bus service will be available from New Street Station from 5.30pm, providing a direct service to the stadium. This shuttle service will also be operational post-event for the return journey to New Street. *Ella*

Evolution - The Drone Light Show visits Edgbaston Stadium on Saturday 26 October.
Tickets start at £21 and are on sale now at [yoop.co/evolution](https://www.yoop.co/evolution)

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BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET



Director Carlos Acosta

Luna


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The creation of *Luna* is possible thanks to a five-year package of support of the Oak Foundation. *Luna* has also received grants from H Steven and P E Wood Trust, The John S Cohen Foundation, The Oakley Charitable Trust and the RPS Drummond Lockyer Fund for Dance.

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Dance previews from across the region

Romeo & Juliet

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Thurs 19 - Sat 28 September

This first chance in decades to experience a ballet performed on the Royal Shakespeare Theatre stage sees Northern Ballet presenting Sergei Prokofiev's much-loved version of the greatest love story ever told. The Leeds-based company has developed a reputation for producing work which focuses not only on dancing but also storytelling - a fact very much in evidence in this particular show, one of the ensemble's most beloved and critically acclaimed productions.



Giselle

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 6 & Sat 7 September

Premiered in Paris in 1841, Giselle tells the story of a peasant girl who dies of a broken heart when she finds out that the man with whom she has fallen in love, a nobleman named Albrecht, is engaged to another woman.

After Giselle's funeral, Albrecht finds himself in mortal danger: The Wilis, a sisterhood of ghosts who in life were jilted by their lovers, have returned to take their terrible revenge... Adolphe Adam's surreal romantic ballet is here presented by the award-winning English Youth Ballet.



Lord Of The Dance

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 6 - Sunday 8 September; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 30 September - Sun 6 October

Since catapulting Irish dance into the limelight back in 1996, Michael Flatley's Lord Of The Dance has become an international phenomenon.

The production presents a tale of good versus evil, in the process combining precision dancing with cutting-edge technology. For those who're interested in the story as well as the dancing, the show recounts the journey of the Lord Of The Dance as he travels through a mythical universe of love, danger and desire to protect his people from the evil powers of Don Dorcha, the Dark Lord.

BRB: La Fille mal gardée

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 25 - Sat 28 September

Frederick Ashton's 1960 version of La Fille mal gardée is a firm family favourite. A choreographed exploration of rural life, it tells the simple and engaging story of Lise - the daughter of Widow Simone - and her mother's attempts to find her a wealthy suitor.

The production features live music by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, not to mention 'slick comedy', a clog-dancing dame and a super-cute pony!



TO THE MOON AND BACK

Birmingham Royal Ballet's brand-new production, Luna, champions women as creators, innovators and activists...



Female empowerment is at the heart of Birmingham Royal Ballet’s Luna, which premieres in the city next month. The final installment in Carlos Acosta’s trilogy of ballets paying homage to Birmingham, the production comprises six scenes created by five internationally renowned choreographers. Producer Caroline Davis recently spoke to What’s On about the forthcoming show...

Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) will next month premiere *Luna*, a production which turns the spotlight on the role of women as creators, innovators and activists, both in the history of Birmingham and in a global context.

The work has been inspired by Louise Palfreyman’s critically acclaimed book, *Once Upon A Time In Birmingham: Women Who Dare To Dream*, and has been created by an all-female team featuring choreographers, designers, a composer and a producer.

Comprising six scenes created by five internationally renowned choreographers, *Luna* aims to give a sense of the experience of all women in overcoming barriers and driving forward positive change, rather than simply picking out individual stories.

Showing at Birmingham Hippodrome in early October, the production forms part of a trilogy of Birmingham-inspired ballets conceived by BRB’s director, Carlos Acosta, as a homage to the city. The other two productions in the trilogy are *City Of A Thousand Trades* and the box-office smash, *Black Sabbath - The Ballet*.

Luna is a two-hour ballet, with each of its scenes approximately 15 minutes long and based around the theme of female empowerment.

“Louise Palfreyman’s book was very much the start of the idea,” says the show’s producer, Caroline Davis. “It allowed us to look at a rich picture of what brilliant things women are doing in the city, and to look at it with a much more female lens. What you end up with is something really exciting.

“It’s an opportunity to think about a different side of the city, about people who are empowering other women, overcoming adversity, dreaming about educating themselves here for a better life and for children and the future.”

Luna begins with *Terra*. Created by Dutch choreographer Wubkje Kuindersma, the work features the song *I Am I Say*, performed by a group of local children who were recruited through an open call earlier in the year.

Over the past few months, 30 young people have worked with composer Kate Whitley and received training from BRB’s Learning, Engagement, Access & Participation department and the education team at Birmingham choir Ex Cathedra. They will take to the stage at various points throughout the work, acting as a Greek chorus and bringing together some of the themes.

“It’s been a huge opportunity for these children,” says Caroline. “This element is

about including children who are representative of the city. It’s about their natural voice coming through, so they are singing about the future and climate change.”

The second piece, *Daring To Dream Big*, has been created by British choreographer Seeta Patel and looks at education as a force for positive change.

“What’s really interesting,” says Caroline, “is that having given the book to them all as a creative stimulus, Seeta has very much focused on the power of education. It’s about what education unlocks in terms of emancipation and dreams and hopes.

“We have something very different in this piece with Seeta because of her Bharatanatyam artform approach. She’s not trying to choreograph in that style on a classical ballet company, but her approach is very different, and she has pulled out this idea of how books and studying can unlock you to become a teacher, a conductor, a doctor and an activist.

“And the really lovely part of it is that the book has beautiful illustrations in it, and what Seeta wanted us to do was to involve schoolchildren and some of the *Luna* children in collecting some of their drawings, which will feature as part of the animation. So there has been a lovely way for us to involve, as part of Carlos’ trilogy, the city’s children in the production of the piece.”

The final scene before the interval, *Overcoming Adversity*, has been choreographed by Cuba’s Thais Suárez and features a pas de deux set to a new arrangement of Gabriel Fauré’s *Requiem*.

“In Thais’ piece there’s a father figure, and it’s about the role of the community and the responsibility of supporting women to go out there and make their lives.

“So choreographically she has divided the stage into three with lines. The choreography will begin at the back. One dancer moves forwards, and there is a point where she has to cross the threshold without that familial support. So it’s about overcoming adversity and memory and the support of family and broader community in doing that.”

After the interval, the audience will see British choreographer Arielle Smith’s *Empowerment*. Featuring eight female dancers, the work is preceded by the children performing another new song, created by Kate, called *There Is Silence*.

“Arielle is much in demand as a choreographer. She’s just been working with San Francisco Ballet and the London City

Ballet, and is choreographing English National Ballet’s *Nutcracker*. Her piece is all about empowerment; about how women can lift women up.

“Then we’re into Act Two Scene Two, which has been choreographed by Iratxe Ansa, who is a Spanish choreographer. Her work is exceptional - it’s a good challenge to the company. It’s very contemporary movement. So it’s one female, the same lead as in Thais’ piece, returning with the eight corps de ballet, and she struggles against dancers in masks. So we really see the struggles of a lone woman played out in a patriarchal society.”

The finale, *Luna*, again created by Wubkje Kuindersma, features the children and dancers reunited in a positive future.

“The finale is dreaming about a better life, and for the future for these children, and this idea that we are now on the moon. We haven’t yet had a woman on the moon and hopefully that might change.”

All of the pieces are set against a waxing and waning moon in a design which features costumes by Imaan Ashraf, projection by Hayley Egan and lighting by Emma Jones. One of the aims of the project has been to bring together and foster a female team of creators.

“It is really important that we ensure we give women representation in the arts. The fact that BRB has said ‘We are going to put this commissioning and production money into an all-female creative team’ is hugely important. We need to make sure we develop that pipeline, and that people get the opportunity to have their interpretations told on these fantastic stages that we’ve got, both in Birmingham and London.

“And the result will be a really special production. I hope that, particularly for female audiences, they can see elements of their personal lives, hopes, dreams and struggles played out on the stage. And that people also go away thinking about the feminine identity of the city and the female population, who are working to keep the city going and to provide a better life for the children. And I hope they will also go away thinking that they have seen something rather spellbinding and beautiful.”

.....

BRB present *Luna* at Birmingham Hippodrome from Thursday 3 to Friday 5 October. The company will also perform *La Fille mal gardée* at the venue from Wednesday 25 to Saturday 28 September

Film highlights in September...



Beetlejuice Beetlejuice CERT tbc (104 mins)

Starring **Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder, Catherine O'Hara, Justin Theroux, Jenna Ortega, Monica Bellucci**
Directed by **Tim Burton**

As sequels go, this one's taken a considerable amount of time to find its way to cinema screens. The original Beetlejuice movie landed way back in 1988 and earned plenty of praise for its just-starting-out director, Tim Burton, and its title-role actor, a pre-Batman Michael Keaton. Both are back in the saddle for Beetlejuice Beetlejuice, and are joined by fellow original cast members Winona Ryder and Catherine O'Hara. Here's the official synopsis: "After an unexpected family tragedy, three generations of the Deetz family return home to Winter River. Still haunted by Beetlejuice, Lydia's life is turned upside down when rebellious teenage daughter Astrid discovers the mysterious model of the town in the attic, and the portal to the Afterlife is accidentally opened. With trouble brewing in both realms, it's only a matter of time until someone says Beetlejuice's name three times and the mischievous demon returns to unleash his very own brand of mayhem." **Released Fri 6 September**



Lee CERT 15 (116 mins)

Starring **Kate Winslet, Alexander Skarsgård, Andy Samberg, Marion Cotillard, Josh O'Connor, Andrea Riseborough**
Directed by **Ellen Kuras**

Kate Winslet here stars as pioneering frontline war correspondent Lee Miller, a fashion model turned photographer who is perhaps best known for her Second World War photos. Her portfolio included impactful images of the London Blitz and the liberation of Paris, while she also used her camera to record the concentration-camp horrors of Buchenwald and Dachau. "To me, she was a life force to be reckoned with," says Winslet in talking about the New York-born Miller. "This photographer, writer, reporter, did everything she did with love, lust and courage, and is an inspiration of what you can achieve, and what you can bear, if you dare to take life firmly by the hands and live it at full throttle."

Released Fri 13 September



Speak No Evil CERT 15 (110 mins)

Starring **James McAvoy, Mackenzie Davis, Scoot McNairy, Aisling Franciosi, Alix West Lefler, Kris Hitchen** Directed by **James Watkins**

When an American family is invited to spend the weekend at the idyllic country estate of a charming British family they befriended on vacation, what begins as a dream holiday soon warps into a snarled psychological nightmare...

James McAvoy turns in a riveting performance as the charismatic, alpha-male estate owner whose untrammeled hospitality masks an unspeakable darkness. The film is a remake of a 2022 Danish movie of the same name.

Released Fri 13 September



Firebrand CERT 15 (121 mins)

Starring **Alicia Vikander, Jude Law, Sam Riley, Eddie Marsan, Erin Doherty, Ruby Bentall, Bryony Hannah** Directed by **Karim Aïnouz**

Set in blood-soaked Tudor England and screened at Cannes last year, Firebrand failed to ignite any great amount of excitement among the critics. The film finds Katherine Parr, the sixth and final wife of King Henry VIII, taking on the role of Regent - while her tyrannical husband is fighting overseas - and doing everything she can to push for a new future based on her radical Protestant beliefs. But when an increasingly ailing and paranoid Henry returns, he focuses his fury on the radicals, and Katherine soon finds herself in a desperate fight for survival...

Released Fri 6 September

Wolfs CERT tbc (108 mins)

Starring **Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Amy Ryan, Austin Abrams, Poorna Jagannathan** Directed by **Jon Watts**

Wolfs sees superstars George Clooney and Brad Pitt teaming up for a fifth time, having previously shared big-screen space in Steven Soderbergh's three-movie Ocean's Eleven franchise and then teaming up for Joel & Ethan Coen's 2008 feature, Burn After Reading.

This latest collaboration is an action comedy in which both play lone-wolf fixers who separately turn up at the same address with instructions to cover up the same high-profile crime. Forced to work together, they soon find their night spiralling out of control in ways that neither of them expected...

Released Fri 20 September



The Substance

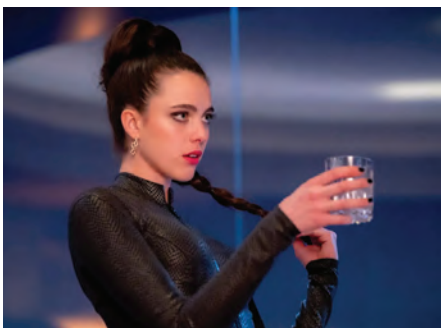
CERT 18 (140 mins)

Starring **Margaret Qualley, Dennis Quaid, Demi Moore, Hugo Diego Garcia, Alexandra Papoulias Barton, Joseph Balderrama** Directed by **Coralie Fargeat**

Publicised as a 'be careful what you wish for' fable, The Substance sees past-her-prime one-time A-lister Elisabeth Sparkle taking drastic action to turn her fading fortunes on their head. Suddenly fired from her fitness TV show by the repellent studio head, she decides to take advantage of a mysterious new drug known as The Substance. With one single injection, she is reborn, albeit temporarily, as a gorgeous twentysomething. But with life starting to look a little rosier, Elisabeth needs to abide by one essential rule connected to The Substance: time needs to be split - exactly one week in one body, then one week in the other. No exceptions. A perfect balance.

What could possibly go wrong?...

Released Fri 20 September



Hellboy: The Crooked Man

CERT tbc

Starring **Jack Kesy, Jefferson White, Leah McNamara, Adeline Rudolph, Joseph Marcell, Martin Bassindale** Directed by **Brian Taylor**

Mike Mignola's comic-book character makes a welcome return in a second reboot of the film franchise. The first left fans of the original Guillermo Del Toro movies feeling seriously underwhelmed, so there's a significant amount riding on this latest offering. Hellboy enthusiasts will no doubt feel somewhat reassured by creator Mignola's take on the new film. "[My favourite thing was] to see how close it is to the comics," he told Screen Rant. "There are several shots in there that are panels from the comics and your fear is always... that it's going to lose something. But all my favourite moments from the comic are in there..."

Released Fri 27 September

Never Let Go CERT 15 (101 mins)

Starring **Halle Berry, Christin Park, Matthew Kevin Anderson, Stewphanie Lavigne, Anthony B Jenkins, Mila Morgan** Directed by **Alexandre Aja**

With only their house and the ties that bind them together as protection, a mother and her twin sons battle against demonic forces that have taken over the world beyond their front doorstep. But when one of the boys questions whether the evil is real, the family's bond is broken - a development that then triggers a terrifying fight for survival... A psychological thriller from visionary director Alexandre Aja, Never Let Go finds Halle Berry in excellent form. But according to The Hollywood Reporter, the Oscar-winning actress recently admitted that making the film was no walk in the park: "There was no electricity, no lights, my character skinning squirrels, and they're eating bugs and frogs - raw frogs - in the woods. It was a challenge!"

Released Fri 27 September





The Reflected Self: Portrait Miniatures, 1550 - 1850

Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
Sat 21 September - Sun 23 February

Across a period exceeding 300 years, portrait miniature paintings created in Britain performed numerous functions. Not only did they serve as emblems of love and loyalty, they were also used as markers of royal favour and exchanged as diplomatic gifts between foreign courts.

Compton Verney's new exhibition celebrates these exquisitely painted portable portraits, bringing together artwork from the gallery's own collection with important loans from the Dumas Egerton Trust Collection and private lenders.

The exhibition also includes specially commissioned films, bringing to life the highly personal nature of the portraits. Work by contemporary artists - demonstrating the miniatures' ongoing relevance and ability to captivate - also features.



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Image: French Tarts by Sarah Brown. Photo by Tas Kyprianou



British Glass Biennale 2024

Furnace Auditorium, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Stourbridge, until Sat 28 September

The flagship exhibition of the International Festival of Glass, the Biennale showcases some of the world-class glass currently being made in the UK and features work by 121 selected artists. The return of the People's Prize Award

allows families to get involved by voting for their favourite piece, while the Young Collectors' Award sees the winning child receive a piece of contemporary glass to start their very own collection.

New Horizons

Stourbridge Glass Museum, until Sat 16 November

This popular returning exhibition, presented by the Contemporary Glass Society, showcases a selection of work by 20-plus talented artists employing both traditional and modern methods of glass making. Processes including hot glass, casting, kiln formed, pâte de verre, lampworking, neon and stained glass are featured, with the works on display 'challenging and exploring the boundaries of glass'.



Claudette Johnson: Darker Than Blue

The Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, until Friday 15 September

Darker Than Blue is Claudette Johnson's first solo show in the Midlands. The Turner Prize nominee's work often takes the human figure as its subject and in particular explores the experience of Black women - including herself. "It's wonderful that Claudette has been nominated and recognised for her incredible work," says the Barber's director, Professor Jennifer Powell. "It is really powerful, with striking and confident line work - and her figures always hold your gaze."



Joy... Inspired By Nature

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, until Sun 22 September

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum's free-to-enjoy exhibition comes complete with giant flowers, bursts of rainbow colours, and sounds and smells that awaken inner tranquillity.

Joy...Inspired By Nature sees acclaimed artists Nicola Richardson and Marianne Taviner create 'an eye-popping wonderland that playfully reconnects us to nature'.

The exhibition features two special commissions: a scentscape by Gemma Costin and a soundscape by Ashley James Brown. Local artist Abeda Begum joins the team in crafting the final installation.



The Year Was 1944

National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire, until Sun 3 November

Autumn visitors to the Arboretum are invited to take an immersive journey back in time via this fascinating World War Two exhibition.

Nineteen forty-four was, of course, the year of the D-Day landings in Normandy. Back in Britain, the war continued to dictate the way in which people lived their lives...

The exhibition revolves around the wartime home of the Ball family, providing an insight into life on the home front during what was to prove a pivotal year in the long-running conflict.

No Going Back

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, until Sun 2 March

A thought-provoking and, for visitors of a certain vintage, memory-stirring exhibition, No Going Back is presented by North Staffs Miners Wives and revisits the Miners' Strike of 1984/85. Featuring photographs and memorabilia recalling an event which radically changed Britain's industrial landscape forever, the display will remain available to view until early March, its closure coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the end of the strike.



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advisers will be on hand to answer house hunters' questions. The hit Channel Four TV series' presenters will be in attendance too, offering visitors not only their property expertise but also the chance to discover some of the long-running programme's behind-the-scenes secrets.



Malvern Autumn Show

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Fri 27 - Sun 29 September

The UK's biggest harvest-season celebration is back this month with a jam-packed programme. Crowd-pleasers such as the CANNA UK Giant Vegetables Championship and the colourful RHS Flower Show will make a welcome return, taking their place alongside the Gardening Village, the World of Animals

Arena and the Great Taste Food & Drink Market. Presenter Nicki Chapman will be hosting the Garden Theatre, where she will be joined by various high-profile experts, including BBC Gardeners' World's Adam Frost, Rachel De Thame and Arit Anderson.

Retro Truck Show

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, Sat 7 & Sun 8 September

The Retro Truck Show returns for another bumper weekend this month, bringing together more than 300 trucks manufactured between 1971 and 2001.

The hugely popular show, one of the biggest in the calendar, is dedicated to some of the world's most iconic truck manufacturers, including DAF, Scania and Volvo. Entry to the British Motor Museum and Collections Centre is included in the ticket price.



The Strongman Open

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sat 7 September

There'll be plenty of muscle in the Midlands early this month when the Strongman Open visits Utilita Arena for the very first time. Presented by the aptly named Giants Live, the show features some of the world's largest and most powerful competitors, battling it out in 'mind-blowing feats of strength'. Impossibly heavy weights will be lifted, carried and thrown in five gruelling events, as participants compete not only for the prestigious Open title itself but also to qualify for the World's Strongest Man Finals.

Peaky Blinders Night

The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 28 September

Dust off your flat caps and finest frocks - Peaky Blinders Night is returning to the Black Country Living Museum! Walk in the footsteps of the television show that put Birmingham on the map. Explore Charlie's Yard and other historic streets that make up one of the series' key sets... Visitors can also take a shot at vintage fairground games, place their bets at the race night, or check out a historic 'bout of strength' at the wrestling ring. Plus, Kal's Kats will be performing on stage at the Workers' Institute.

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Events previews from around the region



Autumn Steam Gala Severn Valley Railway, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 September

Severn Valley Railway will be hosting a selection of guest locomotives alongside its home steam engine fleet at this month's Autumn Gala.

An intensive timetable, featuring early morning and late evening services, will operate each day, with the 'stars' of this

year's four-day get-together including LMS Jubilee, 45596 Bahamas, GWR Saint, 2999 Lady Of Legend and Class 108 DMU. Other Gala highlights include Tallylyn Railway's Douglas, on display in The Engine House, and RailArt at Kidderminster Railway Museum.



Gandey's Circus' Hollywood Spectacular

Tudor Grange Park, Solihull, Sat 7 - Tues 10 September; Pype Hayes Park, Birmingham, Wed 25 September - Sun 6 October

Step onto the red carpet and into the Big Top as Gandey's Circus presents 'a seamless blend of circus magic and glittering Hollywood glamour' in its latest production. Ringmaster Joel Hatton and the ever-popular Bippo The Clown will lead the full-scale

spectacular, which brings together comedy, acrobatics and 'dazzling' choreography. Gravity-defying roller skating and edge-of-the-seat feats on the Double Space Wheel feature among the production's numerous highlights.

Coventry Brick Festival

Coventry Building Society Arena, Sat 14 September

The very first Coventry Brick Festival is a celebration of all things Lego. Suitable for fans of all ages, the event features speed building competitions, large-scale displays, traders selling loose bricks, new and retired Lego sets, minifigures and accessories, plus a dedicated building area.



The Good Clothes Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 20 - Sun 22 September

A brand-new event for 2024, The Good Clothes Show aims not only to highlight the impact the fashion industry is having on the climate, but also to help visitors who are striving to dress more sustainably. Attractions at the show include a makers' market featuring an array of vintage, pre-loved, street style, glam and handmade items. Workshops, clothing swaps, and opportunities to discover and learn about the sustainable-fashion movement also feature.

Miniatura

NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, Sat 14 & Sun 15 September

One of the longest-established and best-loved dolls' house shows in the world, Miniatura brings together devoted enthusiasts with some of the very best miniature modellers. Event highlights include workshops, the chance to buy tools and materials, and an impressive line-up of craftspeople and makers, with thousands of miniatures in tow.



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September 2024



An Officer And A Gentleman - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre - Mon 23 - Sat 28 September

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

What's On

Sun 1 - Sun 8 September



Flying Theatre: Bravo, Bravo! -
RAF Museum Midlands
until Sun 1 September

Mon 9 - Sun 15 September



Jenny 'The Vixen' Ryan -
Lichfield Garrick
Wed 11 September

Mon 16 - Sun 22 September



When Vincent Met John -
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
Wed 18 September

Mon 23 - Mon 30 September



The Shires -
Walsall Arena & Arts Centre
Fri 27 September

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Barber Institute of Fine Arts

THE HIDDEN LIVES OF PLANTS

Exhibition of botanical illustrations, on tour from London's Victoria & Albert Museum, marking the first project in a new annual exhibition partnership, until Mon 10 Nov

UNSTILL LIFE Exhibition exploring global mobility and consumerism in still-life paintings which convey changing attitudes towards globalisation, capitalism and consumer culture over time, until Sun 26 Jan 2025

WOMEN IN POWER: COINS FROM THE BARBER COLLECTION Spanning nearly 2,000 years and more than 2,500 miles, the exhibition focuses on historical women who have appeared on coins, until Sun 26 Jan 2025

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

IN PURSUIT OF REPETITIVE BEATS A 'euphoric, interactive VR adventure' that transports audiences back to the West Midlands in 1989, during the early days of the Acid House movement, until Sun 1 Sept

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

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

A SPIRIT INSIDE A selection of works from the Women's Art Collection and the Ingram Collection, exploring how women and non-binary artists have grappled with the notion and sense of 'spirit', until Sun 1 Sept

LOUISE BOURGEOIS: NATURE STUDY Explore the exceptional career of Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), one of the most influential artists of modern times, until Sun 6 Oct

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

STOKE CONNECTED A free showcase of the innovative and creative work of Digital & Creative students from Stoke-on-Trent College, until Sun 1 Sept

PORT VALE FOOTBALL CLUB: A STEP BACK IN TIME Opportunity to view shirts which have been of particular significance during the history of the club, displayed alongside associated memorabilia, until Fri 8 Sept

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

WE ARE PROUD Exhibition celebrating Shrewsbury Pride 2024, featuring submissions from the local community, Mon 2 Sept - Mon 30 Sept

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

FOOTBALL: DESIGNING THE BEAUTIFUL GAME Large-scale international touring exhibition from London's Design Museum, exploring how design has been used to push football to its technical and emotional limits, until Sun 1 Sept

ZIDANE: A 21ST CENTURY PORTRAIT A film by contemporary artists Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno, capturing French superstar-footballer Zinedine Zidane from multiple angles and in real time over the course of a single match, until Sun 20 Oct

POP THROUGH A QUEER LENS

Exhibition co-produced by members of Wolverhampton's LGBTQIA+ community, presenting new ways of understanding some of the gallery's best-loved artworks, until Sun 3 Nov

Elsewhere:

MAP EXHIBITION Drop in and view some stunning maps of Shropshire. Archivists will be on hand to provide more information about the maps and their context, Sat 7 Sept, Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury

THE MANTHEY MARIONETTES Exhibition of puppets and stories created by Carolyn & Wolfgang Manthey in the 1960s, until Sun 29 Sept, Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton

HORSE IN ART EXHIBITION Featuring works by the Society of Equestrian Artists, in a broad spectrum of styles, from classical to contemporary, until Wed 2 Oct, Rose Paterson Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shropshire

INSPIRED BY NATURE The newly refurbished gallery space hosts an exhibition celebrating the power, beauty and influence of nature. Featuring work by esteemed botanical artists including John Nash and Mary Grierson, until Thurs 31 Oct, Dudmaston, Shropshire

FROM STARS TO CELLS: THE LIFE OF IRON Exhibition exploring the formation of iron in stars and supernovas, and humans' first use of the material. Featuring a selection of artefacts which expand the story, until Sun 1 Dec, Ironbridge Museum, Shropshire

GREENER GLASS Explore the beauty and innovation of environmentally sustainable glass art in this unique exhibition, emphasising eco-friendly practices and the artistic exploration of environmental themes, until Sun 27 July 2025, Stourbridge Glass Museum



Fisherman's Friends - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Gigs

PALEHOUND Sun 1 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

TRICKY MC Sun 1 Sept, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

BONNIE "PRINCE" BILLY + GAZELLE TWIN + MELT BANANA + EMMA RUTH RUNDLE Sun 1 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE RIONS + PACIFIC AVENUE Sun 1 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

A TRIBUTE TO KRAFTWERK Sun 1 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE MERSEY BEATLES Sun 1 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

KID CREOLE & THE COCONUTS Sun 1 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

RICH PARSONS Sun 1 Sept, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

ONE NIGHT IN DUBLIN Sun 1 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

DAISTAR Mon 2 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

RINGO DEATHSTARR Mon 2 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE BROTHER BROTHERS Mon 2 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE SALLY JONES JAZZ TRIO Mon 2 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

GROOVY SHIRT CLUB Tues 3 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

WILLY TEA TAYLOR Tues 3

Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

JO CARLEY & THE OLD DRY SKULLS Wed 4 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GODSTICKS + AXIOM Wed 4 Sept, The Asylum, Birmingham

INDIGO MARSHALL Wed 4 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MAXI PRIEST Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

K-TRAP Thurs 5 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

VENUS GRRLS Thurs 5 Sept, The Victoria, Birmingham

FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS Thurs 5 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

DELTA FUSE Thurs 5 Sept, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

TIA LAMB + FLUOXETINE + RIVIERA + CERYS CURTIS Thurs 5 Sept, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

MARK STANWAYS KINGDOM OF MADNESS CLASSIC MAGNUM Thurs 5 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

BRANDON MCPHEE Thurs 5 Sept, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

PAUL DRAKELEY ALLSTAR BIG BAND Thurs 5 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

WALK LIKE A MAN - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI Thurs 5 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE GO 90S Fri 6 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

JESSIE DESAI Fri 6 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

MASTERS OF SABBATH Fri 6 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

G FLIP Fri 6 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE LUKE COMBS EXPERIENCE Fri 6 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

HE SAID, SHE SAID + CLOUDS OF EVERMORE + SPLIT SECOND + DUNEBUG + MINERVA Fri 6 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BELMONDO Fri 6 Sept, The Victoria, B'ham

UNDER THE COVERS Fri 6 Sept, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

ROCK FOR HEROES Fri 6 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

ENJOY THE SILENCE UK Fri 6 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ERASURED Fri 6 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

AN EVENING OF CLASSIC REGGAE Fri 6 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

HOOKJAW + THE DEAD LIST + BLOKE Fri 6 Sept, The Station, Cannock

N'FAMADY KOUYATÉ Fri 6 Sept, Lichfield Guildhall

RIP IT UP Fri 6 Sept, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

FLASH: A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Fri 6 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE EMINEM SHOW BY JAMES WYTHES Fri 6 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

LACK OF AFRO Fri 6 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE BEAUTIFUL WAYS Fri 6 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

CLARICE JENSEN + BLACK BRUNSWICKER Fri 6 Sept, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

TOUCH TOO MUCH Fri 6 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

PROMETHIUM + LAND CAPTAINS Fri 6 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Fri 6 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MIKI BERENYI TRIO Sat 7 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SKI MASK THE SLUMP GOD Sat 7 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE TESKEY BROTHERS + LIZ STRINGER Sat 7 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LEGEND: THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

KARAN AUJLA Sat 7 Sept, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

THE WHITE LAKES Sat 7 Sept, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

KILLERSTREAM Sat 7 Sept, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

DIVA OF THE DECADES Sat 7 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

ROD STEWART STORY Sat 7 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

JOHNNY2BAD Sat 7 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SUNSCREAM + THE DROP IN SESSIONS Sat 7 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TAKING BACK TOMORROW + PUBLIC ORDER + THE VIZ + JESSIE JAMES Sat 7 Sept, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

STILL MARILLION Sat 7 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LIONEL - THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE Sat 7 Sept, The Prince Of

Wales Theatre, Cannock

AKA NOEL GALLAGHER Sat 7 Sept, The Station, Cannock

DARKSIDE - THE PINK FLOYD SHOW Sat 7 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RUFFNECKS Sat 7 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ROUTE54 Sat 7 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

BLACK HELIUM AND CODEX SERAFINI Sat 7 Sept, Firefly, Oakengates, Telford

BEATLES COMPLETE Sat 7 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth

GORDON HENDRICKS - THE KING'S VOICE Sat 7 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

SIMON & GARFUNKEL - THROUGH THE YEARS Sat 7 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

IGLOO HEARTS Sat 7 Sept, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

MISCHIEF + GLASS ATLAS + KUFFDAM Sat 7 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

DAS KOOLIES Sun 8 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SADIE JEAN Sun 8 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

GAYE BIKERS ON ACID + DAEMONIK FONCE Sun 8 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

THE OFTEN HERD Sun 8 Sept, The Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

Laura Aston Sun 8 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

WE ARE NOT DEVO Sun 8 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ARRIVAL: THE HITS OF ABBA Sun 8 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE LYDIA RAE QUARTET Sun 8 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

WHITNEY: QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Sun 8 Sept, Aston Hall, Wrexham

Classical Music

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Hollins, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Hakim, Handel & Suppé, Sun 1 Sept, Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley, Nr Stourbridge

KIDDERMINSTER MALE CHOIR & ALED JONES: 120TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CONCERT Featuring the Kidderminster Valentines, Fri 6 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

DR IAN TRACEY ORGAN RECITAL Sat 7 Sept, Shrewsbury Abbey

ROGER JUDD ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Bach, Sat 7 Sept, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

NATIONAL YOUTH BRASS BAND OF GREAT BRITAIN: CHILDREN'S BAND Featuring Lynda Nicholson (leader), Cory Band & Black Dyke Band, Sun 8 Sept, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BRASS GALA 2024 Featuring Cory Band, Black Dyke Band, Philip Harper & Nick Childs (conductors), Sun 8 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

SARAH MILLICAN Sun 1 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GARY MEIKLE Sun 1 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM BALLARD Wed 4 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DYLAN MORAN & FIONA ALLEN Wed 4 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

GARY MEIKLE Wed 4 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

NICK WHITE Thurs 5 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MYRA DUBOIS Thurs 5 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BRENNAN REECE, JONNY AWSUM, PAUL CAMPBELL & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 5 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

NICK PAGE, DALISO CHAPONDA, ALEX CAHILL & CHRIS BROOKER Thurs 5 Sept, Lichfield Sports Club

ADRIAN POYNTON Thurs 5 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

IGNACIO LOPEZ, BETHANY BLACK, HARRIET DYER & CHRIS PURCHASE Thurs 5 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

MICHAEL FABBRI, EMMANUEL SONUBI, BARRY DODDS, JOURDAIN

FISHER & ALEXIS ROY Fri 6 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TAT VISION Fri 6 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MATT RIFE Fri 6 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham



SCOTT BENNETT, MATT PRICE, KEVIN DANIEL & WAYNE BEESE Fri 6 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TŶ PAWB COMEDY NIGHT Fri 6 Sept, TŶ Pawb, Wrexham

SIMON BRODKIN Fri 6 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

MICK MILLER Fri 6 Sept, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

JOSH HOWIE, SHARON WANJOHI, LOUISE LEIGH & TOM TOAL Sat 7 Sept, Rosies Nightclub, B'ham

MICHAEL FABBRI, EMMANUEL SONUBI, BARRY DODDS & JOURDAIN FISHER Sat 7 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT Sat 7 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MICHAEL MCINTYRE Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

BABY WANTS CANDY Sun 8 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SIMON BRODKIN Sun 8 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

GARY DELANEY, SHAPARAK KHORSANDI & JAKE LAMBERT Sun 8 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

AS YOU LIKE IT A 'joyful' 80-minute version of Shakespeare's timeless comedy, until Sun 1 Sept, The Holloway Garden Theatre, Nr Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL New production of Sheridan's biting comedy of manners, promising an 'exuberant feast of big wigs and even bigger laughs', until Fri 6 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon



THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR Richard Goulding and Samantha Spiro star in a new production of Shakespeare's tale of mischief and double dealing, until Sat 7 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

PERICLES The RSC's co-artistic director, Tamara Harvey, helms this rarely performed tale of love, hope and miracles, until Sat 21 Sept, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

BODY 115 A tale of broken hearts, old flames and open roads, written and performed Jan Noble, Wed 4 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

THE ENFIELD POLTERGEIST Dramatisation focusing on the infamous 1970s case of paranormal activity in a supposedly haunted council house in Enfield, Wed 4 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

BOY OUT THE CITY Coventry-born Declan Bennett takes audiences on a raw, brutal and often funny journey into the messy, turbulent world of toxic masculinity, homophobia and men's mental health... Wed 4 - Sat 7 Sept, The Rep, B'ham

THE MAGIC FLUTE Magic, romance and music combine in a surreal tale of lovers, bird catchers and operatic queens, Thurs 5 Sept, The Rep, B'ham

UNDER MILK WOOD One-man show in which Guy Masterson plays all 69 characters from Dylan Thomas' iconic work, Thurs 5 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE LAST TIME I SAW CAILEIGH A 'dark, funny and heartfelt' one-act play exploring queer erasure through the lens of an unsolved mystery, Thurs 5 - Fri 6 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

THE BRANDON MCPHEE SHOW Music variety show with a post-performance meet-and-greet, Thurs 5 Sept, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES Amateur version of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's celebrated Sherlock Holmes story, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Sept, Dudley Little Theatre

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS The Handlebards present an outdoor version of Shakespeare's shortest comedy, Fri 6 Sept, Bowring Park, Telford

THE GONDOLIERS Illyria present an outdoor version of Gilbert & Sullivan's lighthearted operetta,

Fri 6 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

OUT OF THE DEEP BLUE Autin Dance Theatre tell the magical story of Eko, a sea giant who rises from the depths of the ocean and encounters a young girl named Violet, Sat 7 Sept, Walsall Maker Fest

MURDER MYSTERY EVENT - FAWLTY TOWERS Cabaret-style immersive entertainment based on the popular 1970s sitcom, Sun 8 Sept, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

Kids Theatre

IN THE NIGHT GARDEN LIVE Fun-filled live show for younger audiences featuring full-size costumes, magical puppets and the amazing flying Pinky Ponk, Wed 4 - Thurs 5 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Dance

GISELLE English Youth Ballet presents its production of the romantic ballet with a haunting storyline, Fri 6 - Sat 7 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

LORD OF THE DANCE - A LIFETIME OF

STANDING OVATIONS A revival of the iconic dance extravaganza, Fri 6 - Sun 8 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Light Entertainment

TOAD ON THE ROAD: AN EVENING WITH NEIGHBOURS STAR RYAN MOLONEY Join Toadie as he reminisces about some of his biggest stories in the Aussie soap and reveals behind-the-scenes secrets... Tues 3 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

THE VERY BEST OF TOMMY COOPER (JUST LIKE THAT!) A glimpse into the life of one of Britain's best-loved comedians, featuring one-liners, dazzling wordplay and celebrated tricks, Wed 4 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

LOOKING FOR ME FRIEND: THE MUSIC OF VICTORIA WOOD Paulus the Cabaret Geek presents 'an evening of pure joy filled with Victoria's best-loved songs', Thurs 5 Sept, Wednesbury Library

DANNY BEARD 'An evening of

scandalous behaviour, laughs aplenty, and an honest insight into what life's really like as a Z-list celeb', Fri 6 Sept, The Alexandra, B'ham

DIVA OF THE DECADES Celebrating the powerhouse voices and iconic performances of the biggest divas in music history, Fri 6 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

PIAF - THE LIFE STORY AND SONGS OF EDITH PIAF One-woman show in which musical theatre actress Sally Jones pays homage to the iconic French singer, Fri 6 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

BELLA MACKIE IN CONVERSATION WITH JOE LYCETT Join the freelance journalist, columnist & Sunday Times bestselling author as she celebrates the release of her new book, *What A Way To Go*, Sun 8 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

ONE NIGHT ONLY Wolverhampton Youth Music Theatre present a jam-packed performance of musical theatre, Sun 8 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE REAL KEN DODD: THE MAN I LOVED Exclusive documentary film revealing the very private man behind the much-loved comic genius. An in-person Q&A with Lady Ann Dodd

follows the screening, Sun 8 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE D-DAY JUNIORS Following in the footsteps of The D-Day Darlings, the Juniors capture the imagination of a new generation and aim to keep the wartime spirit alive, Sun 8 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

Talks & Spoken Word

TIM PEAKE: ASTRONAUTS - THE QUEST TO EXPLORE SPACE Join Tim as he recounts stories from his journey into space and 'brings to life' iconic and ground-breaking missions from the past, Wed 4 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Events

SANDWELL COURTYARD FAIR Meet the local makers, sellers and craftspeople of Sandwell, Sat 31 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, West Bromwich

LOCOMOTIVE 4566'S 100TH BIRTHDAY Featuring a variety of activities for



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 <p>4 October, 8pm Melrose Quartet Tickets: £16</p>	 <p>18 October, 7.30pm Beatles Complete Tickets: £20</p>
 <p>10 October, 7.30pm Terence Blacker The Shock of the Old Tickets: £12.50</p>	 <p>19 October, 7.30pm Windrush Secret Tickets: £15</p>
 <p>11 October, 8pm An Evening with Pete, Annie & Rob Tickets: £12</p>	 <p>25 October, 8pm Brew-ha-ha-house Comedy Tickets: £14</p>
 <p>17 October, 7.30pm Fairport Convention Tickets: £30</p>	 <p>26 October, 8pm Riding The Low Tickets: £15</p>




CRANFORD
By Martyn Coleman
8-12 October 2024

This amateur production of 'Cranford' is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk



StokeRepPlayers.co.uk

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Sunday 1 - Sunday 8 September

visitors of all ages, Sat 31 Aug - Sun 1 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

DRAGON TAMERS SURVIVAL SCHOOL

Find out about the mythical beasts as you're guided through the castle, until Sun 1 Sept, Tamworth Castle

DINO DISCOVERY Join the team of intrepid Dino Rangers as they search for the lost dinosaurs, until Sun 1 Sept, Lower Drayton Farm, Staffs

BEYOND VAN GOGH Immersive experience bringing together more than 300 of Van Gogh's paintings with cutting-edge technology and a specially curated musical soundtrack, until Sun 1 Sept, NEC, Birmingham



THE BEACH Featuring sand, decking, deck chairs, children's activities, refreshments and more, until Sun 1 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

FLYING THEATRE: BRAVO, BRAVO! An immersive family show that features performers flying through the air, until Sun 1 Sept, The Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

ANIMAL BRICKTACULAR Embark on an 'extraordinary' safari to discover hundreds of real-life animals and 40 stunning lifesize brick sculptures, until Sun 1 Sept, Twycross Zoo, Atherstone

ANIMAL MAGIC Special workshops where visitors can create magical animals from clay, until Sun 1 Sept, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

SUMMER FAMILY FUN Packed line-up of interactive exhibits and workshops along the railway, until Sun 1 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

VICTORIAN SEASIDE EXPERIENCE Enjoy a traditional Victorian 'day at the beach', complete with donkeys and stage show, until Sun 1 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

FARMARAMA Beach party with gigantic paddling pools and a huge sand area, until Mon 2 Sept, National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire

MARCH OF THE ELEPHANTS Free public art trail featuring 60 elephant sculptures, until Sun 8 Sept, Lichfield, Tamworth and Sutton Coldfield

BIKE 4 LIFE Event bringing together more than 6,000 bikers to raise funds for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, Sun 1 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

CLASSIC & RETRO SHOW Up to 1,000 classic, modified, sports and supercars on display, Sun 1 Sept,

Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

STOKE ON TRENT MODEL SHOW Model show with 40-plus clubs and traders, Sun 1 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford

VICTORIAN PRINTERS EXPERIENCE DAY

Learn the art of printmaking and discover the intricacies of a traditional letterpress as you design and typeset your very own poster, Wed 4 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA Travel in style on a luxurious vintage carriage and indulge in a delectable spread, Thurs 5 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

BRIDGNORTH BEER FESTIVAL Featuring 40 cask ales from local Shropshire breweries and further afield, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

TAMWORTH BEER FESTIVAL Featuring 75-plus ales, including festival specials and new entries, plus the usual cider and perry bar, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE Action-packed adventure in which young visitors can interact with animal puppets from the rainforest and jungle, play musical instruments, bang a drum, sing along and have heaps of fun... Fri 6 Sept, Smethwick Heritage Centre

GARDENS LATES: HERITAGE WEEK SPECIAL Enjoy a rare opportunity to visit the gardens and glasshouses after hours, Sat 7 Sept, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

THE STRONGMAN OPEN 2024 'The largest and most powerful men and women on earth' battle it out in 'mind-blowing feats of strength', Sat 7 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

POP-UP PUPPET CINEMA See Back To The Future and Jaws 'exactly as they were meant to be told' - with puppets! Sat 7 Sept, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

WALSALL MAKERFEST Featuring makers, artists, crafters, creatives, designers, food artisans and more, Sat 7 Sept, Walsall Town Centre

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS: WEDGWOOD'S CANAL HISTORY A talk on Wedgwood's canal history and exclusive behind-the-scenes access to the V&A Wedgwood Collection archives, Sat 7 Sept, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

GATEHOUSE THEATRE TOUR A backstage tour with expert guides, Sat 7 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GET UP CLOSE WITH MODERN TELESCOPES Free temporary exhibition exploring the science of iron, taking visitors on a journey from iron's origins in space billions of years ago through to its use by humankind and in the Ironbridge Gorge, Sat 7 Sept, The



Flying Theatre: Bravo, Bravo! - The Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

Coalbrookdale Gallery, Ironbridge

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - BEHIND THE SCENES AT SMCC Behind-the-scenes tour featuring hidden gems from the Shropshire Museums' collection, Sat 7 Sept, Shropshire Museums' Collections Centre, Ludlow, South Shropshire

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS: HUNTED HISTORY Solve clues, complete tasks and crack codes as you navigate your way through the building, Sat 7 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS PANTO COSTUME DESIGN WORKSHOP Event inviting participants aged 14-plus to dive into the rich history of pantomime and channel their creativity into designing a costume for a character, Sat 7 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

ALTERNATIVE WRESTLING WORLD PRESENTS RE-LOADED Sat 7 Sept, Halesowen Town Hall

SUDS FEST 2024 Birmingham's own homegrown festival, dedicated to celebrating craft beer, Sat 7 Sept, Uffculme Centre, Moseley, B'ham

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - COALBROOKDALE As part of the national Heritage Open Days festival, enjoy free access to all Coalbrookdale sites across the weekend, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Sept, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Ingenuity, The Old Furnace, Darby Houses & Museum of the Gorge, Shropshire

BATTLE OF CROGEN RE-ENACTMENT Take a look around English and Welsh encampments as part of an authentic living-history experience, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Sept, Chirk Castle, Wrexham

WE LOVE TAMWORTH 2024 Featuring stalls, live music and plenty of family fun, Sat 7 - Sun 8 Sept, Tamworth Castle Grounds

OKTOBERFEST See the resort transformed into a Bavarian-themed venue, complete with exclusive entertainment and oompah band, Sat 7 - Sun 29 Sept, Alton Towers Resort,

Staffordshire

AUTUMN PLANT FAIR A chance to pick up some late-blooming plants, Sun 8 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

HERITAGE OPEN DAY Explore Aston Hall and take a historical journey from the 17th century through to the Victorian era, Sun 8 Sept, Aston Hall, B'ham

WAKE UP THE ZOO Follow the keepers as they go about their daily duties of feeding, cleaning and caring for some of the rarest animals in the world, Sun 8 Sept, Dudley Zoo

BIRDS OF PREY DISPLAYS Spectacular static and flying displays on the valley lawn, Sun 8 Sept, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire

HOME RUN HOUNDS DOG SHOW The first Himley dog show for over 15 years, Sun 8 Sept, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

THE MACABRE MUSEUM - STORIES OF MURDER AND MAYHEM Hear about some of the darker stories from the Lock Up's history, Sun 8 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, B'ham

FAULTY TOWERS THE DINING EXPERIENCE Highly interactive experience featuring a three-course meal and 'five-star comedy', Sun 8 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

HERITAGE OPEN DAY BACKSTAGE TOUR Explore the Grade II-listed auditorium and go backstage to see areas normally open only to performers, Sun 8 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Festivals

BROMYARD FOLK FESTIVAL Line-up includes Oysterband, Spiers & Boden, Fay Held Trio, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Sept, Bromyard, Herefordshire

ONBOARD THE CRAFT Line-up includes Krankschaft, Peter And The Test Tube Babies, Punishment Of Luxury, Thurs 5 - Sun 8 Sept, Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club, Worcester



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Birmingham
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Gigs

ERIC BELL TRIO Mon 9 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

MEGAN MORONEY + WESTON LONEY Tues 10 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK Tues 10 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KERRI COLBY + MIRAGE AMURO! Tues 10 Sept, XOYO, Birmingham

MOCK TUDORS Wed 11 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LAZY HABITS Wed 11 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG Thurs 12 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

LEGENDS OF MOTOWN Thurs 12 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

UK PINK FLOYD Thurs 12 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

THE HELL Thurs 12 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

ESPEN ERIKSEN TRIO Thurs 12 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

ROMEO'S DAUGHTER Thurs 12 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE GLAM ROCK SHOW Thurs 12 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE DIANA ROSS STORY Thurs 12 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GORDON HENDRICKS Thurs 12 Sept, The Anstice, Madeley, Shropshire

MAJOR TOMS Fri 13 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

BLACKBERRY SMOKE + BONES OWENS Fri 13 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

OLD TIME SAILORS Fri 13 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE NEVERLAND EXPRESS + CALEB JOHNSON - CELEBRATING MEAT LOAF Fri 13 Sept, Symphony Hall, B'ham

TEXAS + KT TUNSTALL Fri 13 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

LIVE/WIRE - THE AC/DC SHOW Fri 13 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

PETE WILLIAMS Fri 13 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

FOREVER NU Fri 13 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

MADONNA AS PLAYED BY TASHA LEAPER Fri 13 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LOUISE AND CHRIS ROGAN Fri 13 Sept, Fenton Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SARAH RICHES AND THE DREAMCATCHERS Fri 13 Sept, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

I LIKE IT - TRIBUTE TO GERRY MARSDEN AND THE SWINGIN' 60S Fri 13 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

GREEN HAZE Fri 13 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

ULTIMATE QUEEN Fri 13 Sept, The Station, Cannock

THE DIRTY ROCKING SCOUNDRELS Fri 13 Sept, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

TOTALLY BLONDIE Fri 13 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MAGGIE MAY - THE ROD STEWART YEARS Fri 13 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

REVOLUTION Fri 13 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE Q + CHIPSUM GRAVY + THE RED BASTARDS Fri 13 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

LULO REINHARDT & YULIA LONSKAYA Fri 13 Sept, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

DAY FEVER Sat 14 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

BARS AND MELODY Sat 14 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE PISTOLS + THE RAMONAS + BUZZKOCKS Sat 14 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE BYGONES Sat 14 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

ROB LAMBERTI - PERFECTLY GEORGE Sat 14 Sept, Symphony

Hall, Birmingham

CON JOVI Sat 14 Sept, 45Live, Kidderminster

THE DEAD DAISIES + THE TREATMENT + THE BITES Sat 14 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

MEGSON Sat 14 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

DAVID ESSEX Sat 14 Sept, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

WILL YOUNG + RACHAEL SAGE Sat 14 Sept, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

DURAN DURAN EXPERIENCE Sat 14 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

PURPLE HEARTS Sat 14 Sept, The Underground, Stoke-on-Trent

GORDON HENDRICKS - THE KINGS VOICE Sat 14 Sept, Octogon, Stoke-on-Trent

DS:UK - DIRE STRAITS TRIBUTE Sat 14 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FOO FIGHTERS GB Sat 14 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI Sat 14 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

THE SEARCHERS EXPERIENCE Sat 14 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALL STAR REGGAE WITH JOHNNY 2 BAD Sat 14 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WATERMELON CHRONICLES Sat 14 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

DESIRE LINES + SIDE PROJECT + THE PUBLIC Sat 14 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE VAMPS Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JONAS BROTHERS + MIMI WEBB Sun 15 Sept, Utilita Arena B'ham

ASHLEY HUTCHINGS + BECKY MILLS Sun 15 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TEACHERS PET Sun 15 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

Classical Music

CATHY LAMB ORGAN RECITAL Tues 10 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

VALENTIN MAGYAR PIANO RECITAL Programme includes works by Liszt & Beethoven, Wed 11 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE SIXTEEN: THE CHORAL PILGRIMAGE 2024 Featuring Harry Christophers (conductor). Programme includes works by Lassus, Casulana, Josquin & more..., Thurs 12 Sept, Hereford Cathedral

LUDLOW ENGLISH SONG: YOUNG COMPOSERS 2024 Featuring Harriet Burns (soprano), George Roberts (baritone) & Thomas Eeckhout (piano). Programme includes new compositions and a selection of the singers' favourite, better-known English Songs, Sat 14 Sept, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

PHILIP RUSHFORTH ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Widor, Fletcher, JS Bach, Templeton, Armstrong Gibbs & Lemare, Sat 14 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Comedy

BEN ELTON Mon 9 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



SAM SERRANO Tues 10 Sept, Crown Inn, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire

DALISO CHAPONDA Tues 10 Sept, Tŷ Pawb, Wrexham

THE ALTER COMEDY CLUB Wed 11 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

TEZ ILYAS Thurs 12 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

FIN TAYLOR Fri 13 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

COMEDY IN THE ATTIC Fri 13 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

PAUL FOOT Fri 13 Sept, Nick Whitehead Lecture Theatre, Wrexham

KATIE GILL-WILLIAMS, GETHIN EVANS, JAMES ALLEN & HAYLEY ELLIS Fri 13 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

JEN BRISTER, JUSTIN MOORHOUSE, STEPHEN BAILEY, HAYLEY ELLIS &

PRIYA HALL Fri 13 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

FRANKIE BOYLE, SCOTT BENNETT, DAWN BAILEY, MICK FERRY & HASAN AL-HABIB Fri 13 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

LOL COMEDY CLUB Sat 14 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

FRANKIE BOYLE, MARKUS BIRDMAN, MAUREEN YOUNGER & WAYNE BEESE Sat 14 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

RUSSELL KANE Sat 14 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

SAM AVERY Sat 14 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

LOU SANDERS Sat 14 Sept, Nick Whitehead Lecture Theatre, Wrexham

RAY BRADSHAW Sat 14 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

STEPHEN BAILEY Sat 14 Sept, Nick Whitehead Lecture Theatre, Wrexham

LINDSEY SANTORO Sat 14 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

PAUL SINHA, LOU SANDERS, JENNY COLLIER & COMICS TBC Sat 14 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

VITTORIO ANGELONE Sun 15 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RUSSELL KANE Sun 15 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

CHRIS WASHINGTON, FREDDIE QUINNE, MIKE NEWALL & DOM HATTON-WOODS Sun 15 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PAUL SINHA'S FAST QUIZ Sun 15 Sept, Nick Whitehead Theatre, Wrexham

MYRA DUBOIS Sun 15 Sept, Nick Whitehead Theatre, Wrexham

PETE SELWOOD Sun 15 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

JEFF INNOCENT Sun 15 Sept, Nick Whitehead Theatre, Wrexham

HANNAH PLATT Sun 15 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

REGINALD D HUNTER Sun 15 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

JO CAULFIELD Sun 15 Sept, Nick Whitehead Theatre, Wrexham

DAVID EAGLE Sun 15 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

GARY DELANEY, BRENNAN REECE, ELEANOR TIERNAN, IGNACIO LOPEZ & COMIC TBC Sun 15 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

Theatre

HOME, I'M DARLING The Nonentities present an amateur version of Laura Wade's dark comedy about sex, cake and the quest to be the perfect 1950s housewife, Mon 9 - Sat 14 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

thelist

A CHORUS LINE Nikolai Foster directs a new version of the hit Broadway show. Adam Cooper and Carly Mercedes Dyer star, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

HERE YOU COME AGAIN - THE NEW DOLLY PARTON MUSICAL The story of a die-hard Dolly fan whose fantasy version of the international icon gets him through trying times, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE CHERRY ORCHARD Here To There Productions offer a new perspective to Anton Chekhov's classic drama, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



ROCK OF AGES The Mellow Dramatics present an amateur version of the smash-hit glam-metal musical, Tues 10 - Sat 14 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE KING'S SPEECH Amateur production telling the story of King George VI's struggle to overcome his speech impediment, Tues 10 - Sat 21 Sept, Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield

AUSTEN'S WOMEN: LADY SUSAN Rebecca Vaughan's solo comedy, based on Jane Austen's first full-length work, Wed 11 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

A BUNCH OF AMATEURS Amateur version of Ian Hislop & Nick Newman's heartwarming comedy, Thurs 12 - Sat 14 Sept, The Little Theatre, Donnington, Telford

THE ENFIELD POLTERGEIST Dramatisation focusing on the infamous 1970s case of paranormal activity in a supposedly haunted council house in Enfield, Sat 14 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

(LE) PAIN A story about 'breadmaking, physical heroics, growing up queer in a boulangerie in the south of France, endings and new beginnings', Sat 14 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE DUMB WAITER The Absurd Theatre Company present Harold Pinter's thought-provoking play, Sat 14 Sept, The Edge Arts Centre, Much

Wenlock, South Shropshire

PEPPER AND HONEY The Notnow Collective present a timely play about 'cultural differences and the conflict of upholding tradition and embracing change', Sun 15 Sept, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

Light Entertainment

CANDICE BRATHWAITE: MANIFESTO In-conversation event in which Candice explains exactly what manifesting looks like, Mon 9 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

EMILY CHAPPELL'S EPIC TALES OF CYCLING ADVENTURE Join the inspirational adventurer and endurance cyclist as she shares stories from her epic travels, Tues 10 Sept, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

THE DAVINCI MICHELANGELO EXPERIENCE Join Mark Rodgers, director of The DaVinci Machines & Michelangelo Exhibitions for a unique journey through the glory of Italian Renaissance, Wed 11 Sept,

Birmingham Town Hall

JENNY 'THE VIXEN' RYAN: OUT OF THE BOX Join The Chase's 'dream-crushing brainbox' for a journey through her life and times via some of her favourite tunes, sung live, Wed 11 Sept, Lichfield Garrick



BOX OF FROGS An evening of high-octane, improvised comedy nonsense, based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 11 Sept, 100 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, B'ham

SOLVE-ALONG-A-MURDER-SHE-WROTE Unique evening of entertainment featuring an interactive screening, games and lots of audience participation, Wed 11 - Fri 13 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

PSYCHIC SALLY Evening of mediumship, Thurs 12 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AN EVENING WITH LAUREL & HARDY

THE OLD JOINT STOCK PRESENTS

A STEADY RAIN

A PLAY WRITTEN BY KEITH HUFF DIRECTED BY LIAM ALEXANDRU

16TH - 19TH OCTOBER
THE OLD JOINT STOCK | BIRMINGHAM

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THE OLD JOINT STOCK PRESENTS

I SCREAMED A SCREAM

A Villains Cabaret

30 OCT - 1 NOV
THE OLD JOINT STOCK

7:30PM | THEOLDJOINTSTOCK.CO.UK | £16

Broadcaster, writer, musician & composer Neil Brand tells the touching story of 'the world's greatest comedy team', Thurs 12 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

PROFESSOR DAVID WILSON & MARCEL THEROUX: KILLER BOOKS Novelist & presenter Marcel Theroux is joined by criminologist David Wilson to discuss books that have motivated murder, and how fiction can sometimes become fact, Fri 13 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

AN EVENING WITHOUT KATE BUSH Award-winning show which pays homage to the music, fans and mythology of one of the most influential voices in British music, Fri 13 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

DEFYING GRAVITY: WEST END WOMEN Celebration of women who made their mark on the West End stage. Michelle Pentecost, Maggie Lynne, Tasha Sheridan, Jodie Nolan and Ellie Verkerk star, Fri 13 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MICHAEL AUGER - O WHAT A NIGHT Join the former Collabro vocalist for an evening of musical theatre favourites and pop songs, Sat 14 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH GRAHAM NORTON Join the TV host as he discusses his new book, shares tales from his star-studded sofa, and answers your questions live, Sat 14 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



BIANCA DEL RIO The self-proclaimed 'clown in a gown' returns to the stage to present an evening of witty entertainment, Sun 15 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MISS RACHEL UK TRIBUTE TOUR The only children's tribute show of its kind, featuring interactive screen content with on-brand animation & scenery, puppetry and more... Sun 15 Sept, Walsall Arena

Talks & Spoken Word

TIM PEAKE: ASTRONAUTS - THE QUEST TO EXPLORE SPACE Join Tim as he recounts stories from his journey into space and 'brings to life' iconic and ground-breaking missions from the past, Wed 11 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ROGER MCGOUGH: ALIVE AND GIGGING Performance poet Roger brings his

best pieces to the stage 'for new and old audiences alike', Sat 14 Sept, The Rep, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH GUY CHAMBERS Guy shares stories and songs from his 40-year career as one of the UK's most successful songwriters, Sat 14 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

JUST NAACH A live celebration of South Asian music & dance, Sun 15 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Events

HERITAGE OPEN DAY - COLLECTIONS STORE TOUR Delve into the archives and see some of the museum's oldest and most precious objects, Tues 10 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

DIVINE BEAUTY STAINED-GLASS WINDOW TOUR Learn about the historic Baroque cathedral and its treasures on a free 30-minute tour, Tues 10 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral

VICTORIAN PRINTERS EXPERIENCE DAY Learn about the art of printmaking and discover the intricacies of a traditional letterpress as you design and typeset your very own poster, Wed 11 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

SHADOW PUPPETRY FOR ADULTS Learn to create 'incredible shadows and fantastic moving images' with The Fetch Theatre, Wed 11 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS: UNPACKING WEDGWOOD A behind-the-scenes guided tour of the collection storage space, Wed 11 - Fri 13 Sept, World of Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent

SANDWELL PRIORY HERITAGE WALK Dr Mike Hodder guides visitors around the remains of Sandwell Priory, the landscape around Sandwell Hall and other parts of Sandwell Valley, Thurs 12 Sept, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, West Bromwich

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL CHURCHYARD TOUR Free guided tour, led by a knowledgeable volunteer, Thurs 12 Sept, Birmingham Cathedral

MADE IN BIRMINGHAM TOUR Guided tour of a selection of Birmingham-built objects, Thurs 12 - Fri 13 Sept, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

EXPLORE BLAKESLEY: HERITAGE OPEN DAY Take advantage of free entry to the house & gardens, built in 1590 by Richard Smalbroke, Fri 13 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

WOMEN'S HISTORY TOUR Celebrate International Women's Day by learning about the history of women who lived and worked in Birmingham in the 1800s, Fri 13 Sept, Birmingham Back to Backs

YARDLEY HERITAGE WALK: BIRMINGHAM HERITAGE WEEK Join local expert Mike



Heritage Days at the West Midlands Police Museum

Byrne for a leisurely stroll around the village of Yardley, Fri 13 Sept, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

VINE & DINE NIGHT Enjoy a four-course dinner, created by a team of award-winning chefs, with each dish coupled with 'the perfect wine', Fri 13 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

THEATRE TOUR Check out the dressing rooms, visit the backstage areas and step out onto the stage, Sat 14 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

HERITAGE OPEN DAY - COLLECTIONS STORE TOUR Delve into the archives and see some of the museum's oldest and most precious objects, Fri 13 - Sat 14 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL Weekend celebrating the best of the Marches' food and drink, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Sept, Ludow Castle, South Shropshire

FISE XPERIENCE WOLVERHAMPTON Featuring BMX, scooter and breaking contests, initiations and exhibitions, Fri 13 - Sun 15 Sept, Market Square, Wolverhampton

MUSEUM COLLECTION CENTRE OPEN DAY Day of family-friendly activities and a chance to explore the artefact-packed warehouse, Sat 14 Sept, Museum Collection Centre, Nechells, Birmingham

ENGLISH NATIONAL CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS Event making its debut at Weston, Sat 14 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

JCB COLOUR RUN Get ready to experience a burst of colour 'with the happiest 4K', Sat 14 Sept, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

THE CAT SHOW LIVE Three globally recognised cat registries come together under one roof, Sat 14 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

WATER'S EDGE FEST 2024 Featuring 'live music, great beer, family fun, street food and frolics', Sat 14 Sept, Chetwynd Deer Park, Newport

BINGO LOCO Bingo rave with random

prizes, Sat 14 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

HERITAGE OPEN DAY: EXPLORE SAREHOLE MILL Enjoy the sights and sounds of a traditional 18th-century water mill for free, Sat 14 Sept, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

FAMILY HERITAGE OPEN DAY Family-friendly day exploring the heritage of The Exchange, formerly Birmingham Municipal Bank, Sat 14 Sept, The Exchange, Centenary Square, B'ham

MINIATURA AUTUMN SHOW The ever-popular dolls' house show returns, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

INTERNATIONAL N GAUGE SHOW Featuring a full range of modern image, steam, continental and American layouts, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Warwickshire Event Centre, Coventry

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Enjoy free entry into the Mill exhibition, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

THE PRINT FAIR Meet printmakers and artists from across the region, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

SUTTON COLDFIELD FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring 100 diverse food stalls, celebrity chef demonstrations, live music and children's entertainment, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Sutton Coldfield town centre

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSIC HALL Discover centuries of history in a behind-the-scenes tour, Sat 14 - Sun 15 Sept, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

MIDLANDS COMMUNITY DAY Featuring dance, music, spoken word, exhibitions and activities for children, Sun 15 Sept, The Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

VINTAGE AFTERNOON TEA Travel in style on a luxurious vintage carriage and indulge in a delectable spread, Sun 15 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

Gigs

KEN CARSON Mon 16 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MARC ALMOND Mon 16 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LLOYD COLE Mon 16 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

WILL YOUNG Mon 16 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

OCEAN ALLEY + HOCKEY DAD Tues 17 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LITTLE BIG TOWN Tues 17 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

EDDY SMITH & THE 507 + JAKE O'NEIL Wed 18 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

NORTHLANE + NOVELISTS + TEN56 Wed 18 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ANDI Wed 18 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NEEDTOBREATHE Wed 18 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PHIL BEER Wed 18 Sept, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THE STARS FROM THE COMMITMENTS Wed 18 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

LLOYD COLE Wed 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HEATHER PEACE Thurs 19 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

THE THREE DEGREES Thurs 19 Sept, The Jam House, Birmingham

THE LAFONTAINES Thurs 19 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LAST GANG + SPLIT DOGS + LAST HOUNDS + CLOBBER Thurs 19 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

JOHNNY HATES JAZZ Thurs 19 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

JESS SILK Thurs 19 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE JAMES BROWN STORY Thurs 19 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

STARS OF IRISH COUNTRY Thurs 19 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ANNIE DUGGAN AND ROB HINE Thurs 19 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

GOLDIE LOOKIN' CHAIN Fri 20 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

GRATEFUL DUDES Fri 20 Sept, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TAZEALIA BANKS Fri 20 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

AC/DC UK + DIZZY LIZZY Fri 20 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOSHUA BASSETT + THOMAS DAY Fri 20 Sept, O2 Academy, B'ham

MELANIE MARTINEZ + ELITA Fri 20 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ELO ENCOUNTER Fri 20 Sept, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ULTIMATE COLDPLAY Fri 20 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

MASSIVE WAGONS + RANSOM Fri 20 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT Fri 20 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

WHITESNAKE UK Fri 20 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Fri 20 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

HIGH ON ADAMS - BRYAN ADAMS TRIBUTE Fri 20 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THUNDER DAZE Fri 20 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

THE ELTON JOHN SHOW Fri 20 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shrops

THE ILLEGAL EAGLES Fri 20 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

POIZON Fri 20 Sept, The Station, Cannock

THE WEEKENDERS Fri 20 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

GOOD KID + DUTCH CRIMINAL RECORD Sat 21 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE SILVER LINES + HEADSHRINKERS + THE MOOD Sat 21 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE DANGEROUS SUMMER + BROADSIDE Sat 21 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

ALISHA CHINAI + KAVITA KRISHNAMURTI + ALKA YAGNIK + ANURADHA PAUDWAL Sat 21 Sept, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

SYNTH Sat 21 Sept, The Rhodhouse, Sutton Coldfield

DIANA & LIONEL - ENDLESS LOVE THE SHOW Sat 21 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

KICK UP THE 80S Sat 21 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

THE JOHN RICHARDS BAND Sat 21 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TYKETTO + LITTLE CAESAR + DAN BYRNE Sat 21 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ALICE ZAWADZKI Sat 21 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

RIDE Sat 21 Sept, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE ULTIMATE BOYBAND PARTY SHOW Sat 21 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

DISCO INFERNO Sat 21 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

TOTALLY TINA Sat 21 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE BOY GEORGE EXPERIENCE Sat 21 Sept, The Station, Cannock

THE ANIMALS AND FRIENDS Sat 21 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN Sat 21 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE ORIGINAL WANTED Sat 21 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

NEW HOPE CLUB Sun 22 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PAUL CARRACK Sun 22 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE BUSHBURYS Sun 22 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

Classical Music

DAVID SAINT ORGAN RECITAL Tues 17 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN 9 Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Lucy Crowe (soprano), Jennifer Johnston (mezzo soprano), Joshua Stewart (tenor), Jonathan Lemalu (baritone) & CBSO Chorus. Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Strauss & Beethoven, Thurs 19 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

THE DANTE QUARTET Featuring Zoë Beyers & Ian Watson (violin), Carole Ella (viola) & Richard Jenkinson (cello). Programme includes works by Haydn, Janáček, Judith Weir & Walton, Fri 20 Sept, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

THE PHOENIX SINGERS Sat 21 Sept, Shrewsbury Abbey

AMALTHEA ENSEMBLE Programme includes works by Bach, Bruch, Bozza, Denham, Millicent B James & Villa-Lobos, Sat 21 Sept, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

Comedy

LLOYD GRIFFITH Tues 17 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ANDY ASKINS, RAY BRADSHAW & HAYLEY ELLIS Wed 18 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, NINA GILLIGAN & RAY BRADSHAW Thurs 19 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KATHERINE RYAN Thurs 19 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

ANDREW RYAN Fri 20 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDREW O'NEILL, ANDREW MAXWELL, NINA GILLIGAN, RAY BRADSHAW & BAB Fri 20 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

COMEDY IN THE MET Fri 20 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JONNY COLE Fri 20 Sept, Churchill's, Wednesbury

TOM STADE Fri 20 Sept, Bilston Town Hall

VLAD ILICH, MARTIN WESTGATE, JASON STAMPE & JON PEARSON Sat 21 Sept, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

ANDREW O'NEILL, ANDREW MAXWELL, NINA GILLIGAN & RAY BRADSHAW Sat 21 Sept, The Glee Club, B'ham

GARY MEIKLE Sat 21 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HAL CRUTTENDEN & DARREN HARRIOTT Sat 21 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

JONNY COLE Sat 21 Sept, St George's Hall, Bewdley

FIN TAYLOR Sun 22 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

STAND UP & ROCK WITH STAN BOARDMAN, SCOTT BENNETT & THE SUBTERRANEANS Sun 22 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

Theatre

HAIRSPRAY A big, bold and beautiful musical filled with show-stopping numbers and dance routines. Strictly's Joanna Clifton stars as Velma von Tussle while Hairspray royalty Brenda Edwards makes her directing debut, Mon 16 - Sat 21 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome

CHICAGO Amateur version presented by Lichfield Musical Youth Theatre, Tues 17 - Sat 21 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

CAN'T WAIT TO LEAVE 'A biting frank portrayal of loneliness and self-discovery', Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

WHEN VINCENT MET JOHN Imagine what would have happened if Vincent Van Gogh and John Lennon met... Wed 18 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ANNIE Amateur version presented by Cannock Chase Drama Society, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Sept, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

KATHAKALI: THE CLASSICAL Show fusing 'movement, drama and vibrant costumes alongside ritual and symbolic storytelling originating from the temple of Kerala 500 years ago', Fri 20 Sept, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

METTLE Nicholas Collet's new play commemorates those who served on the Atlantic Convoys, Fri 20 Sept, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

BROADWAY TO BROADWATERS Kidderminster Operatic & Dramatic Society present an evening of musical theatre favourites, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

THE COMPANY OF WOLVES Theresa Heskins and Vicki Amedume co-direct an imaginative staging of Angela Carter's gripping horror story... Fri 20 Sept - Sat 12 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

BEE CART Pif-Paf present an 'exciting, accessible walkabout theatre piece' for audiences of all ages, Sat 21 Sept, Caldmore Community Garden, Walsall

RITA, SUE AND BOB TOO Andrea Dunbar's semi-autobiographical drama, offering a snapshot of 1980s northern working-class life, Sat 21 Sept, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

KRAPP'S LAST TAPE David Westhead stars in a new production of Samuel Beckett's exploration of the human soul. A post-show Q&A with David and the show's director, Stockard Channing, also features, Sun 22 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Kid's Theatre

HURLY BURLY THEATRE: YOU ARE THE SUN A first opera for babies and grown-ups that explores the magic of nature through a fusion of singing and sensory play, Tues 17 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

PEPPA PIG'S FUN DAY OUT Join Peppa, her family and friends as they go to the zoo and beach for a special party, Wed 18 - Thurs 19 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MCDUGALLS IN TOYLAND: A SINGALONG ADVENTURE Stage show for younger audiences packed with musical mayhem and audience participation, Sat 21 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE LIVE Education and entertainment combine in this popular show for younger audiences. Expect 20ft liquid nitrogen clouds, exploding oxygen and hydrogen balloons, fire tornadoes, hydrogen bottle rockets, ignited methane and even a self-built hovercraft, Sun 22 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Dance

ROMEO & JULIET Northern Ballet bring Shakespeare's love story to life, accompanied by Prokofiev's glorious score, Thurs 19 - Sat 28 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Light Entertainment

THE VERY BEST OF TOMMY COOPER (JUST LIKE THAT!) A glimpse into the life of one of Britain's best-loved comedians, featuring one-liners, dazzling wordplay and celebrated tricks, Thurs 19 Sept, Halesowen Town Hall

AN EVENING WITH LAUREL & HARDY Broadcaster, writer, musician & composer Neil Brand tells the touching story of the 'world's greatest comedy team', Thurs 19 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE STARS OF IRISH SHOW Sean Wilson, Shawn Cuddy, Curtis Magee & Stephen Smyth showcase their trademark singalong songs, accompanied by a backing band,

Thurs 19 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY BANGERS LIVE! Join James B Partridge for a nostalgic evening of singalong tunes to take you back to your primary school days, Fri 20 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic show fusing comedy, impersonations and music from the 1950s through to the 1980s, Fri 20 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE CHORIZO MAY SHOW Join the RuPaul Drag Race star for an evening of big drag energy, lip syncs, dazzling costumes, music and laughter, Fri 20 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE VERY BEST OF TOMMY COOPER (JUST LIKE THAT!) A glimpse into the life of one of Britain's best-loved comedians, featuring one-liners, dazzling wordplay and celebrated tricks, Fri 20 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

TOAD ON THE ROAD: AN EVENING WITH NEIGHBOURS STAR RYAN MOLONEY Join Toadie as he reminisces about some of his biggest stories in the Aussie soap and reveals behind-the-scenes secrets... Fri 20 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DISCO INFERNO A cast of West End performers present an evening of disco classics, including hits from the Bee Gees, Village People, The Jacksons, Sister Sledge, Rose Royce, ABBA and Donna Summer... Sat 21 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SOUL OF BOLLYWOOD Bollywood's best-loved anthems get the Shaft treatment in what's promising to be 'an unforgettable fusion of music, culture and pure entertainment', Sat 21 Sept, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

JOE LYCETT'S ART HOLE LIVE Join Joe as he reads some of his favourite stories from his new book and showcases the paintings that were inspired by them, Sat 21 Sept, Birmingham Town Hall

FRANKENSTEIN (ON A BUDGET) 'Comedy musical Hammer homage horror' featuring 'one actor, dodgy backdrops, weather-based puns, cardboard props and more hats than you can throw a stick at'... Sat 21 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE RAT PACK IS BACK! Starring David Alacey (Lovejoy & Inspector Alleyne) as Frank Sinatra, Paul Drakeley (Inside Out) as Dean Martin and former EastEnders star Des Coleman as Sammy Davis Jr, Sat 21 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

AN EVENING WITH GRAHAM NORTON Join the TV host as he discusses his new book, shares tales from his star-

studded sofa and answers your questions live, Sat 21 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MUSICALS BY CANDLELIGHT: OPENING NUMBERS EDITION Featuring a selection of musical theatre classics, Sat 21 - Sun 22 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SAM RABONE'S BIG BOSTIN' VARIETY SHOW Featuring comedian Ben Langley (Britain's Got Talent), vocalist Lorraine Brown and comedian and occasional musician Herbie Adams, Sun 22 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH CAROL KLEIN Join the gardening expert and bestselling author as she celebrates the release of her memoir, Hortobiography, Tues 17 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TOP HAT SPOKEN WORD OPEN MIC NIGHT Hosted by Joss Musgrove Knibb, Wed 18 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

CARLTON KIRBY'S TRUE TALES OF THE TOUR DE FRANCE Cycling star Carlton shares his front-row experiences from the Tour De France and other big races, Wed 18 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

POETRY JAM LIVE! Monthly open-mic platform, Thurs 19 Sept, Justham Family Room & Jane How Room, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH SIMON PARKER: A RIDE ACROSS AMERICA - COUNTDOWN TO THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION Join the award-winning travel writer, public speaker & filmmaker for 'a night of adventure', Sat 21 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

Events

MARK SMITH: THE STORY OF THE VICTORIA CROSS Meet militaria expert Mark and have your family medals evaluated, Mon 16 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SUMMER MUSIC NIGHT Listen to live music, enjoy artisan cocktails and indulge in alfresco dining, Thurs 19 Sept, Weston Park, Shropshire

STAFFORD MUSIC & FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring stalls, live entertainment and street food, Thurs 19 Sept, Market Square, Stafford

AUTUMN STEAM GALA Four-day festival of steam starring 2999 'Lady of Legend', 45596 'Bahamas', Black Five 44932 and L&Y 51456, Thurs 19 - Sun 22 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

COALBROOKDALE BEER FESTIVAL Featuring a wide variety of beers from around the country, Fri 20 - Sat 21

Sept, Enignuity, Ironbridge

ADVENTURE CINEMA Open-air screenings of The Greatest Showman, Mamma Mia! and Pretty Woman, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Sept, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

A PLACE IN THE SUN LIVE Everything you need to know about buying overseas, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Sept, NEC, Birmingham



THE GOOD CLOTHES SHOW Find high-end sustainable clothes, meet designers and discuss the future of fashion, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

ADVENTURE CINEMA Open-air screenings of Dirty Dancing, Mamma Mia! and The Gruffalo, Fri 20 - Sun 22 Sept, Shugborough Estate, Staffordshire

CORVEDALE FESTIVAL Classical music festival, Fri 20 - Sat 28 Sept, The Corvedale Churches, Shropshire

THE ALDERFORD SWIM Alderford's very own freestyle open water swimming competition, Sat 21 Sept, Alderford Lake, North Shropshire

BURTON RADIO LAUNCH PARTY Official rebrand launch party celebrating the transition from Micro Brew Radio to Burton Radio, Sat 21 Sept, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

BEYOND THE MANOR - MURDER MYSTERY NIGHT Keep your cool and piece together crucial clues to reveal the murderer's identity, Sat 21 Sept, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

BONGO'S BINGO OKTOBERFEST SPECIAL The original bingo rave sensation, Sat 21 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

FIRED UP - THE RAKU EXPERIENCE Have a go at this traditional Japanese ceramic technique, Sat 21 Sept, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

TAMWORTH WARGAMES CLUB A day of tabletop battle tactics and wits, Sun 22 Sept, Tamworth Castle

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring traders from across the UK selling a wide range of items from yesteryear, Sun 22 Sept, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

Festivals

HEAL FESTIVAL Line-up includes Embrace, Tom Meighan, The Farm, Fri 20 - Sat 21 Sept, Greenhouse West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

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Gigs

BLAZE BAYLEY + ABSOLVA + PRYMA Mon 23 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

YOT CLUB + LATE NIGHT DRIVE HOME Tues 24 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MONSTER MAGNET Tues 24 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

BEVERLEY KNIGHT Tues 24 Sept, The Civic at The Halls W'hampton

CLAVISH Wed 25 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

MERCURY - QUEEN TRIBUTE Wed 25 Sept, The Alexandra, B'ham

RYAN ADAMS Wed 25 Sept, The Wulfrun at The Halls W'hampton

ELVIS COSTELLO AND STEVE NIEVE Wed 25 Sept, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

TAYLOR SWIFT TRIBUTE Wed 25 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RACHEL TUCKER Wed 25 Sept, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

ROB LAMBERTI PRESENTS PERFECTLY GEORGE Wed 25 Sept, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

ROCKY AND ROSS LYNCH + ALMOST MONDAY Thurs 26 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE REAL THING + MEL DAY Thurs 26 Sept, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

JOHN OTWAY BAND Thurs 26 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

TERRORVISION Thurs 26 Sept, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 26 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE SOUL BROTHERS SYNDICATE Thurs 26 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JEAN MARTYN Thurs 26 Sept, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

JOHN SMITH Thurs 26 Sept, Shrewsbury Abbey

JADES + WHYSPIDERS Thurs 26 Sept, Albert's

Shed, Shrewsbury

MARSEILLE Fri 27 Sept, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

AND FINALLY... PHIL COLLINS Fri 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 27 Sept, The Night Owl, Birmingham

SENSES FAIL + SAVES THE DAY Fri 27 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RUM JUNGLE Fri 27 Sept, O2 Institute, B'ham

NORTH ATLAS Fri 27 Sept, The Rainbow, Birmingham

JANET JACKSON + WYCLEF JEAN Fri 27 Sept, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE SHIRES Fri 27 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre



ALEXANDER O'NEAL Fri 27 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

GLAM 45 Fri 27 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

RICKY COOL AND THE IN CROWD Fri 27 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SLADE UK Fri 27 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE THE Fri 27 Sept, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

SERIOUSLY COLLINS Fri 27 Sept, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE CARPENTERS MASQUERADE Fri 27 Sept, Octagon, Stoke-on-Trent

TWO TONE REVOLUTION Fri 27 Sept, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI Fri 27 Sept, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THE HEMPOLICS Fri 27 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DOMINO SUGAR Fri 27 Sept, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

AUDIOGENIKA Fri 27 Sept, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

I.M.I.V + BRUISES Fri 27 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

WSTR Sat 28 Sept, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CANNIBAL CORPSE + MUNICIPAL WASTE + IMMOLATION + SCHIZOPHRENIA Sat 28 Sept, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MARY SPENDER Sat 28 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

THE FATHER TEDS Sat 28 Sept, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

SERIOUSLY COLLINS Sat 28 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

SHAM 69 Sat 28 Sept, The Robin, Bilston

SLADEST Sat 28 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION Sat 28 Sept, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE DRIFTERS Sat 28 Sept, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

RAMMLIED Sat 28 Sept, The Station, Cannock

THE UK ROCK SHOW Sat 28 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

THE SPECIALS LTD Sat 28 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

PET SHOP BOYS, ACTUALLY Sat 28 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

AUDIO THIEVES Sat 28 Sept, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

A NIGHT IN THE CANYON Sat 28 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW Sat 28 Sept, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

UNF + LESS THAN HOLLOW + WE THE NORTH Sat 28 Sept, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by JS Bach, Curzon, Volans, Gershwin & Liszt, Mon 23 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: MOZART & SHOSTAKOVICH Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Fabien Gabel (conductor), Nikolaj Henriques (bassoon) & Jason Lewis (trumpet). Programme includes works by Mozart, Simpson & Shostakovich, Wed 25 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PIANO SPOTLIGHT Featuring young Pianists from the Walsall area, Wed 25 Sept, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

LUNCHTIME MUSIC Featuring Matthew Pandya (baritone), Yeeching Lau (piano) & Elliot Gaston Ross (percussion). Programme includes works by Hahn, Liszt, Holst, Finzi & more..., Mon 30 Sept, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

TBC Thurs 26 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ED GAMBLE Thurs 26 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

ED BYRNE Thurs 26 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

JOSH PUGH, MARK MAIER, JONNY AWSUM & JOE KENT-WALTERS Fri 27 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROBIN MORGAN Fri 27 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Fri 27 Sept, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

JACK DEE Fri 27 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

KANE BROWN Fri 27 Sept, Bilston Town Hall



ALFIE MOORE Fri 27 Sept, William Aston Hall, Wrexham

NISH KUMAR Sat 28 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOSH PUGH, MARK MAIER, JONNY AWSUM & COMIC TBC Sat 28 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DOM JOLY Sat 28 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

KATHERINE RYAN Sat 28 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ALFIE MOORE Sat 28 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

SHIRLEY & SHIRLEY Sat 28 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

JOHNNY COLE Sat 28 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TOMMY SANDHU, JANINE HAROUNI, PRINCE ABDI, RUNI TALWAR & ESHAAN AKBAR Sun 29 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MAX GOSH Sun 29 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JO ENRIGHT Sun 29 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

JENNY HART Sun 29 Sept, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

TOMMY SANDHU, JANINE HAROUNI, PRINCE ABDI & DON BISWAS Sun 29 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Comedy

FERN BRADY Tues 24 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

HAL CRUTTENDEN & COMICS TBC Tues 24 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

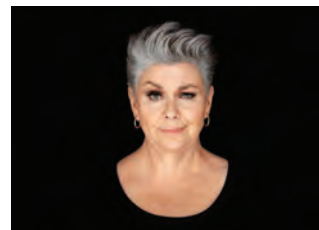
REGINALD D HUNTER Wed 25 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms



NEIL DELAMERE Wed 25 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

CHRISTOPHER HALL Wed 25 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAWN FRENCH Wed 25 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent



LLOYD GRIFFITH Wed 25 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MATT BRAGG Thurs 26 Sept, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JOSH PUGH, SAM SERRANO & COMICS

Theatre

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN Hit musical based on the award-winning 80s movie. Featuring a smash-hit soundtrack including songs by Madonna, Bon Jovi, Cyndi Lauper and Blondie... Mon 23 - Sat 28 Sept, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

WHEN VINCENT MET JOHN Imagine what would have happened if Vincent Van Gogh and John Lennon met... Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

AN INSPECTOR CALLS Award-winning production of JB Priestley's post-war masterpiece, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Sept, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

PEOPLE SHOW: THE DIVINERS 'Electrifying and strangely topical' story in which four broken AI entities try and make sense of the world but no longer have the correct information, Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Sept, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

FOUR FELONS AND A FUNERAL GOYA Theatre Company present a feel-good musical concerning four dysfunctional friends on a road trip to scatter their mate's ashes, Thurs 26 - Sat 28 Sept, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

AFTER ALL Heartfelt exploration of death rituals and the role that dancing might play in healing, Fri 27 Sept, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

DEATHS AT SEA Murder-mystery performed by Our Star Theatre Company, Fri 27 Sept, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

AUTIN DANCE: THE GIANT WHEEL A moving performance inspired by 'the beauty, power and impact of people from different walks of life coming together'... Fri 27 Sept, Walsall Arboretum

CONFETTI The story of Felix, an uptight and unlucky-in-love 'mate of honour' at his best friend's wedding, Sat 28 Sept, Dorothy Parkes Centre, Smethwick



ALL MY SONS The Crescent Theatre Company present an amateur version of Arthur Miller's classic play, Sat 28 Sept - Sat 5 Oct, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

WONDER BOY Ross Willis' heart-warming and inspiring story about the power of communication, Mon 30 Sept - Wed 2 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur version of the Disney classic, Mon 30 Sept - Thurs 3 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Kid's Theatre

THE GRUFFALO Production based on Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved picture book, Tues 24 - Wed 25 Sept, Lichfield Garrick

CHARLIE COOK'S FAVOURITE BOOK Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's children's book is brought to life with puppetry and enchanting songs, Fri 27 - Sun 29 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Dance

ROMEO & JULIET Northern Ballet bring Shakespeare's love story to life, accompanied by Prokofiev's glorious score, until Sat 28 Sept, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

upon-Avon

BRB: LA FILLE MAL GARDÉE Comedy, ballet and clog dancing combine in Birmingham Royal Ballet's staging of Sir Frederick Ashton's classic, Wed 25 - Sat 28 Sept, Birmingham Hippodrome



LORD OF THE DANCE - A LIFETIME OF STANDING OVATIONS A revival of the iconic dance extravaganza, Mon 30 Sept - Sun 6 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

PSYCHIC SALLY Evening of mediumship, Mon 23 Sept, The Alexandra, Birmingham

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SHREWSBURY

SUN 18
MAY 2025

THE GIRLS BATHROOM PLANET TOUR Internet favourites Sophia and Cinzia bring their chart-topping podcast to the stage, Mon 23 Sept, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ANDALUCIA - FLAMENCO The award-winning Daniel Martinez Flamenco Company present a 'spellbinding production' in which classical music meets the passion and fire of flamenco, Tues 24 Sept, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

RACHEL TUCKER: THE 'I'M HOME TOUR' Storytelling and vocals from the West End and Broadway star, Wed 25 Sept, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

SHAUN RYDER - HAPPY MONDAYS, AND FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS, AND SUNDAYS Spoken-word show presented in support of Shaun's new book. Expect 'an entertaining evening of wild tales and improbable truths', Wed 25 Sept, Stourbridge Town Hall

BOX OF FROGS Evening of high-octane, improvised comedy nonsense, based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 25 Sept, 100 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, B'ham

FLEETWOOD MAC BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring a cast of West End singers and a live band, Wed 25 - Thurs 26 Sept, Lichfield Cathedral

MR. B - THE GENTLEMAN RHYMER An upbeat cabaret show featuring 'cleverly twisted rap at its most inoffensive', Fri 27 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

COME WHAT MAY Be transported to the dazzling world of the Moulin Rouge in the company of AJ & Curtis Pritchard and a cast of West End performers, Fri 27 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY BANGERS LIVE! Join James B Partridge for a nostalgic evening of singalong tunes to take you back to your primary school days, Fri 27 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield



A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES: THE SOUNDTRACK OF YOUR LIFE Live concert featuring hits from Back To The Future, Top Gun, The Greatest Showman, Moulin Rouge and many more... Sat 28 Sept, Dudley Town Hall

MAGIC & MARVELS One-man extravaganza presented by multi-skilled performer Michael Jordan, Sat 28 Sept, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

BAGA CHIPZ: THE MUCH BETTA TOUR!

Expect crass blue comedy, live vocals, dazzling costumes, drunken antics and the tale of a single mum from the Black Country who became 'one of the nation's best-loved stars', Sat 28 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SHIRLEY & SHIRLEY: GERIATRIC MUMS Observational humour, sketches and impressions from the award-winning double act, Sat 28 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BOTTOMS UP: BURLESQUE & CABARET The creme de la creme of the cabaret world take to the stage to surprise and delight... Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

SU POLLARD: STILL FULLY CHARGED One-woman show in which the Hi-De-Hi star recounts stories from her 50 years in showbiz, Sun 29 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE ROCK ORCHESTRA BY CANDLELIGHT A band of 14 classical musicians unleash enchanting melodies alongside powerful walls of distortion, Sun 29 Sept, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE REAL KEN DODD: THE MAN I LOVED Exclusive documentary film revealing the very private man behind the much-loved comic genius. An in-person Q&A with Lady Ann Dodd follows the screening, Sun 29 Sept, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

Talks & Spoken Word

AN AUDIENCE WITH KEVIN KEEGAN Sky Sports presenter Pete Graves hosts an evening with the footballing legend in which he chats about his career, Mon 23 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WHY BRITAIN ROCKED Elizabeth Sharkey delves deep into Britain's history to explore how rock became roll and took over the world... Wed 25 Sept, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

16 YEARS OF THE INBETWEENERS: IN CONVERSATION WITH JOE THOMAS A stripped-back, relaxed and inclusive event during which the comic actor takes questions from the audience and talks about his role in the award-winning Channel Four comedy, Wed 25 Sept, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AN AUDIENCE WITH JOHN SIMPSON An exclusive evening in which the journalist & broadcaster gives an insight into his life as one of the most distinguished foreign correspondents of our time, Thurs 26 Sept, Theatre Severn Shrewsbury

DR LOUISE NEWSON: HORMONES & MENOPAUSE, THE GREAT DEBATE Dublin-based comedian Anne Gildea accompanies Dr Louise as she aims to challenge misconceptions about



The Rock Orchestra by Candlelight - Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

menopause and advocate for better healthcare for women, Fri 27 Sept, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Events

LEEK TEXTILE WEEK A week of community-focused activities celebrating Leek's rich textile heritage, Mon 23 - Sun 29 Sept, various venues in Leek, Staffordshire

VICTORIAN BLACKSMITH EXPERIENCE DAY Experience the life of a Victorian blacksmith, Thurs 26 - Fri 27 Sept, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

GUIDED TOUR OF SHREWSBURY - SHUTS & PASSAGES Walking tour through some of Shrewsbury's famous shuts and passages, Fri 27 Sept, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

BONGO'S BINGO COUNTRY SPECIAL The original bingo rave sensation, Fri 27 Sept, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SLADE FANS CONVENTION Experience wall-to-wall 1970s hard rock and glam in the spiritual birthplace of the Black Country Fab Four, Fri 27 - Sat 28 Sept, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

PEAKY BLINDERS NIGHT Enjoy a night of entertainment courtesy of the Peaky Blinders, Sat 28 Sept, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



GINGER AND SPICE FESTIVAL Community festival exploring the town's culinary heritage and social history, Sat 28 Sept, Market Drayton, Shropshire

THE MURDER OF EDWARD CATES A 1920s-inspired night that will test your detective skills and immerse you

in 'a thrilling whodunnit experience', Sat 28 Sept, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

GIN TRAINS Try a selection of gins on a luxury train journey, Sat 28 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

STAFFORD RAILWAY CIRCLE ANNUAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION Model railway exhibition featuring traders and demonstrations, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, Staffordshire County Showground

PICK YOUR OWN PUMPKINS Hop on the trailer ride to pick your pumpkin from the patch, then carve it in the new indoor carving barn, Sat 28 - Sun 29 Sept, Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge

CERAMIC GREEN MAN WORKSHOP Make your own Green Man from clay, Sun 29 Sept, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP - RAILWAY REENACTMENT Pick up tips and tricks with Lee Chapman of Chappers Photography, Sun 29 Sept, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring more than 500 stalls packed with thousands of for-sale collectables, Sun 29 Sept, NEC, Birmingham

HOME RUN HOUNDS: THE GREAT GLOBAL GREYHOUND WALK Annual dog-walking event that brings together greyhounds, lurchers and other sighthounds, Sun 29 Sept, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

HOME RUN HOUNDS: THE GREAT GLOBAL GREYHOUND WALK Annual dog-walking event that brings together greyhounds, lurchers and other sighthounds, Sun 29 Sept, Beacon Park, Lichfield

ANYTHING GOES DIESEL GALA Special event in which every available diesel will be in action on a frequent timetable, with photo opportunities and the chance of some rare diesel haulage, Sun 29 Sept, Telford Steam Railway

Enter now at whatsonlive.co.uk to be in with a chance of bagging one of these fabulous prizes!



Win! A night out at The Arcadian for two - courtesy of Birmingham Comedy Festival!

Birmingham Comedy Festival is back next month - and to celebrate, we're giving one lucky reader the chance to win a night out for two at the city's Arcadian centre!
The fabulous prize includes a dining experience at Indian restaurant

Blanc NRI Birmingham, free parking at The Arcadian and two tickets to enjoy The Birmingham Comedy Festival Breaking Talent Award 2024 event at The Glee Club on Thursday 10 October...
Competition closes Friday 27 September



Win! A premium family ticket to see Evolution: The Drone Light Show at Edgbaston Stadium!

An epic drone show telling the story of time and space is making its debut at Edgbaston Stadium next month. Providing audiences with a greener alternative to fireworks, Evolution: The Drone Light Show offers a front-row view of the world's biggest stage (the sky!) and features more drones than ever before. The narrated story starts with the explosive birth of the universe and then journeys

through life on Earth. Tailored for all ages, the event also provides accessible seating options and facilities for those with sensory needs. We have a premium family ticket to give away to the show on Saturday 26 October...
Competition closes Monday 14 October

For your chance to WIN! with What's On, visit:
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2024 LIVE TOUR

JOE McELDERRY
UP CLOSE & PERSONAL
THURS 10 OCT

FRI 11 OCT
Tasha Leaper as MADONNA

SAT 12 OCT
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DIRTY DC

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The Pink Princess Party
FEATURING AURORA FROM 'SEMI-PRIMA' PLUS SPECIAL GUEST: 'Barbie' RAPUNZEL FROM 'TANGLED'

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