

Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 453 OCTOBER 2024

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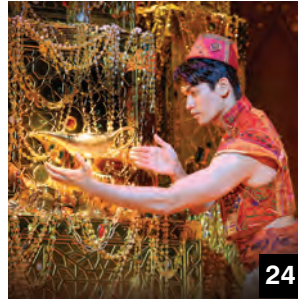
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What's On

MEDIA GROUP

Jessica Clixby jessica@whatsonlive.co.uk Subscriptions: subscriptions@whatsonlive.co.uk 01743 281714
Contributors: Graham Bostock, Diane Parkes, Patsy Moss, Steve Adams, Sue Hull, Reggie White, Sue Jones, Chris Eldon Lee

Publisher and CEO: **Martin Monahan** Accounts Administrator: **Julia Perry** julia@21stcd.com 01743 281717

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A seasonal feast at the Good Food Show Winter

The Good Food Show Winter makes a welcome return to Birmingham's NEC next month.

Running from Thursday 21 to Sunday 24 November, the show is 'packed with exciting features and new additions, ensuring there's something for everyone'.

Celebrity chefs making a contribution to the event include, among many others, Tom Kerridge, James Martin, Nadiya Hussain, Michel Roux and John Torode. There's also a Christmas Kitchen, Good Food Kitchen and the Let's Talk Good Food Stage for even more foodie inspiration. For further information, visit goodfoodshow.com/winter, where you can also buy tickets.

Villains Unleashed at Stourbridge Town Hall

An hour-long show featuring 'spine-tingling songs, chilling choreography and devilish party dances' is stopping off at Stourbridge Town Hall this Halloween.

Titled Villains Unleashed, the show is described by its publicity as 'devilishly fun' and visits the venue on Halloween itself, the 31st of October. To find out more about the production, check out boroughhalls.co.uk

Moving Worlds at the Glasshouse Arts Centre

Stourbridge's Glasshouse Arts Centre is this month hosting an evening of dance on film, presented by choreographer & filmmaker Rosemary Lee.

The featured movies have been selected by Rosemary with the intention of 'reflecting our humanity and unspoken connection to each other and the environment'.

Taking the title Moving Worlds, the event runs for two hours and is being held at the venue on Thursday 24 October. For more information, visit bctouring.org.uk

Shakespeare classic reworked at the Garrick

A reworking of Shakespeare's most popular comedy will be Lichfield Garrick Theatre's next in-house production.

Written by Elly Brewer and Sandi Toksvig, The Pocket Dream is inspired by A Midsummer Night's Dream and will star Lichfield panto favourites Sam Rabone and Ben Thornton. The production runs at the Garrick from Thursday 24 April to Saturday 3

May. Tickets for the show are available by visiting lglt.ink/pocketdream

Windrush drama touring to Midlands theatres

A new one-man drama about the Windrush scandal is coming to the Midlands as part of an autumn tour. Rodriguez King-Dorset's The Windrush Secret shows at Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn on Friday 18 October, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, on Saturday the 19th, and Lichfield Garrick Theatre on Friday 1 & Saturday 2 November. Visit individual venue websites for more information and to book tickets.



Hot wheels! Monster Trucks back in the region

Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live is coming to the Midlands next year.

The show's publicity reveals that the 2025 edition - taking the theme Glow-N-Fire - will not only feature 'the level of fun and excitement that fans have come to expect', but also offer 'an added fiery twist'. The touring show visits Birmingham's Utilita

Arena on Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 April.

For further information and to purchase tickets, find the event on livenation.co.uk

Michael and Alfie to make a Midlands stop-off

Singers Michael Ball and Alfie Boe will celebrate their 10th year of making music together in 2025 - by making music together!



The much-loved duo visit Birmingham's bp pulse LIVE venue on Friday 11 April in support of their new album, Together At Home, which is released next month (Friday 8 November). To purchase tickets for the show, visit livenation.co.uk

Bonfire fun coming to Weston Park next month

Weston Park's annual Bonfire & Fireworks Night makes a return on Sunday 3 November. The event features 'two dazzling firework displays, one giant roaring bonfire, delicious street food and a fairground for all ages'. Tickets are available at weston-park.com



Gareth's songs from the movies...

Gareth Gates will visit the Potteries next spring with a brand-new show.

The 40-year-old singer, who rose to fame when he took the runner-up spot in TV talent contest Pop Idol back in 2002, stops off at Stoke-on-Trent's Victoria Hall on Thursday 6 March, presenting a concert in which he sings love songs from the movies.

To find out more and purchase tickets, visit the website atgtickets.com/stoke



Bjorn Again in the Midlands in 2025

Abba tribute act Bjorn Again have announced an Autumn 2025 tour, including stop-offs at two Midlands venues.

The long-established counterfeit stars - the only Abba tribute act to be endorsed by the Swedish supertrouper themselves - will visit Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Saturday 27 September and then return to the region, at Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre, on Sunday 19 October. Tickets for the shows can be booked at cuffeandtaylor.com

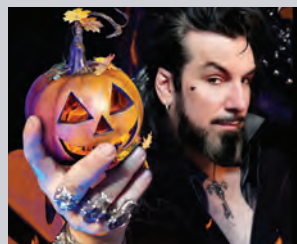


Vampires looking for Eternal Love at Shrewsbury theatre

Steve Steinman will next year celebrate 22 years of his epic Vampires Rock chronicles by touring a brand-new rock musical.

Taking the title Eternal Love, the production is set in 'a fantastical dark world filled with vampires', where the Vampire Baron - played by

Steve himself - is searching for his next bride... The show will visit Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn from Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 March. It then stops off at Birmingham venue The Alexandra on Thursday 27 March.



Newhampton Halloween party

'Modern-day renaissance man' Aurelio Voltaire is visiting Wolverhampton's Newhampton Arts Centre on Wednesday 6 November with his Halloween Forever UK touring show. Aurelio's song output includes a collection of murder ballads and numerous bawdy songs about Star Trek and Star Wars. To find out more, visit newhamptonarts.co.uk

Peaky Blinders ballet among the hit shows heading to the Midlands

Hit West End productions SIX, Calamity Jane and Mary Poppins are among the highlights of Birmingham Hippodrome's 2024/25 programme of shows.

The three much-loved musicals are joined in the line-up by, among other shows, Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story and numerous dance productions, including Acosta Danza's Cuban Eclectico and the critically acclaimed Peaky Blinders: The Redemption Of Thomas Shelby. Tickets for all shows can be booked at birminghamhippodrome.com



Spooktacular Halloween fun at Tamworth venue

Tamworth's SnowDome is welcoming back two spook-tacular events for Halloween this autumn half-term holiday. Running from Friday 25 October to Sunday 3 November, Treats & Chills and Spooks & Slide will see the venue's ice skating and snow fun park areas undergo a spinechilling transformation. For further information about the events and to book tickets, visit the venue's website at snowdome.co.uk

Santa Trains to return at Severn Valley Railway

Severn Valley Railway will once again be running its ever-popular Santa Trains this Christmas. Departing on selected dates from Kidderminster town station, the trains will take passengers on a scenic journey to Arley, where families can enjoy a professional panto show and say hello to Father Christmas. To find out more about the heritage railway's festive-season attractions, visit the website at svr.co.uk



Alderford to become a festive winter wonderland

Alderford Lake is to be transformed into a winter wonderland for Christmas (Thursday 21 November - Saturday 5 January). The popular Shropshire visitor attraction's festive-season offering includes a brand-new ice bar, the 'magical' Santa Island Experience, and an undercover ice rink. Further information is available by visiting alderford.com/christmas



Shropshire's biggest beer festival back in the Quarry

Shropshire Oktoberfest returns to Shrewsbury's Quarry Park this month (Friday 4 & Saturday 5 October). The county's biggest beer festival, the event features local brewers, drinks producers and street-food trucks, all presented against a backdrop of 'live music and lederhosen'.

The popular event also promises to serve up a barrel of laughs, with Sam Avery, Tony Vino and MC Keiran Lawless performing in the comedy tent on the Saturday. Carpool karaoke and a silent disco also feature. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit shropshireoktoberfest.co.uk

Sharing a joke as hit show visits Shrewsbury

A play which has twice been a hit in Edinburgh is visiting Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn next month (Tuesday 12 November) as part of a UK tour. Written by the multi-award-winning Dan Freeman, *A Joke* tells the story of three strangers who appear in the middle of nowhere with no memory of who they are. As they try to work out the mystery of their existence, they begin to suspect that they may in fact be characters in a joke... For further information and to purchase tickets, visit theatresevern.co.uk

Sunday the 19th). For more information and tickets, visit Strictlycomedancinglive.com

BRB's second company to return with a new show

Birmingham Royal Ballet's second company, BRB2, which 'brings together some of the world's very best young dancers', returns next year with a brand-new show. Created by BRB Director Carlos Acosta, *Diaghilev And The Birth Of Modern Ballet* premieres at Birmingham Hippodrome on Tuesday 6 May. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

Motsi Mabuse set to join Strictly Live judges

The live tour of *Strictly Come Dancing* will be foxtrotting its way around the country again in the new year - and for the first time ever, Motsi Mabuse will join fellow TV judges Shirley Ballas, Anton Du Beke and Craig Revel Horwood for the on-the-road version of the show. The *Strictly Live* Tour will also feature the welcome return of Janette Manrara as host. As usual, the tour kicks off in Birmingham (Utilita Arena) in January (Friday the 17th to

Bookings now live for Stoke's Spitfire simulator

Bookings for the Spitfire simulator at Stoke-on-Trent's Potteries Museum & Art Gallery are now live. The simulator, commissioned and owned by Operation Spitfire, offers an authentic-feeling cockpit and features 'realistic controls, stunning visuals, and an immersive environment'. To find out more and make a booking, visit the venue's website: stokemuseums.org.uk

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Goldie Lookin Chain to play Loopfest 2025

Popular Shrewsbury festival Loopfest has announced that Goldie Lookin Chain (GLC) will play the town's St Mary's Church on Friday 2 May.

Straight out of Newport and best known for classics *Guns Don't Kill People Rappers Do* and *Your Mother's Got A Penis*, GLC will be joined at the 2025 edition of the festival by Coach Party, who will play Shrewsbury Castle on the same day.

Tickets are available now at loopfest.co.uk



Celebrating 30 years of sweet success...

Cake decorating and sugar craft show Cake International will celebrate its 30th birthday at the NEC in Birmingham at the start of next month (Friday 1 - Sunday 3 November).

Highlights of this year's get-together include academy workshops, live demonstrations and a Best In Show competition.

To find out more and book tickets, visit the event's website: cakeinternational.co.uk



Ghost tours return to museum & art gallery

The 'darker side' of Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery is set to be revealed this Halloween (Thursday 31 October) courtesy of a special 'ghost tour'.

Ghost guide Robert Elliott will lead participants underground into 'a chilling and creepy network of rooms and prison cells usually closed to the public'.

Tickets for the event can be booked by visiting the website ticketsource.co.uk



Faye and Kevin bringing Chicago to Stoke-on-Trent

Coronation Street actor Faye Brookes and former *Strictly Come Dancing* favourite Kevin Clifton will star in a new touring production of *Chicago* when it visits the Potteries next month.

Kander & Ebb's hit musical - which features a host of show-stopping numbers, including *Razzle Dazzle*, *Cell Block Tango* and *All That Jazz* - stops off at the Regent Theatre in

Stoke-on-Trent from Monday 25 to Saturday 30 November. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit atgtickets.com/stoke Chicago then returns to the region in 2025 when it will play Birmingham theatre The Alexandra (14 to 19 April) and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre (23 to 28 June). Casting for the latter two shows is yet to be announced.

Local kids' poet creates his own YouTube Channel

Wolverhampton-based writer Ian Billings has created a brand-new YouTube channel dedicated to children's poems.

Tiddley Pom Telly mainly features work written by Ian himself, with 'a few classics thrown in'. The channel is the latest venture in a career which has so far seen Ian publish 36 children's books and write or direct more than 50 pantomimes.

known as Johnny Rotten, will play Dudley Town Hall on Saturday 18 October, presenting his show, *I Could Be Wrong, I Could Be Right*. The evening event will see John taking audience questions about his career.

To purchase tickets, visit boroughhalls.co.uk



Gardeners' Question Time at the Arboretum

One of BBC Radio Four's most iconic programmes, *Gardeners' Question Time*, is paying a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire this month. The Tuesday 22 October stop-off will see two episodes of the much-loved show being recorded in front of a live audience. To find out more, visit thenma.org.uk/events

Punk idol John Lydon back at Dudley Town Hall

Punk icon John Lydon will visit Dudley next autumn as part of a national tour. The former Sex Pistols frontman, also

Walking Dead artist in bid to save local arts venue

Shropshire comic-book artist Charlie Adlard, best known for his work on *The Walking Dead*, has unveiled his latest project in a bid to help save Shrewsbury's popular arts & entertainment venue The Hive from closure.

Charlie, who has also worked on titles including *Spider-Man*, *Batman* and *Judge Dredd*, is launching a new book called *Coffee Shop* on Friday 4 October at the town's Soden Collection gallery. All proceeds from sales of the book will go towards saving The Hive.



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FROM DANCE FLOORS TO EARTHQUAKES

Black Country Touring returns with a show to go wild about.

A new show touring the Black Country this autumn is asking audiences this question: what does the idea of ‘wild’ mean to you?

To create the work, innovative theatre company Black Country Touring posed the question to people from all walks of life across the Black Country. And, says writer Rochi Rampal, they received a myriad of responses.

“When the artistic directors, Stephen Johnstone and Frances Land, talked to me about the concept of what this show could be, I thought, what a big question: What is wild?

“It kind of instantly conjures up a million things in my head. So I was excited at the challenge of capturing what wild could mean to all of our audiences, but also the prospect of how that could be really meaningful for everyone who comes to see the show - especially if everyone’s understanding of what wild means is so diverse.”

And that proved to be the case. The team spoke to people in a host of different groups and settings, from community gardens to the police force, and from mountain rescue teams to city dwellers who experience their concept of wild on the streets or in the local clubs.

“It’s important to us as an organisation that the diversity of experience, and lives and journeys of people within the Black Country, are absolutely reflected in the shows we make,” says Rochi. “So we talk to as many people as we can possibly fit into any research phase. We treat it a bit like an oral-history-collection project, so we did interviews with people from all reaches of life within the Black Country.”

Rochi, who has worked with Black Country Touring on shows for more than a decade, says the responses were wide-reaching.

“People talked about going on holidays, to the mountains, to the beach. We’ve talked to so many people about their experience of the sea. People have talked about how important the sea is in terms of not just when you go on holiday but the need to escape and to face yourself at the shore’s edge. People have talked about standing at the sea in raging storms and jumping into the sea to swim in that.

“And wild doesn’t have to mean standing on top of a mountain. Wild, for many, particularly in a landlocked area, means letting loose on a dancefloor, the adrenaline

of being chased on city streets, or earthquakes in Dudley.”

The challenge for Rochi and the team was then to condense all of those stories into a 75-minute show.

“My involvement as writer in the room of actors and musicians and directors is to offer somewhere where everybody’s ideas can come together and be shaped into a script,” she says. “Black Country Touring is entirely collaborative, so I’m not the writer of the play; I’m just a writer in the room, and we are all the creators. That’s my favourite way of working; it speaks to the interests of the company and how important it is to reflect as many voices as possible.

“Everybody has got a story to tell, so there are lots of stories that people have wanted to share with us - but within that, there are so many commonalities. That’s the magic of working in this way - that within all of our different experiences as humans, there is so much that connects us and holds us together.

“We’ve looked at ways to allow these stories to speak to each other. So, for instance, you might find that one person’s experience of getting stuck on a mountain chimes with another person’s experience of being lost in city streets at night.”

Those responses have been based in different people’s lives and experiences.

“When we spoke to our mountain-rescue volunteer, his frame of reference was very much his experience of living and working near the mountains. But then, when we spoke to someone from one of the community gardens in Smethwick, his frame of reference was racist behaviour in the 1980s. Whilst we were sat in an allotment community garden, he didn’t talk about wild meadows, he talked about the feeling of being chased through city streets at night and how that made him feel wild.”

The show, which tours to libraries, arts centres and community spaces this month, combines the stories with recorded and sung soundscapes.

“We’re having digitally produced soundscapes, and we also have a community choir, which is led by an amazing singer-songwriter: Katy Rose Bennett. The idea is that the choir will also provide the soundscape, so there will be live sound textures as well as songs surrounding the audience.

“The show will be in traverse, so that the

audience will be either side of the action and the choir will be around that. That is to allow the audience to be as transported as possible into the worlds of the show. We can’t take the audience to the sea, but we hope to create a sense of being in a raging storm, or lying down and looking up at the stars at night.”

Rochi hopes Wild will light a spark in audience members and inspire them to consider their own ideas and responses.

“The show features such a wide range of stories, and we’re interested in inviting people to think about where they sit amongst those experiences. What does wild mean to us, and what is it that we need from wild behaviour or the wild world?

“The story within the show is, what are the wider things that connect us? So the stars which go back and back and back further than we can imagine. The sea that reaches beyond us. Nature finds a way, nature carries on - and experiencing that will help the audience feel connected to other people with different stories.”

The company hope to encourage people from all backgrounds to come and experience Wild.

“This show is for you if the word wild says something to you and you wonder what it means to you. When we did our research, there wasn’t a single person who didn’t have an answer to that question, and that’s what’s so exciting about it. Everybody brought their own experience to that word because it does mean something to everybody. Whether we want more wild in our lives and feel we’re not getting it, or if we live a wholly wild existence, it is completely personal.

“The show will be celebratory about human nature, and how much we rely on our world to keep us going; how we, as humans, confront the wild; how we battle with it; how we live alongside it; how we need it. There are no answers, but maybe when the audience leave our show, they might be thinking about that in a different way - what is wild to them?”

.....

Wild shows at venues across the Black Country from Wednesday 16 to Saturday 26 October. The recommended age for audience members is 10-plus. Entrance is ‘pay what you can’, with a suggested price of £6 per person. For further information visit bctouring.org.uk/wild

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Classical music from across the region...



Image credit: Julia Alukhova

BBC Philharmonic: Elgar's Cello Concerto

Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 11 October

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke-on-Trent, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concert-goers with works from its impressive repertoire. The orchestra's latest visit to the Potteries

sees conductor Ben Gernon joined by soloist Anastasia Kobekina (pictured). The concert programme features Elgar's nostalgic and hugely popular Cello Concerto, Schubert's unfinished Eighth Symphony and Mozart's 41st, longest and last symphony, nicknamed Jupiter.

London Concertante: Vivaldi's Four Seasons by Candlelight

Shrewsbury Abbey, Sun 6 October

While it's a given that they take the business of musicmaking extremely seriously, there's certainly nothing stuffy about London Concertante.

Indeed, 50 percent of people who attend a performance by this 33-year-old chamber orchestra are first-time classical music concert-goers - a statistic which speaks volumes for the ensemble's commitment to remaining at all times light-of-touch and refreshingly accessible.

The Concertante here present a candlelit performance of Vivaldi's much-loved Four Seasons.

Ex Cathedra: Bruckner, Palestrina & Allegri

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 13 October

Ex Cathedra here make a welcome Town Hall return, collaborating with the wind & brass sections of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to present a concert in celebration of the 200th anniversary of Anton Bruckner's birth.

Alongside the Austrian composer's majestic motets - *Locus iste*, *Ave Maria*, *Ecce sacerdos*, *Inveni David* - the concert also features his monumental Mass in E Minor, widely considered to be the most spiritual of his seven masses.

Completing the programme is Palestrina's *Missa sine nomine* (*Kyrie*, *Gloria*) and Allegri's *Miserere*.

Lichfield Concert Band

Lichfield Cathedral, Sun 20 October

Comprising more than 50 members, performing pop, swing and classical, and playing regularly in a variety of local concerts across the West Midlands, the award-winning Lichfield Concert Band here offers audiences the chance to enjoy an evening of familiar and much-loved Proms music.

Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 23 October

Making a long overdue return to Birmingham - it's more than 30 years since their last visit - Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo present a concert of blockbusters including Akira Ifukube's *Dance Of The Seven Veils* and Rachmaninov's *Second Symphony*. They're joined by free-thinking violinist Christian Tetzlaff (pictured), who completes the programme with a performance of Beethoven's *Violin Concerto*. Sebastian Weigle conducts.



Classical Chills feat. Irena Josifoska

Stourbridge Town Hall, Sun 13 October

The brilliance of acclaimed Czech composer Antonín Dvořák comes under the spotlight when the Gig Caritas Orchestra make a Town Hall stop-off this month.

The well-established local ensemble are joined for the event by award-winning cellist Irena Josifoska, who will be displaying her phenomenal talent via a performance of Dvořák's *Cello Concerto* in B minor. The programme also features Dvořák's *Ninth Symphony* in E minor - *From The New World* - and Glinka's *Ruslan And Ludmilla Overture*.



STILL ROCKIN'



MANBand The Musical premieres at Theatre Severn

Heralded as ‘the perfect show for anyone who’s ever been to a pub’, MANBand The Musical is premiered by Bloomin’ Good Productions at Shrewsbury’s Theatre Severn this month. Set in a Shropshire pub, it promises to go down a treat. What’s On takes a look at what’s brewing...

They say you are never too old to go back on stage (just ask the Rolling Stones!), and new musical MANBand proves the point. Why should the young have all the fun?

MANBand is the jolly, feelgood, comical story of four music-loving regulars (Baz, Kev, Eric and Frank) in a Shropshire pub who decide to have one last shot at the Big Time with their repertoire of retro-style songs. Being far too old to be a Boy Band, they decide to form a Man Band. But, with an average age of 70, they are also inclined to get grumpy. Can they cope with the pace? Will they stay off the booze long enough to master their dance steps? Do they really have to wear make-up? And what will happen when the women in their lives find out?

There are many egotistical hurdles to stardom, but these septuagenarian wannabes are tenacious. As their first song goes:

*“What are we thinking?
It’s ‘cus we’re drinking
It’s been so long
Since we wrote a song
It would be great
To rejuvenate
Back on the stage
At our old age
But we could do it!!!”*

One of the first new musicals created especially for Theatre Severn since it opened in 2009, MANBand began life in a pub. Actor/writer Tim Baker was having a quiet pint (or two) in The Three Fishes in Shrewsbury when an old badminton adversary, Pete Hanlon, and his wife Jo walked in. Pete and Jo had spent a dozen years in a professional function band. Tim had been writing scripts for almost as long. None of them are in the first flush of youth. How about a collaboration that celebrated the comic idiosyncrasies of so-called ‘maturity’?

Pete and Jo have written a suite of 21 catchy new songs in the style of some of the musicians they admired in their youth: The Four Seasons, Smokie, Hot Chocolate, Bonnie Tyler, The Police, Fleetwood Mac and Frankie Goes To Hollywood. They stress these are brand-new songs - but they like to think their heroes would have recorded them if only they’d been written at the time. Naturally, many of them are love songs; like First Love, which might have tempted The Temptations...

*“Friday night at the dance
It would never be the same
Our eyes met across the room
I just had to know your name
You were my first love
You’ll always be my last
Whenever I think of you
My heart it beats so fast”*

Tim’s storyline has the ‘famous four’ making an appearance on the BBC’s Midlands Today programme in their search for stardom - but, needless to say, the interview isn’t a complete success! This sequence was filmed in June in the Midlands Today studio at the Mailbox in Birmingham. And it’s ‘hats off’ to the BBC for playing along, and particularly presenter Joanne Malin (herself a trained actor and all-round game girl) for learning her lines, throwing herself wholeheartedly into the spirit of the show, and allowing herself to be lightly humiliated in the process.

Director Beverley Baker has pulled together the crème de la crème of Shropshire’s performing talent for this show. The cast includes experienced comedy actors, seasoned Shakespearians (letting their hair down), four young lads (who play the wannabes as their frolicsome younger selves), some period Go Go Dancers (recruited from the Viv Kelly School of Dance & Theatre) and even a former Benny Hill girl. For whilst the show is called MANBand, there are some cracking parts for women. Somehow the men acquire a domineering female manager, Bryony, whose signature song sounds a lot like Tina Turner...

*“My opinion’s always right
And I don’t lose no sleep at night
By telling people what I think
Sometimes brings them to the brink
I’m an Alpha Male female
I’m the boss.”*

Meanwhile, there’s a wonderful Bonnie Tyler-style power ballad for Kev’s younger sister, Marg, who also feels she should have made the grade...

*“I should have gone to stage school
But I became a mother and wife
When I’m alone I think what might have been
Had my world taken a different turn
From the one I’m living in
It should have been me
And I’m so tired of dreaming
How it would have been”*



The situation comes to a head when the women wreak revenge.

The extensive choreography is in the hands of the highly experienced Chrissie Purslow. Inspired by the routines of The Temptations, The Four Tops and other Motown acts, Chrissie has the cast (of 20) performing dances that echo the era. There’s a nod to the Twist, and the MANBand’s jazz-box steps are reminiscent of The Shadows’ famous walk.

But amidst all the comedy and chaos, above all MANBand is a tribute to the joys of having a few miles on the clock, the crankiness of ‘getting on’ and the bliss of having a good ‘local’ to go to - where, as the musical affirms, all life can be found.

So, the whole show is set in and around a fictional Shropshire pub, created on the stage of the Walker Studio. As you might imagine, this took considerable on-site research. But the MANBand team also consulted experts from the Three Tuns Brewery in Bishops Castle, who have provided props, advice and sponsorship support. Rumour has it there will be a specially brewed MANBand beer on tap in the theatre bar, to be sipped whilst enjoying the show. You may just have to put your (plastic) glass down to clap along to the grand finale, though...

*“Everybody give a hand
Give a hand to the ManBand
So raise your glass
To the friends of your past
And the new ones we’ll meet through the years
Welcome all ... ‘cus all life is here!”*

MANBand The Musical shows at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, from Thursday 10 to Saturday 12 October. For further info visit manbandthemusical.co.uk

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KERRY ELLIS

The Queen of the West End looking back on her illustrious career
Wednesday 16 October



MARTIN FRY

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Live music from across the region...

Iron & Wine

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 29 October

Inspiring a wide range of descriptions, including sophisticated, fancy-free and whimsical, Sam Beam's latest album, *Light Verse*, is his seventh, and his first solo offering since 2017's *Beast Epic*. Talking about the new release, Sam - aka Iron & Wine - said: "*Light Verse* is a form of poetry about playful themes that often uses nonsense and wordplay, and it's my first official Iron & Wine comedy album!... "[Nah], just kidding..."



Seth Lakeman

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 12 October

Starting out in the 1990s alongside brothers Sam and Sean, Seth Lakeman boldly stepped into the solo spotlight in 2002, immediately finding an audience with debut album *The Punch Bowl*.

He then made even more of a splash with his sophomore offering. Released in 2004, *Kitty Jay* bagged him a Mercury Music Prize nomination and cemented his reputation as a performer of extraordinary talent.

His Wolverhampton stop-off this month comes as part of an autumn tour to celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Kitty Jay*.



Salt House

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 13 October;
Rhydycroesau Village Hall, Oswestry, North Shropshire, Wed 16 October

Generating a sound inspired by the landscapes of their respective homes in the Scottish Highlands, Northumberland and Shetland, Ewan MacPherson, Anna Hughes

and Jenny Sturgeon - aka Salt House - are thoughtful and innovative interpreters of both old ballads and contemporary songs, brilliantly blending heartfelt vocal with instrumental interplay. They visit Shropshire as part of a short autumn tour.

Steve King Big Band

Cathedral Hotel, Lichfield,
Wed 16 October

Returning to Lichfield for the first time since appearing at the city's Jazz & Real Ale Festival a good few years back, the Steve King Big Band tackles a wide range of musical styles, performing everything from Goodman to Goodwin. Vocals are provided by US singer Lynn Dawes, who's so far appeared on four of the band's albums and proved a big hit with UK audiences.

featuring a number of tracks from Genesis album *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*, which is this year celebrating its 50th anniversary.

Steve Hackett

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 7 October;
Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 13 October

Guitar star Steve Hackett is of course best known for his telling contribution to Genesis' classic 1970s catalogue of albums - but he's also enjoyed plenty of success fronting his own touring band. Steve and the boys - and special guest Amanda Lehmann on guitar and vocals - are stopping off in the Midlands this month to present a show that brings together the best of Genesis with a selection of Steve's solo work. And as an extra-special treat, he'll be

Dasom Baek

Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury,
Wed 23 October

Composer and improviser Dasom Baek creates ground-breaking and modern music rooted in traditional Korean instrumental performances... She appears in Shrewsbury this month alongside *Leaving*, a left-of-centre electronics project which sees Erasers' Rupert Thomas conjure mood-driven synthesiser compositions.



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ON THE ROAD...

Comedian & writer Maisie Adam is currently zig-zagging the country with new show *Appraisal*, stopping off at three Midlands venues along the way. We recently caught up with the So You Think You're Funny award winner to chat about her new show, her new hair-do, football and plenty more...

Let's get the hair out of the way quickly. It's now blonde and longer at the back, where you previously shaved it.

It's strange. I was getting quite a lot of tweets saying 'love the new hair' when I was on the Last Leg in March. But I dyed it blonde last summer for the Women's World Cup. I guess a lot of telly stuff I've filmed since then hasn't gone out yet, so this was probably the first time that people would see this hair.

And not to sound like a little old man, but I've been growing it out the back; it's too cold to have my head exposed when I'm walking back from gigs. I fancied a change. A lot of people thought I'd gone blonde for the Barbie film, which was annoying, as it was actually doing it like Paul Gascoigne!

Are you keeping it like this for the tour?

I better had - I've had my photos done now!

Why is your show called *Appraisal*?

I'm now in my fifth year of being able to say that this is my job, and the title came from a conversation with a friend who said that normally, when anybody in his company has been there for five years, they come in for an appraisal. That doesn't really exist in comedy, but maybe this tour is that. Each night you're going in for a meeting with people who are going to sit the other side from you and let you know how you're doing. Hopefully the audience will be impressed and I'll keep my job.

Tell us about the pre-tour warm-ups...

You've got ideas in your notepad, and you don't really know how they're all going to form together. But I really like work-in-progress shows for that reason, because you can share a little secret with the audience like 'I think I've got an idea, and I want to know if I'm barking up the wrong tree.' I like that vulnerability. It gives you a different thrill to the one you get when you're out on tour, where you're like, 'I think I've got a brilliant show and I want you to hear it.'

Is there a theme?

It's about everything that's been going on for me in the last couple of years. I got married in June 2023, then played Soccer Aid at Old Trafford the next day. That's a weekend that I don't think many people will be able to say they've had. Then, three days later, you're trying out jokes in a room above a pub, and a day after that you're hosting the UK Mattress Awards. Sometimes you have to stop and go 'What on earth is happening here?'

Do you feel under more pressure with your second tour?

With the first big tour there are no expectations, whereas perhaps there are with this one. People might come expecting me to talk about certain things, so it's a puzzle that you've got to work out - which, again, is why the work-in-progress is really fun; I enjoy trying to work out that puzzle.

Who would you say your typical fans are?

Before my first tour, I'd been tour support for bigger comedians like Jason Manford, Josh Widdicombe and John Bishop, and one of the things I clocked was how different every comic's audience is. So I was nervous but really excited to see what my crowd was going to be like. Was it going to be people who heard me talk about women's football on Radio Four, or people who like the woman with the weird hair on *Mock The Week*? I guess now it's those same things plus a new specific audience from the Big Kick Energy podcast.

Big Kick Energy, with Suzi Ruffell, has been a big hit. How did that come about?

When the Women's World Cup was on, there was no comedy entertainment show about football. It's the fastest-growing sport in the world, and it felt like all of the talk around it was clinical and technical, which doesn't do much for new fans. I thought I'd do a podcast about 'what if I knew somebody who was enthusiastic but doesn't know the ins and outs'. And that's Suzi. We came up with this idea that I could get Suzi into football during the World Cup, and afterwards we got loads of messages going 'please continue it'. So we carried on and within eight months won Sports Podcast Of The Year at the Broadcast Sport Awards.

Do you still play for the football team you talked about in your first touring show?

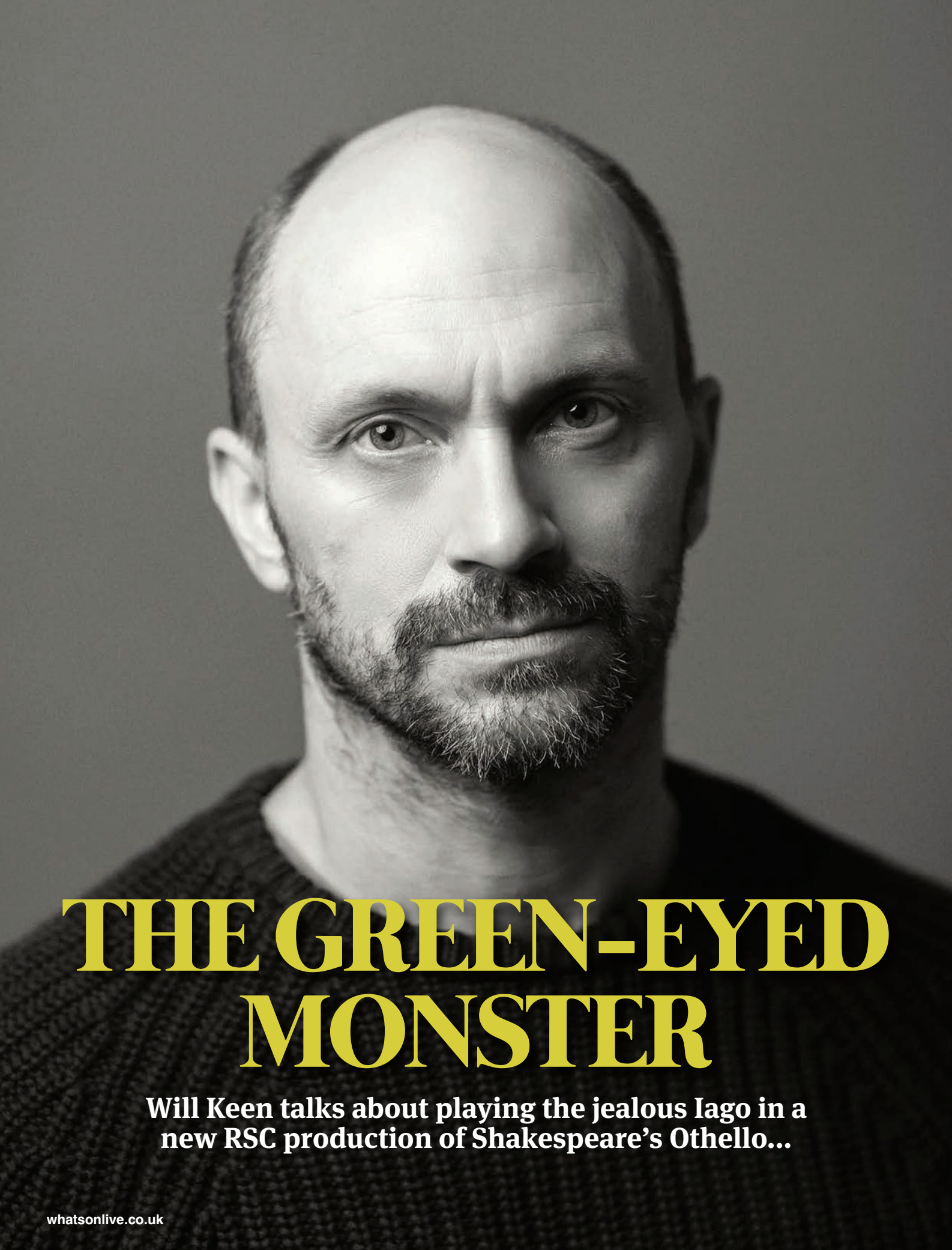
Yes, the Brighton Seagals. I love it. Last week I was filming *QI* and they got me a car home, but I asked for the car to take me straight to training. I got changed as soon as we'd finished filming. The driver dropped me off, and I was in a full face of make-up, which was running everywhere by the end of the training session.

What are the best and worst things about touring?

The best thing is getting the opportunity to gig to a roomful of different people every single night. You can't walk into a theatre in Guildford expecting to do what you did in a comedy club in Cardiff. It's going to be two completely different gigs with two completely different audiences... The worst thing is travelling on your own. You do start to feel a bit 'Alan Partridge' staying in hotel rooms. I went through my phone camera recently and it was just pictures of hotel-room doors with the numbers on; you'd be away for seven nights in a row, you'd get to the hotel, and suddenly you're thinking 'What number room am I in?' That's how I remember the room numbers. But if that's the shittiest part of touring, it's pretty good.

Maisie Adam brings her *Appraisal* tour to Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on Friday 4 October; Birmingham Town Hall (part of the Birmingham Comedy Festival) on Tuesday 8 October; and Royal Spa Centre, Leamington, on Saturday 2 November





THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

Will Keen talks about playing the jealous Iago in a new RSC production of Shakespeare's Othello...

A new production of Othello opens this month at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The play swings from political intrigue to tight domestic drama, telling a tale of jealousy and exploring the way in which an individual can be manipulated towards destruction. Will Keen, who is playing Iago - Othello's officer, and a man intent on orchestrating the title character's downfall - recently spoke to What's On about the power of a great Shakespearean tragedy...

Can you give us a brief outline of the story of Othello, Will...

I'll try to spoil as little as possible... Othello is a Moorish general in Venice, a very distinguished fighter and statesman, and he falls in love with a young woman called Desdemona. Meanwhile, one of his 'ancients' [his standard-bearer, Iago] wishes he had been promoted to a better position. For various reasons of jealousy, Iago decides to create a plot which will frame the person who's been put in the position of authority that he wishes he could have, and destroy Othello's marriage.

It's really a story about how you manage to infect a mind with jealousy, and what the effects of jealousy are. How, once that seed has been planted in your head, it can become so overpowering that it matters more to be proved right in your suspicion - for your ego to be proved right - than for the thing actually to be true, even to the cost of your own destruction.

Tell us about Iago, the character you're playing...

Well, it's difficult to say a take really, because I'm still getting to know him, and I don't want to become too prejudicial. I would say that, as far as I can make out, he is somebody who feels that the universe has betrayed him in some way. The form of that betrayal is partly to do with his belief that his wife has cheated on him, and is partly to do with a very deep spiritual sense of betrayal, which I think is a sort of theological despair. I think that Othello is almost a god-like figure, and Iago feels a bit like Lucifer - like God has turned away from him.

In terms of developing your own interpretation of the character, what is your starting-point and what are your influences?

Well the director is Tim Carroll, who I've worked with several times in the distant past. I've always loved his playfulness as a director. What we're doing is a lot of games around the verse - it's actually incredibly rich language. You're given a huge amount of options as an actor, and in a way, one's job is to try and keep as many options open for as long as possible - not to be shutting things

off. It's a judicious job deciding when and where you take decisions and where it's possible not to take decisions. The starting point, I suppose, is being as irreverent and as respectful as possible, in terms of the preconceptions that we have for the play and the characters.

How well do you know the play - have you ever performed in Othello before?

This is my first time. I do know it quite well, just because it's a play that I've always loved and have read several times throughout my life. The amazing thing about these huge plays is how they seem to transform themselves according to your life experience. They become different animals. When you meet them at different moments in your life, they mean completely different things to you.

Is there anything about the production that you feel will make it refreshingly different from a 'standard' version of Othello?

Well, I think the way Tim approaches text is fantastically rigorous and fantastically releasing. It really does listen to the heart of the play, without having any kind of prejudices about what it represents - what it *has* represented culturally, what it represents culturally [now]. It's a very pure way of listening to the play, which just allows it to reverberate in the audience's mind. The audience draws their conclusions. Of course, what's so brilliant about Shakespeare, like all great writers, is that he's not providing any answers - he's only putting questions out there. I think Tim is very good at revealing the questions.

Where does the play stand in comparison with Shakespeare's other tragedies?

I'd put them all equal first, really - it's one of the great plays of world literature, without any shadow of a doubt. It's an astonishingly tight domestic drama. It feels like a very modern psychological drama. It's amazingly imaginative, it's incredibly rich, but it's different. If Macbeth is a play of the imagination, this is a play of the mind.

If you could choose one Shakespearean character to play who you haven't already

played, who would it be and why?

I think probably, if I could only play one other Shakespeare character in my life, it would be King Lear, which I think is as complete and terrifying an account of the experience of humanity and approaching death as I can imagine.

What would you like an audience member who's new to Shakespeare to take away from watching this latest version of Othello?

I would always want them to feel that they had been spoken to intimately about their own lives, and their own responsibilities, and their own treatment of other people - their treatment of *themselves* and other people. I think that this play talks about that as well as any other piece of literature I've ever come across.

You're making a return to the RSC to play Iago - what do you think makes the RSC special and different, other than its obvious world-renowned status in terms of the works of Shakespeare?

I'm semi-returning. It was a co-production I did before, between the Lyric Hammersmith and the RSC. I've never done a full, pure RSC production - so in that sense, I'm a debutant! I'm thrilled, of course. I'm absolutely delighted, very honoured and privileged. I think there's a wonderful thing about leaving London and playing in a space which is dedicated to a particular imaginative universe - the imaginative universe of Shakespeare. And being surrounded by the countryside which inspired that imagination. I think that, obviously, the RSC has an amazing history of people who started it up and have worked for it over the years. It's lovely to feel a part of a continuing tradition. There aren't many playwrights who deserve to have a company made in their honour, but Shakespeare certainly does.

.....
Othello shows at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon from Friday 11 October until Saturday 23 November

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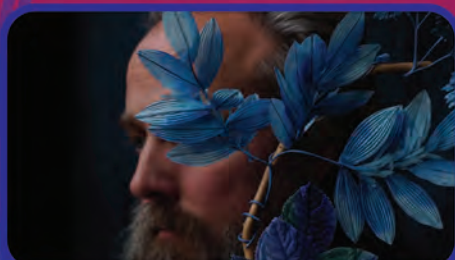
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Comedy previews from across the region...

Laura Lexx

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Thurs 10 October

Laura Lexx's arrival on the stand-up scene was impressively explosive; within just one year she'd reached the finals of both the Chortle and Paramount student competitions and confidently set out her stall for a successful career on the UK comedy circuit.

"My on-stage persona is fairly close to the off-stage me," explains Laura. "It's quite chatty, excitable and energetic, and I don't really like putting people down."

She visits the Midlands this month with Slinky, a show which is being publicised as 'effortlessly heartwarming, hilarious about motherhood, and fearless with the front row'.



Kiri Pritchard-McLean

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 26 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 14 November; Stratford Playhouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 15 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 16 November; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 24 November

Hailed for her dynamic stand-up and admirable commitment to chiselling out high-quality humour from even the thorniest of subjects, Kiri Pritchard-McLean makes a welcome return to the circuit with Peacock, a show about her recent experience of becoming a foster parent.

"Lots of people don't know how [fostering] works," Kiri recently told Entsouthwales, "and I think demystifying things can often open doors. People have preconceptions about who and what it takes to be a foster carer. I think a stand-up comedian who's about to do a 100-date tour blows a lot of those [preconceptions] out of the water!"



Lucy Beaumont

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 20 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 14 November; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 21 November

No less a comedian than the highly praised Arthur Smith once described Lucy Beaumont as 'the next Victoria Wood in the making'. Others have called her 'a riot' and praised her 'devastating comic timing'.

For Lucy's part, though, she's just grateful that performing no longer feels like an out-of-body experience.

"I started out acting but quickly realised I needed to try something else," says the Hull-born comic, who was last year diagnosed with ADHD and recently amicably separated from husband and fellow comedian Jon Richardson. "I've had all sorts of humorous things happen to me in my life, so I thought it made sense to see how I'd do at being funny."



Rachel Parris

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 10 October

Rachel has passed this way before, not only as a solo performer but also as a founder member of smash-hit improv show Austentatious, a comedy play presented in the style of Jane Austen.

An award-winning comic whose name has appeared on the BBC's Hot Talent List, Rachel is touring to the Midlands with Poise, a show that sees her doing more of what she does best: bringing together a stand-up routine with a smattering of highly amusing songs.



Felicity Ward

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sat 28 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 10 November

A much-loved regular at the Edinburgh Festival, New South Wales-born comedian Felicity Ward is this month set to attract a whole new army of followers when the Australian version of The Office, in which she top-bills, arrives on Prime Video (Friday 18 October).

She stops off in the Midlands this month and next with I'm Exhausting, a show described by its publicity in the following way: 'Birth, Quorn, fingering, and transition lenses - there's no matter too big or too small that Felicity can't get worked up about.'



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Comedy previews from across the region...

Sooz Kempner

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 13 October; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Fri 22 November

Combining material from her last two Edinburgh Fringe offerings, award-winning comedian Sooz Kempner says her new show is for anyone who remembers the year 2000 or had big dreams as a kid. "Now, almost a quarter of a century later, things feel eerily similar," says Sooz. "I'm looking at class through the lens of doing my GCSEs in 2000 at a state comp, while knowing all about dressage, politics, horses, EastEnders and the Millennium Bug."



Daniel O'Reilly

Lichfield Garrick, Wed 16 October; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Sat 12 October; Walsall Arena, Fri 1 November; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 30 November

Daniel O'Reilly reckons his life has resembled a rollercoaster ride - and he's stopping off in the Midlands this month to tell his fans all about it. O'Reilly originally made his name a decade ago as the character Dapper Laughs, but an ill-advised joke about rape put the brakes on what had seemed to be a promising career. Now he's out on the road performing under his own name and urging comedy lovers to bag themselves a seat for his upcoming gigs: "For those of you who missed out on Oasis tickets but still wanna see a loudmouth ex-coke-head working-class millionaire with a habit of rubbing people up the wrong way - my tickets are now on sale!"



Jason Byrne

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 11 October

Watching Jason Byrne on stage has been likened by one reviewer to watching footballer Lionel Messi: it's not a matter of 'if' the magic will come, but 'when' and 'how often'.

Jason this month visits the Midlands with brand-new offering No Show, a 'full-on, double-up, gasping-for-oxygen-hilarious' experience which has so far met with plenty of positive reviews.

"Everyone's welcome at the show," says the 52-year-old Dublin-born comedian. "Unless you're under 14 years of age - in which case, come back when you're older."



Adam Kay

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 3 October; Malvern Theatres, Fri 18 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 28 October

After watching an Adam Kay performance, Stephen Fry declared, "This made me very, very happy."

Numerous sell-out years at the Edinburgh Fringe and tens of millions of YouTube hits later, former obstetrician and gynaecologist Adam is this month visiting the Midlands with latest offering Undoctored, a follow-on from previous smash-hit stage show This Is Going To Hurt.



Jonny Cole

Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Thurs 10 October; Halesowen Town Hall, Sat 19 October

"It's difficult for me to put my brand of comedy into an industry-standard soundbite," says local comedian Jonny Cole. "There are a lot of people who love Black Country humour and who'd love to go into a rough & ready Black Country pub just to listen to the banter, and that's exactly what I do. I've absorbed Black Country humour the whole of my life. I take it out of that pub, where people wouldn't dare go in case they got their teeth knocked out, and I put it into a safe, controlled environment where they can enjoy it."

Rhod Gilbert

The Halls Wolverhampton, Thurs 10 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 17 & Fri 18 October; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 15 - Sat 16 November

Welsh funnyman Rhod Gilbert has acquired a huge and still-growing following thanks to a high-energy brand of grumpiness that marks him out as one of the top comedians of his generation.

He's returning to the Midlands this month with Rhod Gilbert And The Giant Grapefruit, a show in which he discusses his recent battle against stage four head and neck cancer.

Rhod's best-loved gags include: "In the Bible, God made it rain for 40 days and 40 nights. That's a pretty good summer for Wales... That's a hosepipe ban waiting to happen."

Laura Smyth

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Wed 16 October; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 18 October

British Podcast Awards 2023 Best Comedy nominee (for Bang On It) Laura Smyth is asking how 'living your best life' is actually achieved. And here's a heads-up from her: "It don't involve Instagram!"

Laura is stopping off in Coventry with an evening of new material that sees her mugging off the madness of all manner of subjects - from childhood, school and parenting, to marriage, social media and chasing her dreams.





DISNEY DELIGHT



Adam Strong and Desmonda Cathabel talk about starring in the touring stage version of Disney's Aladdin, which flies into Birmingham Hippodrome this month...



A stage adaptation of Disney’s 1992 animated film version of Aladdin has been delighting audiences for more than a decade. A high-flying spectacle boasting comedy, colour and a memorable musical score, the show is currently doing the rounds as part of its first-ever UK tour and stops off in Birmingham this month. What’s On recently caught up with two of the production’s cast - Adam Strong, who plays the evil Jafar, and Desmonda Cathabel, who stars as Princess Jasmine...

Actor Adam Strong shares his dressing room with a cuddly toy. It’s an official Disney character from the film Aladdin which dates back to when Adam was a child growing up in Sunderland. But Adam didn’t want a cuddly Aladdin or Princess Jasmine; he wanted his very own baddie - the evil royal vizier, Jafar.

Adam has been intrigued by the character ever since he first saw the animation. And now he is living his dream, playing Jafar on the UK tour of the stage musical, which comes to Birmingham Hippodrome this month.

Based on the hit Disney movie, Aladdin The Musical premiered in the US in 2011 and features well-known songs from the film, including A Whole New World, Friend Like Me and Arabian Nights, as well as new tracks created for the stage production. The show has played worldwide to audiences of more than 14 million people and enjoyed a run in the West End from 2016 to 2019.

“I first saw the film as a child,” Adam recalls. “It came out when I was about four years old. I’m half Middle Eastern, and Aladdin was the first time I’d seen someone on the screen who kind of looked like me.

“And as much as I saw myself in Aladdin, I wasn’t interested in him. I just gravitated towards Jonathan Freeman’s interpretation of Jafar. And now to be playing Jafar is just amazing.

“Ironically I have a teddy-bear Jafar in my dressing room that I’ve had since the movie came out. He’s in quite good condition. Bearing in mind it was 1992, he’s quite old now, and he comes with me on every tour I’m doing. And I also have many figurines which I get sent, which I love.”

Adam trained at London School of Musical Theatre and has appeared in a host of top shows - including We Will Rock You, Rock Of Ages, Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and Jesus Christ Superstar - as well as pantomimes and concerts in theatres across the UK.

“I’ve always gravitated towards the villain. I’ve played quite a few now. I like those roles because it’s so far removed from who I am. And you get to have so much fun playing the villain.”

Adam has wanted to play Jafar ever since he first caught the acting bug as a child, but it’s a role which for a long time proved elusive.

“I always thought I was too young. When it was in the West End, I was never considered for the role because it’s normally played by a much older actor - but thankfully our director, Casey Nicholaw, and the team took the chance on somebody younger.

“I mean, we’re all actors, so I can portray older. For Jafar, I wear a lot of make-up to make me look not just older but gaunt and creepy.”

For Desmonda Cathabel, taking the role of Princess Jasmine is also an acting dream come true.

“You grow up watching Disney movies and Disney animation,” she says, “so you’re really familiar with the characters. It feels like you’re almost a part of that world. So to be actually playing the part feels very natural. With knowing Aladdin, knowing Princess Jasmine, knowing the Genie, knowing Jafar, knowing the magic carpet as you grow up, you just accept that that’s a magical world you strive to be in. I know these characters. I grew up with them. I knew them a lot.

“And for me it’s special because the original singing voice of Princess Jasmine was Lea Salonga, and she is a South Asian icon. She was the first one to do it, and for me to be in this position as another South East Asian woman - although I’m Indonesian rather than Filipino - is quite unbelievable. I’ve always looked up to her, and now I get to play the same role that she played.”

Born in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, Desmonda trained at the Royal Academy of Music in London and has gone on to take roles in shows including Miss Saigon, From Here To Eternity and Stephen Sondheim’s Old

Friends. She is keen to ensure her Jasmine is a feisty and independent princess.

“I think Jasmine has always been a strong character, even among the princesses that come within that Disney renaissance in the 1990s. And with our show in particular, she has more to show. She has more dialogue, more solo songs, and we get to see her more than we see her in the animation.

“I’ve found it really easy to play Jasmine because she feels like a modern girl. She has modern wants and needs - although actually these things aren’t necessarily really modern. Girls have always had these aspirations, and that’s how we’ve got to where we are today; because of all the women before us wanting and having these aspirations.”

Having grown up with Disney princesses, Desmonda is also very conscious of the responsibilities that come with such an iconic role.

“Jasmine has always been that character for me. It’s just a real privilege to play because I know there are a lot of young children watching, of any age and gender, and they get to see this really famous princess, but they can see her as a real girl with real sides to her. She’s joyful but she’s also determined. She has vulnerability but also strength within her. It’s a really good role to play.

“With our production, we’re lucky to work with directors who really allow me to bring my own interpretation to Jasmine. They never said ‘You have to do it like this’ or ‘This is a Disney princess and you have to be a certain way.’ They really wanted me to bring my interpretation to the character, and that’s what I really love about it.”

.....
Disney’s Aladdin shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 9 October to Sunday 3 November



& Juliet Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 7 - Sat 12 October; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 22 April - Sat 3 May; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 12 - Sat 17 May

Premiered in 2019 and featuring a string of hits by Max Martin, & Juliet tells an alternative story of Shakespeare’s famous heroine. In sharp contrast to the original tale, this one sees Juliet realising that she *can* survive without Romeo - a revelation that prompts her to set off on her own journey, both in love and life.

The award-winning production, which has proved a massive hit across four continents, visits the Midlands this month with former X Factor winner Matt Cardle taking on the role of the Stratford bard himself.

“People will have assumptions because the show is about Juliet,” says Matt. “If you like Shakespeare and his plays, then great, you’ll come

along. But if you have any fear that it might be Shakespearean and you’re not into that, 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.

“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.”

Dear Evan Hansen

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 22 - Sat 26 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 1 - Sat 5 April

Olivier, Tony and Grammy award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen makes a welcome return to the Midlands. The show focuses on title character and high-school student Evan, a young man struggling with Social Anxiety Disorder, who has a therapeutic and self-intended letter stolen by classmate Connor Murphy.



When Connor later dies by suicide, Evan inserts himself into the boy’s past, a decision that leads to a series of lies and confrontational events...

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 22 - Sun 27 October; Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 4 - Sun 9 March

Everybody’s favourite flying car makes a welcome return to the region, complete with the Sherman Brothers’ memorable score and a high-energy cast headed by Adam Garcia, Liam Fox and RuPaul’s Drag Race UK winner The Vivienne (Hippodrome casting tbc). When eccentric inventor Caractacus Potts creates an amazing flying automobile, he uses it to take his family to the fictional country of Vulgaria. But all is not well in the European barony, where the sinister Baron Bomburst has decided to make children illegal... Truly Scrumptious, Toot Sweets, Hushabye Mountain and the Oscar-nominated title song feature among the show’s best-known musical numbers.

THE **Disney** CLASSIC ON STAGE



Aladdin

Wed 9 Oct - Sun 3 Nov

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ALISON HAMMOND **MATT SLACK**



Peter Pan

THE HIGH-FLYING PANTO ADVENTURE

Sat 21 Dec - Sun 2 Feb 2025

Touch Tour CAP R



Becoming Nancy

The Rep, Birmingham,
Wed 2 October - Sat 2 November

Acclaimed director & choreographer Jerry Mitchell looks set to add another triumph to his portfolio of hit shows when his latest offering receives its UK premiere at The Rep this month. Adapted from Terry Ronald's bestselling novel of the same name, *Becoming Nancy* finds gay teenager David Starr faced with a dilemma. He's been offered the role of Nancy in school musical *Oliver!*, but doesn't know whether to take it. While his friends and family all weigh in with their views, David is less than certain he's ready to put his head above the parapet... "I have a funny feeling that this show is going to be a huge success in the UK," says Jerry. "I've seen other shows like it, such as my own show *Kinky Boots*, or *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. These are shows that have a similar sort of leading character, with issues that I think are very much what's happening today."

Callings

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham,
Thurs 10 & Fri 11 October

Well-established theatre company Kabosh here take their audience back in time to the 1970s, to tell the story of how a befriending service was set up to support the north of Ireland's 'community' of hidden LGBTQ+ individuals. With a strong anti-gay feeling prevailing at the time, establishing the service proved to be no easy task...



Pride And Prejudice* (*sort of)

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 14 - Sat 19 October; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 29 October - Sat 2 November; Malvern Festival Theatre, Tues 21 - Sat 25 January; The Rep, Birmingham, Mon 3 - Sat 8 February; Lichfield Garrick, Tues 13 - Sat 17 May

A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, *Pride And Prejudice* (*sort of) has proved a winner with critics and audiences alike. Indeed, celebrity fan Stephen Fry has described it as an evening of "hilarity, romance, madness and utter theatrical joy". Alongside the raucously



irreverent but admirably affectionate retelling of Austen's rollercoaster romance, the 2022 Olivier Award winner also boasts a host of pop classics, including *Young Hearts Run Free*, *Will You Love Me Tomorrow* and *You're So Vain*.

Only Fools And Horses The Musical

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 21 - Sat 26 October; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 2 - Sat 7 December; Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 31 March - Sat 12 April

Become reacquainted with loveable rogue Del Boy in this touring version of the hit *West End* musical. Based on John Sullivan's classic BBC TV sitcom, the stage show is co-written by comedy legend Paul Whitehouse and John's son, Jim. Much-loved characters Rodney, Cassandra, Grandad, Boycie and Marlene are all present and correct, as are more than 20 'hilarious' songs and a re-worked version of Chas & Dave's iconic theme tune.

The New Real

The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon,
Thurs 3 October - Sat 2 November

"It's [about] two political consultants who have run a company together in America, split up rather acrimoniously, and end up on opposite sides of the same election in a faraway country. So it's a kind of grudge match thousands of miles away from home." So says David Edgar in talking about *The*

New Real, his epic new play for the Royal Shakespeare Company. "There's comedy in it," he continues, "but also it's a way of looking at how the new politics has been constructed, and how it's spread throughout the world."



Frankenstein

Lichfield Garrick, Tues 8 - Sat 12 October

Mary Shelley's classic gothic horror novel has inspired no shortage of films, but theatrical versions of the story, such as this one, are relatively rare. Tilted Wig have taken the 1818 original and played around with it. Setting their tale in the war-torn Europe of 1943, they take as their starting-point two women hiding from their past at what feels like the very end of the world... The production is not suitable for under-12s.



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Theatre previews from around the region



Dracula

Bridge House Theatre, Warwick, Tues 15 & Wed 16 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 14 - Sat 18 January; Lichfield Garrick, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 April; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 18 & Sat 19 April

Bram Stoker's Dracula is best known from its many and varied cinematic incarnations - but as theatrical productions like *The Woman In Black* have ably illustrated, a spine-tingling story of horror can work just as well on the stage as on the screen... Cue, the critically acclaimed Blackeyed Theatre's brand-new adaptation, a production which imaginatively blends Victorian Gothic with the contemporary... The company has deemed the show suitable for audience members aged 11 upwards.

Partition Of The Heart

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 October

Midlands Arts Centre commemorates the 77th anniversary of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent with this ground-breaking new show. A multi-disciplinary work of musical theatre, the production delves into 'a moment in history that continues to shape the lives of millions'.



A Steady Rain

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 16 - Sat 19 October

The notorious and gruesome Dahmer murders are the inspiration behind this tale of Chicago police officers Joey and Denny. When a domestic-disturbance call takes a turn for the worse, the lifelong buddies suddenly find themselves operating in a moral grey area inhabited by pimps, prostitutes and criminal lowlives... The show is an Old Joint Stock Theatre in-house production starring Steven Rostance and Graham MacDonnell (pictured).



The History Boys

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 8 - Sat 12 October; Malvern Theatres, Tues 15 - Sat 19 October

"I think I'd always wanted to write something about a charismatic schoolmaster, and that went back quite a long way," explains Alan Bennett in talking about his award-winning play, *The History Boys*.

The story unfolds in a boys' school in northern England in the 1980s. A young teacher named Irwin has been brought in to coach the pupils for the Oxbridge exam - but fellow teacher Hector believes instead in learning for its own sake.

"Realistically the person that parents would want teaching their child would be Irwin, as Irwin would get you into university," says Alan. "However, sentimentally their hearts would be with Hector, because he's the type of teacher everyone wants. Everybody always wishes they'd learned more poetry at school and had someone who would inspire them like that. And it's the fact that, in a way, I couldn't resolve this conflict in my head which made me write [*The History Boys*]." This new production is touring in celebration of the play's 20th anniversary.

Show & Tell

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tues 15 - Sat 26 October

Mention Alan Ayckbourn and a list of brilliant observational comedies springs readily to mind, the most famous among which - think *Relatively Speaking*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Bedroom Farce* - were penned way back in the 1960s and 70s. But the 85-year-old has written plenty more plays besides, including this latest (and 90th) offering, a 'delightfully dark farce' which celebrates theatre and lifts the lid on 'the performances we act out on a daily basis'.

As is often the case with his plays, Ayckbourn also takes the directorial reins.



Othello

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 11 October - Sat 23 November

Shakespeare's tragic tale of lost handkerchiefs, ruined reputations and mistreated wives has always been one of theatre's most powerful stories.

When Iago is overlooked for promotion by Othello, his Machiavellian mind turns to thoughts of vengeance. Othello's willingness to be led by the nose is all grist to Iago's mill, and fatal consequences ensue... John Douglas Thompson (pictured) stars as Othello.





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Theatre for younger audiences

**Mr Sleepybum**

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 27 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Wed 30 October; The Core, Solihull, Sun 10 November; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sun 17 November

With a nomination for best kids' show at this year's Leicester Comedy Festival to recommend it, not to mention a clutch of five-star reviews trailing in its wake, Mr Sleepybum is a show well worth checking out. The title character is a fella who has 'stupid, silly dreams' at night - and he's going to re-enact the whole lot of them for his sure-to-be-enthralled audience... The show runs for 45 minutes and is suitable for children aged between three and eight.

Awful Auntie

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 October; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 October

Fights, fights and friendships are the order of the day in this lively adaptation of David Walliams' much-loved story. At the centre of the tale is a young girl named Stella. The sole heir to Saxby Hall, she finds herself in danger of losing both her inheritance and her life when she comes up against her thoroughly unpleasant Aunt Alberta...

Produced by the team behind the hugely successful stage adaptation of Walliams' Gangsta Granny, the show comes complete with a very old car, a very large owl, a very small ghost and plenty of opportunity to enjoy a jolly good chuckle.

**The Baddies**

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 26 & Sun 27 October; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Tues 8 - Sun 13 April

Given the success of so many other stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's hugely popular stories (see, for example, The Smartest Giant In Town elsewhere on this page), it's a real no-brainer to mount a live version of The Baddies. The company behind the show is Freckle Productions, who've got plenty of form when it comes to brilliant stage adaptations of Donaldson's terrific tales. This one focuses on a witch, a troll and an ancient ghost who

love nothing more than being very, very bad... Expect your kids to laugh out loud.

Milkshake! Live On Holiday

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 28 October

The Milkshake! pals are heading off on holiday - and Midlands-based families are invited to join them for a fun-packed new adventure...

If you've watched the TV series and/or been to a previous live production, you'll already know what to expect from a Milkshake! show. If not, get ready for an event that promises lots of laughter, bucketloads of family fun, bags of audience participation and plenty of singing and dancing...

Dinosaur World Live

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 31 October - Sat 2 November; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 22 - Thurs 24 April

Dinosaurs are once again roaming the Midlands this autumn, thanks to this interactive show for all the family to enjoy. Youngsters get to meet a host of impressive prehistoric creatures - including, of course, every child's favourite flesh-eating giant, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. A special meet & greet after the show provides the perfect opportunity to make a new dinosaur friend.

**Curious Investigators**

Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Sun 13 October; Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent, Mon 21 October

Fancy inspiring your kids with a fun-filled and brain-stretching adventure? One Tenth Human's Curious Investigators is exactly that, presenting an inventive and engaging work of theatre for youngsters aged three to seven.

The story revolves around the characters of Scribble & Clipboard. Having discovered a mysterious egg hidden in the recycling rubbish, the pair then call on their young audience to help them rescue an unborn chick...

The Smartest Giant In Town

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 16 & Thurs 17 October; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 12 & Sun 13 April; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 April

Fierylight & Little Angel Theatre are the creatives behind this stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved story.

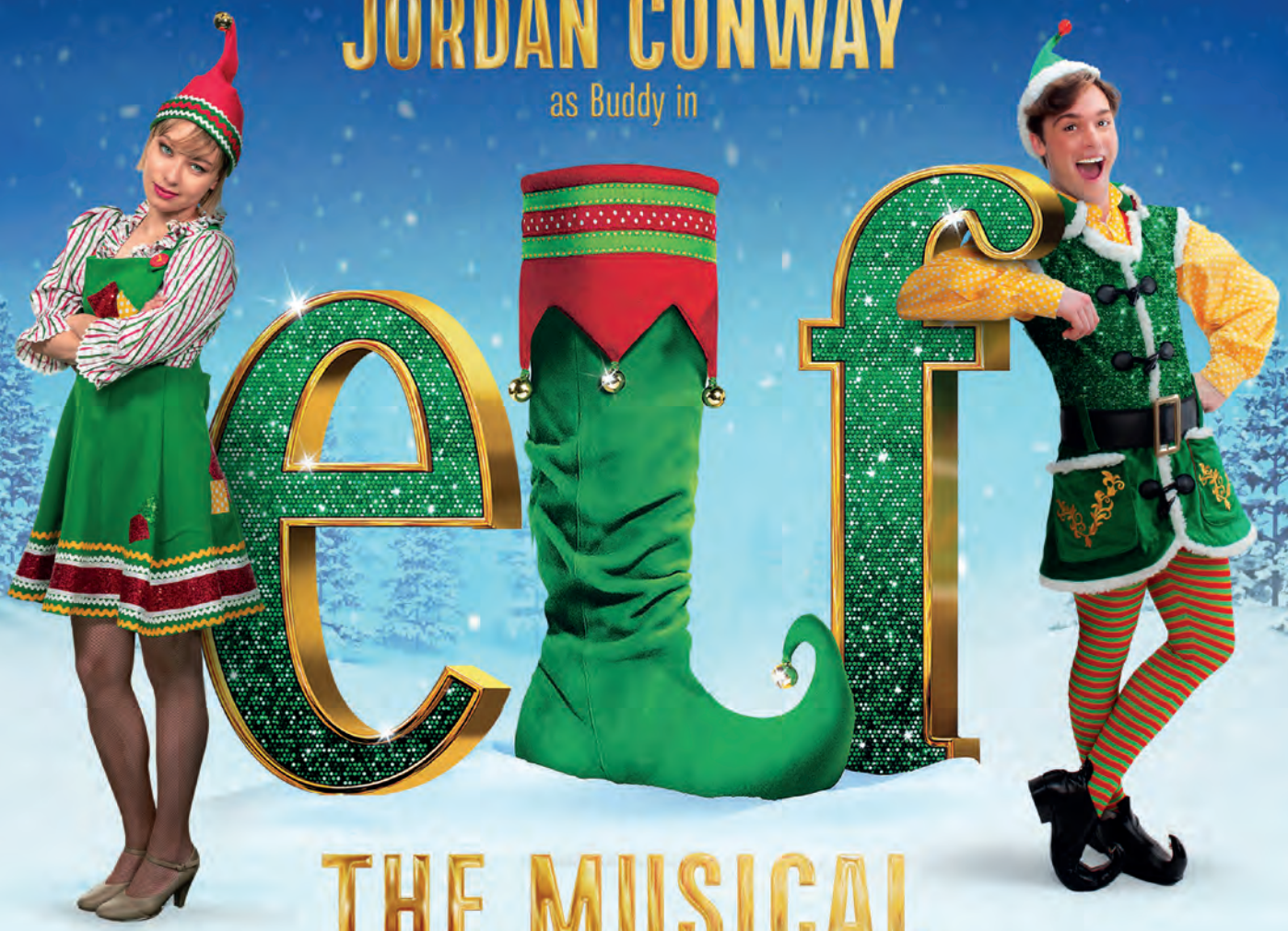
The title character is George, a giant who decides his scruffy days are a thing of the past and buys himself some oversized clothes. But when he encounters various animals needing his assistance - and, more particularly, his newly purchased items of clothing - George soon realises that it isn't clothes that maketh the giant but rather a gargantuan sense of generosity and a colossal warm heart...



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Cirque du Magique

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
Thurs 31 October - Sat 2 November

'Mind-blowing magic, world-class circus acts and death-defying stunts' are seamlessly brought together in this high-energy magic show, visiting Wolverhampton this month as part of a UK tour. Richard Cadell, Alex McAleer, Rebecca Foyle & Taylor Morgan are the stars of a production that promises to be 'no ordinary circus' and 'a journey into the extraordinary'... The recommended age to experience the performance is eight-plus. Kids younger than three will not be admitted.



Showstopper: The Improvised Musical

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,
Thurs 24 October

If ever there was a show worth seeing more than once, this is it - and not only because it's an Olivier Award winner.

Showstopper! is exactly what it says on the tin: a musical that's improvised (meaning that no two nights are ever the same).

The rotating cast of quick-witted performers take audience suggestions and then 'magic up' a brand-new comedy musical out of thin air, complete with tunes, lyrics, dances and harmonies.

It's clever stuff performed by clever people - and if audience reaction across the years is anything to go by, you can expect to be well and truly gobsmacked.



I Screamed A Scream

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Wed 30 October - Fri 1 November

Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre is promising 'a frightful night' this Halloween, courtesy of this special concert event paying homage to 'the best baddies of stage and screen'.

According to the show's publicity, audiences should brace themselves for 'barbarous ballads and horrible hidden gems, performed by some of the most frighteningly talented performers in the musical theatre industry'.

Jack Rhodes Magic

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 31 October

As might be expected, reaching the final of this year's Britain's Got Talent has done wonders for Jack Rhodes' burgeoning career. The talented magician is most definitely 'on the up', his winning blend of comedy, magic, and sheer, unadulterated nonsense having seen his online material amass more than 125 million views. He's visiting Birmingham as part of his first-ever live tour.



Queenz: Drag Me To The Disco

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 9 October;
Lichfield Garrick, Tues 22 & Wed 23 October;
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 31 January

Loved and adored by celebrities including Gary Barlow and Dawn French, Queenz is described as 'a trailblazing, life-affirming drag extravaganza that's currently taking the UK by storm'.

This latest show sees a selection of dazzling divas performing the biggest disco hits of all time - and if their previous production is anything to go by, there won't be a lip-sync in sight!

Carrie Hope Fletcher: Love Letters Live

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Mon 14 October

West End star Carrie Hope Fletcher hits the road again having toured her debut solo show, An Open Book, last year. This time out, she's taking a



look at the subject of love in its many and varied guises - from romantic to maternal, and unrequited to obsessive - all explored through a concert of musical theatre favourites. West End leading man Bradley Jaden joins in the fun.

Musicals: The Ultimate Live Band Sing-Along

Royal Spa Theatre, Leamington Spa, Wed 9 October; Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock, Fri 11 October; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Sat 12 October; Lichfield Garrick Theatre, Sun 20 October; Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sun 27 October; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 29 October

If you love musical theatre, appreciate the live-band experience and enjoy a good old-fashioned singalong, then this is the show for you...

Featuring memorable numbers from Mamma Mia!, Grease, Frozen, The Greatest Showman, Dirty Dancing, SIX and Hairspray (plus plenty more), the production provides the perfect opportunity to - as the show's publicity puts it - 'unleash those iconic lines, flaunt your funkier dance moves, and become part of the musical magic'.

The Return Of The Wicked Wizard Of Fizzog

Halesowen Town Hall, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 October

Having previously registered a big hit with a chuckleworthy parody of Wicked and The Wizard Of Oz, Black Country-based Fizzog are now returning with this reimagined version of that show.

An award-winning company suitably proud of their Midlands roots, Fizzog urge anybody who enjoys a good laugh to get along to this latest production. "Our shows are riotous, poignant and nostalgic," they say, "but most of all, they're hysterically funny."

STEPPING OUT

Steps' brand-new musical, *Here & Now*, will debut at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra next month



Iconic songs from pop group Steps' repertoire provide the backdrop for a brand-new musical premiering at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra next month. A celebration of love and friendship, Here & Now is helmed by former Birmingham Rep artistic director Rachel Kavanaugh. What's On recently caught up with Rachel to find out more about the new musical...

Midlands theatre The Alexandra will next month host the world premiere of new musical Here & Now.

Based on songs by pop band Steps, the show tells the tale of four friends - Caz, Vel, Neeta and Robbie - as they steer their way through a summer filled with happiness, heartache, hurt and humour.

Written by Shaun Kitchener and helmed by former Birmingham Rep artistic director Rachel Kavanaugh, the musical features a host of hit Steps tracks, including Last Thing On My Mind, Heartbeat, Tragedy, Chain Reaction, One For Sorrow and 5,6,7,8.

Rachel, who has directed West End blockbusters including Half A Sixpence and The Great British Bake Off Musical since her time at The Rep (from 2006 to 2011), says that the songs are the perfect backdrop to the show's storyline.

"Here & Now is a completely original story with new characters. It's not about Steps, but we use their songs to tell the story. It's brilliant for people who love Steps, but I think that even if you don't know the songs, you'll still enjoy it.

"Shaun has very cleverly interwoven the songs and the story. It's set in a British seaside town and is about four friends who set themselves a task over one summer. The thing that is incredibly appealing about it is that the characters are incredibly recognisable. They're just ordinary people with ordinary everyday dilemmas to do with having children, marriage breakups, commitment issues in relationships, not being able to tell someone that you've had a crush on them for ages, issues to do with sexuality - all kinds of stuff, but it's presented very lightly and is great fun."

The show also explores how friendship can bring together people with very diverse life experiences.

"Because it's set in a supermarket, and all kinds of people of all ages work in a supermarket, the friendship group is two early-middle-aged people and two younger people, all from different heritages, so it's incredibly inclusive in so many ways.

"We use the songs to express all these emotions, but it's mostly about those four people trying to achieve something for a party by the end of the summer. It's really

saying, seize the day, have fun, hold your loved ones tight, and have a good dance!"

Here & Now follows in the tradition of productions like Mamma Mia!, set to Abba hits, Greatest Days, based around Take That songs, and We Will Rock You, featuring Queen tracks. Rather than telling the story of the bands, these shows use their songs as a backdrop to a totally different story. And, says Rachel, the beauty of such shows is that they not only follow a narrative but also bring something new to the songs themselves.

"I think there's always a challenge, when the songs are very well known, to make people hear them in a new setting. In a musical, if we get it right, you hear the lyrics more. The audience will hear the songs they know and love - they might be sung in a slightly different way, but they will be recognisable as those pop songs - but what the musical should do is make you hear the words in a slightly new way because they are connected to a particular moment in a story.

"With good pop songs, you love them not just because they're musically catchy but because you connect to the sentiment in them. And lots of pop songs are about love: disappointed love, or hopeful love, or a celebration of love.

"Part of the task which these four friends are set over the summer is to do with love. So when one of them falls for someone, it makes great sense to sing Love's Got A Hold On My Heart, or Say You'll Be Mine, or It's The Way You Make Me Feel. They all work brilliantly at certain moments in the show. It's all about placement and about who sings them."

Featuring Claire Richards, Faye Tozer, Ian 'H' Watkins, Lee Latchford-Evans and Lisa Scott-Lee, Steps formed in 1997. They went on to have 14 top-five singles, release four chart-topping albums, sell 22 million records, and pack out arenas on 11 sold-out tours.

As co-producers of the musical, along with ROYO and Coventry-born pop legend Pete Waterman, the band have been heavily involved in the creation of Here & Now.

"I've been meeting with them at every stage of the development," says Rachel. "I met them first of all just to meet them. Then we did a workshop earlier in the year, which they all came to, and they give notes on the show. They've all got opinions and they are

incredibly supportive.

"I think people have been talking to them for a long time about doing a musical using their music, but it's never felt quite right until this proposal [was put] to them. And it's great to have Pete on board because his wisdom and knowledge of the music is extraordinary."

Beginning her career as an assistant director in the 1990s, Rachel has worked on countless shows - many of which were premiered at Birmingham Rep. These included A Doll's House with Tara Fitzgerald, Hapgood with Josie Lawrence, and Arthur And George, based on a true story set in the West Midlands. Her career has featured musicals and both classic and new drama.

"I really like doing new musicals. It's both the hardest and the most rewarding kind of theatre to do because there's so much at stake - but if you get it right, you can create something that's really joyous or really moving, or hopefully both.

"I also love Steps, and I think for people of my age the band have come round a second time. I think that's one of the very clever things about doing this musical now - that hopefully people of different ages will enjoy the music, and that parents will take their children, or groups of friends will go."

With her strong links to Birmingham, Rachel is delighted Here & Now will be premiering in the city.

"I'm thrilled it opens at the Alex because I love Birmingham. I've never worked at the Alex, so it's great to have a show originate there. I think it's great that it's going to be done first of all in a city, and also a diverse city, and also a city that has such a good history with musicals and new writing. It's a perfect home for it.

"It would be lovely both to tour it and take it to London afterwards, but at the moment this is the premiere and we want to get it right for Birmingham first. People will have a really, really good time, a proper fun night out. They might cry a bit, but they're mostly going to laugh and want to sing along and dance."

Here & Now shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Saturday 9 to Saturday 30 November

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Director Carlos Acosta

Sir Peter Wright's

The Nutcracker

22 November - 14 December

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HIPPODROME

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“No other version comes close”

Sunday Times



Dance previews from across the region



Jasmin Vardimon: Now

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 8 October

“Most of what I produce originates from observing our contemporary society,” explains choreographer Jasmin Vardimon in talking about her body of work. And that’s certainly the case with *Now*, a piece in which she uses her distinctive dance-theatre style and creative approach ‘to tell a story of our time’. Designed to reflect ‘the current moment, the present, the now, and the continuous movement of time’, the work marks the company’s 25th anniversary. Jasmin is as clear as ever about her ambitions for the future: “I want to make people think and ask questions; I don't want to give answers. At the end of the day, I see myself as a storyteller and communicator about things that are important to me.”

BRB: Luna

Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 October

Birmingham Royal Ballet’s new production turns the spotlight on the role of women as creators, innovators and activists, both with regard to the history of Birmingham and in a wider, 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.

Luna forms part of a trilogy of Birmingham-inspired ballets conceived 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*.



Imperial Classical Ballet: Swan Lake

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 14 October; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 28 October; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 4 & Tues 5 November; Malvern Theatres, Sun 24 November;

Imperial Classical Ballet presents a spectacular production of a timeless classic. Set to Tchaikovsky’s mesmerising score, *Swan Lake* tells the story of Odette, a

beautiful princess who, caught under the wicked spell of the evil Von Rothbart, must spend the daytime hours as a swan, returning to human form only when night falls... A sumptuous visual feast, *Swan Lake* is ideal not only for the seasoned dance-goer but also the first-time trier.



James Wilton Dance: Lore

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 19 October

The award-winning James Wilton’s choreography is always distinctive, his productions powered by an energy the audience can almost reach out and touch. James’ in-demand company previously scored a massive hit with *Leviathan* - a retelling of Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* - which is widely considered to be the ensemble’s best and most finely tuned work to date.



They here make a welcome return with *Lore*, a one-hour folklore-inspired journey into a pagan world of gods, demons and humans - all embodied through the ‘otherworldly’ athleticism of the company’s dancers.

The Nutcracker

Palace Theatre, Redditch, Thurs 31 October

Whisper it as quietly as you can...

Christmas is a-coming.

...And, as usual, that means a return to the limelight for Tchaikovsky’s beloved *Nutcracker*.

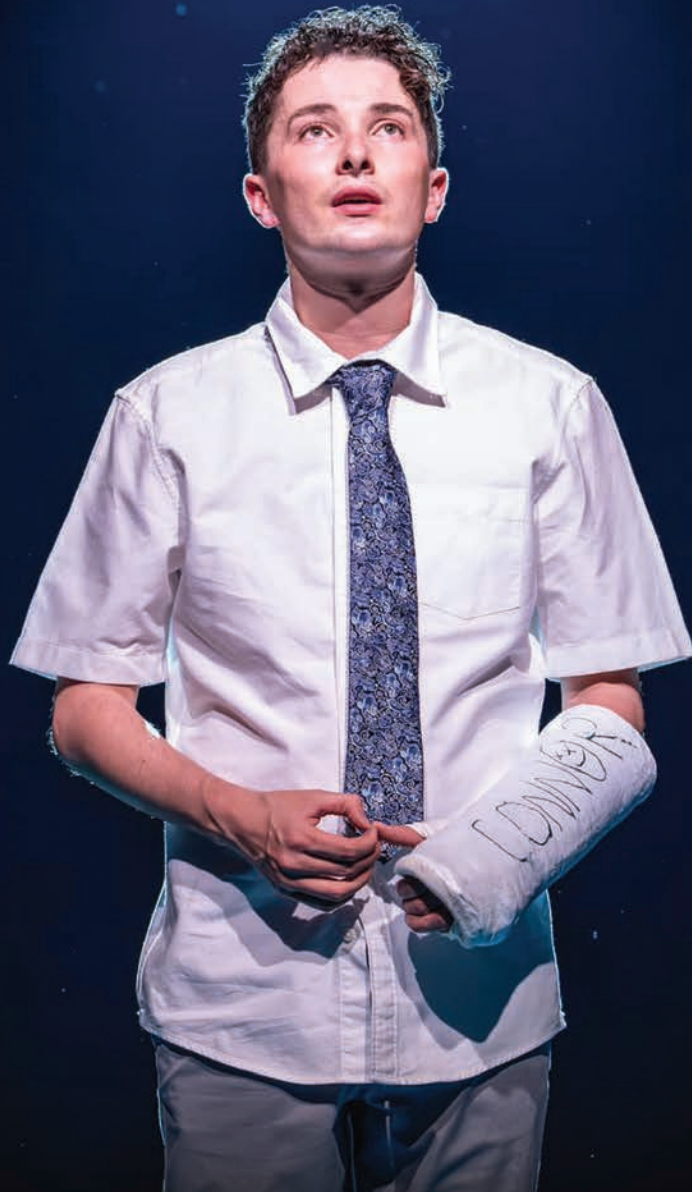
Kickstarting the season of goodwill a few weeks early, Moldova’s Crown Ballet here present the much-loved story of Clara’s exciting fantasy-adventure, experienced in a world of soldiers, giant rats, snow fairies, mystery and magic.

Balance

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Mon 28 October - Fri 1 November

The outcome of an unusual collaboration between Keneish Dance and Dr Darius Koester from the Centre for Mechanochemical Cell Biology at Warwick University, *Balance* presents an exploration of resilience, renewal, and the interconnectedness of all living things. The show has been described as a mesmerising and high-spirited dance-theatre performance, and sees Keneish’s dancers ‘morphing into the microscopic marvels of immune cells’... The performance lasts 45 minutes and is suitable for all ages.





A LITTLE REINVENTION

**A new version of hit musical Dear Evan Hansen tours to
Birmingham theatre The Alexandra this month**

A new Nottingham Playhouse production of multi-award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen is visiting Birmingham this month. The show follows title character and anxious teenager Evan, who bends the truth to fit in at school, and then faces the consequences. The iconic role is being played by Ryan Kopel, with Sonny Monaghan taking over for matinee performances. Here, the two actors offer a glimpse behind the scenes...

‘Today is going to be a good day...’

With not one, but two Evan Hansens in the room, that would appear to be a given.

Ryan Kopel and Sonny Monaghan may sport very different looks and have an age gap of six years, but they have one important thing in common - both are preparing to play the iconic title role in Dear Evan Hansen, the fresh new Nottingham Playhouse production of the Olivier, Tony and Grammy award-winning musical.

Dear Evan Hansen is the story of an anxious high school kid who wants nothing more than to fit in - but who, on his way to fitting in, doesn't tell the whole truth. As events spiral and the truth comes out, Evan reckons with himself and everyone around him.

The musical premiered in Washington, DC, in 2015 before transferring to off-Broadway and then Broadway a year later. The London West End production followed in 2019, but it was on Broadway that Monaghan, a self-confessed fan of the show, first saw the musical during a family holiday to New York.

He then landed the part after submitting a video on TikTok, as part of the casting team's collaboration with the social-media platform. From more than 2,000 submissions, the 21-year-old was one of 36 TikTok users invited to in-person auditions, eventually being cast as a member of the show's ensemble and as alternate Evan, a role he will perform twice a week, at every matinee.

Kopel took a more traditional route when auditioning, but unlike Monaghan, had never seen the show before. His introduction came during the audition process, and with themes including bullying and mental health, he quickly discovered that Dear Evan Hansen deals with some important issues.

The actor from Kirriemuir, in Scotland, recalls, “Reading the script during the audition process was very helpful because as much as Ben Platt, the original Evan, was iconic in the role, it was nice to be able to form my own take on Evan. The writing is so good that I really can just trust my instinct to bring what I feel to the character... We have complete freedom to take the script and create something new.”

“Staging-wise, everything is different...” chips in Monaghan, before Kopel continues: “It’s eight years since the Broadway production debuted, which doesn’t sound that long but when you think about it, a lot has changed in that time. The technology we use every day is so different that much of the script has taken on a whole new meaning. Just looking at the piece from the lens of 2024 has been an interesting experience.”

If the rehearsal period has been invigorating for Kopel, for Monaghan it has been nothing less than hectic. Explaining how having two Evans ‘in the room’ works, he reveals, “Mainly, it’s Ryan and the principal cast who are in the rehearsal room with Director Adam Penford. They create the show. As the alternate Evan, I get brought in once it looks the way they want it to look. Then I work with our associate director to replicate that.”

Kopel elaborates: “To be fair, that is the case, but it’s also done that way because Sonny has about ‘90 million’ different things to learn. While I’m lucky to be focusing on one character, he has to be in a different room learning the parts of Evan, Connor, Jared, and all the ensemble’s moves, too. One hundred per cent do I have the easy shift... apart from having to do it every night!”

And it’s not just lines, songs and moves with which the pair have to familiarise themselves. Due to the sensitive themes of the piece, the producers have partnered with The Mix, the UK’s leading digital charity for under-25s, to ensure anyone affected by the issues explored in the show knows where to find support. The Mix has provided training to the cast and creative team on how to respond appropriately to queries from the public, both online and offline, and has equipped them with the knowledge to direct individuals to the right support channels.

Kopel explains: “There’s just something about this show that allows people to connect deeply with the characters. Often, they then associate characters with the actor playing them and open up, sharing what they’re going through. We take that responsibility incredibly seriously, and having that guidance from The Mix is vitally important.”

Despite its themes, Dear Evan Hansen is a beautifully crafted and uplifting piece of musical theatre, one that Monaghan believes will “be a blessing for many, by helping them realise they need to talk to someone.”

Kopel agrees: “Ultimately, Dear Evan Hansen is about hope. No matter what happens, what you are going through, its message is that there is always someone to talk to and reasons why you should go on. That’s what I’d like people to take away from the show.”

Packed with some of the biggest musical theatre songs of the last decade, Dear Evan Hansen has Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, the Oscar-winning composers for The Greatest Showman, to thank for its haunting score - and both Evans have a favourite song.

The anthemic For Forever is Monaghan’s, while for Kopel it’s Words Fail. He adds with a cheeky smile, “I like it because it’s a bit of an emotional catharsis; it doesn’t matter if your voice cracks, because you are crying and already an emotional mess.”

Before they head back to rehearsal, there’s one last question: Dear Evan Hansen starts with Evan writing a letter to himself. It begins, naturally enough, with the title of the show followed by ‘Today is going to be a good day because...’ So, what would they write in such a letter to themselves?

“Keeping in line with the show,” says Kopel, “my letter would say, ‘today is going to be a good day because you can take each day at a time, every hour as it comes.’”

And what about Monaghan’s? “Mine would read, ‘today is going to be a good day because this is what and where you want to be, and you should know that you have worked hard and deserve to be here.’”

.....

Dear Evan Hansen shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Tuesday 22 to Saturday 26 October. The production returns to the Midlands in 2025 to play Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 April

AUTUMN at COMPTON VERNEY

CELEBRATING 20



Photo by Graham Fudger

A Walk in the Park: Autumn Colours
Fri 4, 18, 23 Oct & 22 Nov



Smartphone Photography Discovery Walk
Fri 11 Oct



CV Sounds: Indian Man
Sat 26 Oct

The Reflected Self: Portrait Miniatures 1540-1850. (c) Simon Bevan



Curator's Tour and Tea
5 & 19 Nov



The Textile Fair
Fri 8 – Sun 10 Nov



Neon Naked Life Drawing
16 Nov

OCTOBER HALF TERM

KIDS GO FREE*

Sculpture in the Park- Louise Bourgeois. Spider. © Compton Verney, photo by Jamie Woodley. Louise Bourgeois's art is © The Easton Foundation/DACS, London



Halloween Trail
Sat 26 Oct – Sun 3 Nov

Photo by Graham Fudger



Curious Adventures of Colour & Light
Sat 26 Oct



Make your own Pinhole Camera
Tues 29 Oct



Blue Play Blocks
Tues 29 Oct – Sun 3 Nov

© Tegen Kimbley



Kineton RAF Stem
Wed 30 Oct



Get Mucky, Get Making
Thu 31 Oct

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*Under 18s get free entry to our parkland and exhibitions. Fees apply to some workshops and special events.

Film highlights in October...

Joker: Folie à Deux

CERT tbc (138 mins)

Starring **Joaquin Phoenix, Lady Gaga, Zazie Beetz, Harry Lawley, Brendan Gleeson, Jacob Lofland**
Directed by **Todd Phillips**

This much-anticipated follow-up to 2019's Academy Award-winning *Joker* sees Joaquin Phoenix once again donning the grotesque clown's makeup to play Batman's arch nemesis... Institutionalised and awaiting trial for his crimes as the Joker, Arthur Fleck stumbles upon true love in the form of music therapist Lee (Lady Gaga). Meanwhile, Arthur's followers launch a movement aimed at liberating him from the long arm of the law...

Released Fri 4 October



Transformers One

CERT PG (104 mins)

With the voices of **Chris Hemsworth, Brian Tyree Henry, Scarlett Johansson, Keegan-Michael Key, Jon Hamm, Laurence Fishburne**
Directed by **Josh Cooley**

Having eagerly anticipated a new film for more than four years, Transformers' hugely committed fans were beyond ecstatic to see their favourites finally return to the cinema screen last year in *Rise Of The Beasts*, the seventh installment in a series which kickstarted in 2007 and has been gathering pace ever since. So the arrival this month of *Transformers One* - recounting the untold origin story of Optimus Prime and Megatron, and coming so soon after the last movie - is sure to be met with a further show of undiluted joy. Particularly as it's the first-ever fully CG-animated film in the series.

Released Fri 11 October

The Apprentice

CERT tbc (120 mins)

Starring **Sebastian Stan, Jeremy Strong, Maria Bakalova, Martin Donovan, Catherine McNally, Charlie Carrick**
Directed by **Ali Abbasi**

With the US presidential election taking place next month, what better time to release a film about presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump?

Hollywood's first-ever biopic of the 45th President of the United States charts Trump's ascent to power through the Faustian deal he cuts with influential right-wing lawyer and political fixer Roy Cohn... Sadly, considering the outsized personality of the man at the centre of the story, the film is somewhat pedestrian in its pacing and disappointingly tame.

Released Fri 18 October



The Wild Robot

CERT U (101 mins)

With the voices of **Lupita Nyong'o, Pedro Pascal, Kit Connor, Bill Nighy, Stephanie Hsu, Matt Berry** Directed by **Chris Sanders**

Peter Brown's *The Wild Robot*, an illustrated middle-grade novel first published in 2016, became a startling phenomenon, rocketing to the top spot on the New York Times bestseller list. So it's hardly surprising that Hollywood came a-calling. Or, to be more precise, DreamWorks Animation. The epic adventure follows the journey of Rozzum robot unit 7134. Known as 'Roz' for short, the robot is shipwrecked on an uninhabited island, where it learns to adapt to the harsh surroundings, gradually builds relationships with the animals it encounters, and becomes the adoptive parent of an orphaned gosling.

Released Fri 18 October



BEARLY BELIEVABLE

A new play telling the incredible true story of a bear who lined up alongside soldiers during the Second World War premieres in Coventry this month. Writer Alan Pollock tells What's On how *The Bear Who Went To War* came about, and explains what audiences can expect...

Ladies and gentleman of the jury, let me finally put to rest the argument about whether truth can be stranger than fiction... The evidence?...

A real-life bear fought alongside a regiment of Polish soldiers during the Second World War.

Yes, you read correctly. A Syrian brown bear cub was adopted by soldiers who fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino near Rome in May 1944. Not only that, he remained their companion throughout their decisive Italian campaign, during which time he carried artillery shells and even rose to the rank of Corporal.

After the war, the bear emigrated to the UK, made an appearance on *Blue Peter*, and saw out his days at Edinburgh Zoo, where he died in 1963.

Playwright Alan Pollock discovered the fascinating tale while conducting research for another project, and admits he could scarcely believe his ears when he first heard. "Reactions vary when you tell people," he says. "Some people have heard the story, but most haven't, and half of those go 'Sorry, can you repeat that?'"

The proud Coventrian is best known for penning the critically acclaimed *One Night In November*, a play about the Coventry Blitz. Premiered in 2008, it has been revived twice and is still the most successful new work produced at the city's Belgrade Theatre.

"It transformed my life, really," says Alan. "People apparently still come into the theatre every autumn asking whether it's on. I wish the answer was yes, but I think we've probably seen the last of it for now."

Following his 2011 play *Too Much Pressure*, a 2-Tone musical also based in the city ("the critics didn't love it, but I think it was a decent show and we had a blast doing it"), Alan wanted to write a play about the rebuilding of Coventry after the Second World War. As part of his research, he interviewed a number of the city's Polish immigrants.

"I talked to a 90-year-old lady called Yanina, and while she was telling me her own story, she dropped in the story of the bear. I literally couldn't believe her; 'What do you mean - there was a bear who was a Private in the army?!"

"I started to research it and found out it was real; it did happen. It was one of those

moments when I thought, I have to write this, because it's a quintessential Midlands story.

"Although the soldiers and the bear ended up in Edinburgh, lots of Polish people ended up in the Midlands - Coventry, Leicester, Newark, Nottingham and so on."

Making that geographic connection was especially important as Alan is the co-founder of *From The Heart Theatre Company*, which he set up to be a Midlands version of *Northern Broadsides*, a Halifax-based outfit that specialises in work with a northern focus.

"I wanted to tell Midlands stories, with Midlands voices, to Midlands audiences, and I just thought, we've got to do this."

But that was easier said than done. He wrote a successful children's picture book that was published in 2019, but the stage version of *The Bear Who Went To War* has dragged its heels in comparison; it's been in development since July 2018.

"It's been 11 years since I heard the story and six years since I wrote the first draft of the play, which I did in Gdansk in Poland, just to get the flavour," chuckles Alan, who has managed to keep the same director (Kirstie Davis) and composer (Rebecca Applin) on board throughout the show's protracted gestation.

The book was aimed at six-year-olds, so children who read it at the time will be nearing their teens now - but Alan is quick to point out that the stage version is for an older audience anyway.

"The play is for ages seven and upwards. It's not much scarier than the book, but you'll be slightly more aware of the war in this version. It's very much for a family audience - the kind of people who might read a Michael Morpurgo novel. If you like his books, then you're gonna love this - it's basically *War Horse* with a bear!"

Which is obviously the line that should be on posters advertising the show, not least because the production features three life-size puppets ("baby, mid-size and a massive one") that portray the bear at different stages of his life. And once again there's a local connection: the design is by Abby Clarke, who grew up in Allesley - the same Coventry suburb as the writer.

A number of local community groups are also involved in the production.

"Most of the real soldiers in the story were

from eastern Poland, including places like Lvov [Lviv], which is now part of Ukraine. One of the schools we're collaborating with is a primary school in Camp Hill in Nuneaton, which has the fastest-growing Ukrainian population in the country because of migration due to the war with Russia."

The show also features contributions by migrant musicians from the Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre and refugee textile makers from local minority support group the *Inini Initiative*. It will premiere in one of the new studio spaces at the Albany Theatre, which is rapidly establishing itself as the city's community theatre.

"The whole project is about community and migration - what you leave behind when you leave somewhere, what you carry with you, and what you end up with. I know everybody says this about everything, but I don't think this play could be more timely, with people on the move again all over the world.

"Most of the people in this story left home one morning and never went back, because Poland didn't exist anymore. They never went home, so it's about what home and what family you make for yourself somewhere else."

Migration, the trauma of being forced to leave home, and how the world treats migrants are all key themes of the play, not least when the soldiers and the bear are repatriated to the UK after being left stateless at the end of the war.

"The country didn't particularly welcome refugees after the war, but the bear helped to sugar the pill. Most people are hostile to the bear initially, and then it'll just roll over and make a funny sound and everybody's won over. The bear makes friends with everybody.

"So it's a lovely story with a bit of an emotional edge. I won't tell you the ending but it'll be really entertaining as well as rather moving."

.....

The Bear Who Went To War shows at Coventry's Albany Theatre from Wednesday 30 October to Saturday 2 November. Associated events will also take place at various libraries in Warwickshire from Sunday 6 to Wednesday 9 October. See page 6 for details

Exhibition developed by



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History
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Visual Arts previews from around the region



Scent And The Art Of The Pre-Raphaelites

Barber Institute, University of Birmingham, Fri 11 October - Sun 26 January

“The exhibition is going to have a sensory experience,” explains Andrew Davies, communications & marketing manager at the Barber, in talking about Scent And The Art Of The Pre-Raphaelites. “We’re actually going to be producing scent in the gallery. There was a belief in Victorian

times that you could smell a rainbow - it smelt like spring flowers and meadows... “One of the paintings we’re borrowing comes from Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. It’s called The Blind Girl, where they’re breathing in the scent of the rainbow in the background.”

Atchin Tan: Travelling Through Art

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Sat 26 October - Sunday 5 January

Oral histories, traditional storytelling, poetry and music all feature in this brand-new exhibition, which takes viewers on a visual journey through the history of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Co-curated with members of those communities, the show presents works by Turner, Munnings and Gainsborough alongside newly commissioned artworks by Romani artists, some of which demonstrate skills from endangered crafts.



Chila Kumari Singh Burman: Spectacular Diversions

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 26 October - Sun 26 January

Highly rated contemporary artist Chila Kumari Singh Burman works in multiple media, with drawings, prints, collage and sculpture all featuring in her output. An installation of her famous neons will light up the façade of Compton Verney, with Hindu deities and mythological creatures mingling with animals and ice creams in a glowing display.



Waste Age: What Can Design Do?

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 26 October - Sun 23 February

MAC’s first collaboration with the Design Museum is a group exhibition focusing on a new generation of designers who are ‘rethinking our relationship to everyday things’.

Telling the story of the environmental crisis, the show explores how design can transform waste into valuable resources. The exhibition features a new sculptural commission inspired by clothes waste markets in Nigeria. The work has been created by Birmingham-based artist Abdulrazaq Awofeso.

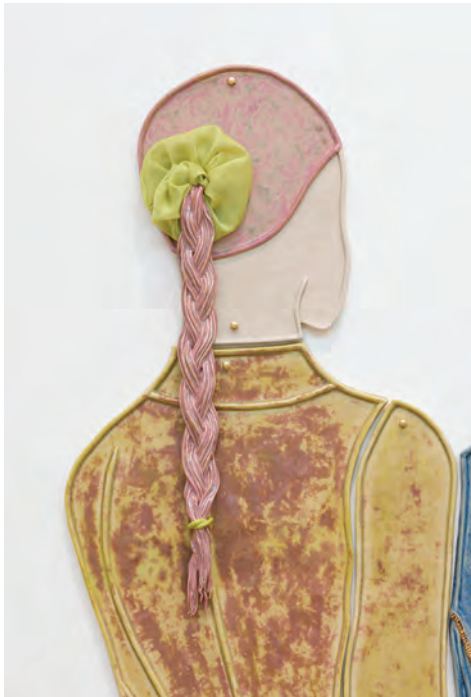
Friends In Love And War: L’Éloge des meilleurs ennemi-es

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, Wed 2 October - Sun 23 February

An exhibition exploring the nature and role of friendship in contemporary life, Friends In Love And War features paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, textiles, film, sculpture and installation.

The exhibition is showing at Ikon as part of the venue’s 60th anniversary year.





Material Worlds: Contemporary Artists And Textiles

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre,
Coventry, Wed 9 October - Sun 15
December

Hayward Gallery Touring’s new exhibition explores how simple everyday materials are being used to surprise and provoke, ‘creating worlds and telling stories ranging from the personal to the cosmic’. Speaking about the show, its curator, Caroline Achaintre, said: “I wanted the exhibition to emphasise the transition from something quite everyday, domestic and supposedly unspectacular, into the creation of fantastical and extraordinary works, worlds, and visions. “It has been an enriching experience to encounter such a diverse realm of artists and to create this exhibition, which features pieces by both upcoming and established artists from different generations.”



**Painted
Dreams:**
THE ART OF
**Evelyn
De Morgan**

19 Oct 24 – 9 Mar 25
Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Free admission

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
DE MORGAN
WOLVERHAMPTON

Night and Sleep, 1878, Evelyn De Morgan © Trustees of the De Morgan Foundation



Image: Love's Passing, 1883, Evelyn De Morgan © Trustees of the De Morgan Foundation

PAINTED DREAMS

Pre-Raphaelite artist Mary Evelyn Pickering De Morgan (1855 - 1919) painted in an elegant style inspired by Italian Renaissance paintings - particularly the work of Botticelli - and often featured female figures and mythological or allegorical subjects in her work.

This month, Wolverhampton Art Gallery exhibits 30 of De Morgan's oil paintings and drawings. And it's not the first time that her work has visited the city... The exhibition - titled Painted Dreams - is a recreation of a show held at the same venue in 1907.

The artworks will be reunited for the first time in 120 years, having been loaned for exhibition from private collections and by the Trustees of the De Morgan Foundation.

De Morgan studied at Slade School of Art at the University of London, where she excelled, winning a full scholarship and prizes for her work. During her time at the school she chose to paint under her ambiguously gendered middle name, Evelyn. This decision was made so that her work would be judged equally alongside that of her male peers, rather than being subject to the prejudices held against women painters at the time.

These prejudices created an environment in which female artists' work was rarely showcased in modern galleries - the pursuit of art was not seen as a suitable occupation for women.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery's curator in the early 20th century, JJ Brownsword, first encountered De Morgan's work while he was visiting her husband, ceramics designer William De Morgan.

Brownsword was enthralled by what he saw, writing in 1906 that De Morgan's paintings were "vividly impressed on my memory".

As curator, Brownsword was invested in bringing the work of unknown artists to exhibit in Wolverhampton. So he wrote to De Morgan, asking her if she "would be so kind as to lend" her artwork "to the Corporation of Wolverhampton for an exhibition at the Wolverhampton Art Gallery". At the time, it was particularly unusual for a female artist to be the subject of a solo exhibition.

The 1907 show was to be the largest of De Morgan's career and certainly made an impression. One reviewer at the Wolverhampton Express & Star newspaper described the pictures as "painted dreams", from which the gallery's 2024 exhibition takes its evocative title.

The new exhibition will present the works chronologically, across three galleries, to highlight some of the themes that De Morgan revisited throughout her career. She frequently drew from mythological subjects, one example of which is Flora - a lifesize painting featuring the Roman Goddess of Spring.

She also painted in an allegorical style, in pieces which reimagine abstract ideas as human figures. One such example is her impressive painting, *The Storm Spirits*, which shows thunder, lightning and rain represented as three beautiful women.

Three pictures which were originally exhibited in 1907 were sadly lost in a warehouse fire in 1991. However, local artist Paul Francis-Walker, who also works in the Pre-Raphaelite style, has recreated these paintings for inclusion in the exhibition. The recreation of the lost pieces ensures that the new show is as close as possible to the 1907 display.

Painted Dreams not only showcases the work of a talented artist, but also offers a unique opportunity to dive into the past of the gallery itself. In the recreation of this groundbreaking exhibition, Wolverhampton Art Gallery reconnects with its history - to a time when it was a key player in recognising and elevating De Morgan's work, and in celebrating a female artist who might otherwise have been disregarded and forgotten.

Painted Dreams: The Art Of Evelyn De Morgan shows at Wolverhampton Art Gallery from Saturday 19 October until Sunday 9 March



AIMING HIGH

New drone light show Evolution is set to wow audiences at Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium this month...



Get 15% off tickets to Evolution at Edgbaston Stadium with the code **EVOLUTION15**



Drone light show pioneers Celestial have reached dizzying heights since forming in 2020. Their productions use hundreds of illuminated drones to create extraordinary animations that light up the night sky and provide a brand-new form of family entertainment. Celestial have now partnered with Bristol-based experience provider Yuup to produce Evolution, an epic light show that recreates monumental moments in history - from the origins of life on Earth, through to the modern-day moon landings. What's On caught up with Celestial's founder and chief executive officer, John Hopkins, to find out more...

Can you tell us about Celestial, and how it all started?

Celestial began about four years ago. My background is as a film director, and I spotted a drone display that Intel had done at the Korean Winter Olympics in 2018 - I saw a snowboarder in 3D in the sky over the mountains. It blew my mind, and it made me realise that perhaps the sky was the next big screen, through which we could use these drones to tell stories on an epic scale. I just had this feeling that I had the skill set to be able to harness this new medium. It turned out I did! My partner at the time, who I set Celestial up with, was a drone engineer, so we had that side of the business covered, and I was leading the charge with the creative vision.

How many drone shows has Celestial created to date?

Despite the process of creating and animating a drone show still requiring a fair amount of time, the market is still growing and we're producing more and more each year. This year to date, we've delivered over 18 shows globally and with the addition of our new ticketed drone shows - a brand-new concept - a single show goes on tour and plays in multiple venues for multiple nights.

When making a drone show, is the creative process always the same?

It always starts with a conversation. Historically, if we were doing a show for a brand, we'd usually take a brief from the client. Now we're doing ticketed drone shows, it's more of a collaboration with Yuup to come up with a concept for a new show. We get the project down on paper first, then go into the design phase, where we animate the show with the soundtrack. Then it's the final phase, where we deploy the show.

Has it been hard to adjust to creating narratives for a long-form show?

It's more satisfying. We're telling longer stories. Our shows are longer than traditional drone shows, which tend to be around eight minutes and are sort of seen as a firework-replacement gimmick. We're choosing to use

this new medium to tell longer stories. Evolution is roughly half an hour long, which is much more immersive and involved. You can tell a much fuller story that emotionally carries audiences away with the narrative. What's exciting about the ticketed drone show paradigm is that we're now really playing to our creative strengths; getting to flex our storytelling muscles.

Are you able to do trial runs beforehand?

We're good at being able to judge a show on a computer and get a really good, solid understanding of what it's going to look and sound like. We test our productions as much as we possibly can using this method before we have to deploy them, but there's nothing like standing there in person and seeing what you've created go live.

In a single production, how many drones are in the sky?

In Evolution we've got about 650 drones, split into three different flights. Drones have a duration cap - they can only fly for a certain period of time, so in order to extend our shows, we've got several flights staggered. It feels like you're watching drones in the air for 30 minutes, but actually it's been three separate flights cleverly stitched together. In the cricket stadiums that we're currently flying in, they will be flying quite low down to the ground, keeping them enclosed within the stadium - I think the uppermost part of the show can be 100 metres.

How do you troubleshoot problems?

Putting on drone shows isn't easy. It's very complicated, and it's taken four years for us to fine-tune our processes, which are now way better than they've ever been. It's night and day from when we first started doing this. We tend to hire people who are brilliant problem-solvers. What we do is unprecedented, so we are a self-solving team. Safety is our number-one mantra. We've never had any safety issues in any of our shows. I think we've only had one or two shows within four years where we've had any technical problems at all - so we're pretty good!

Let's talk about Evolution. Is it your most ambitious project to date?

Absolutely! And I would argue that it's the best show we've created. We've had so many thousands of people buying tickets to come and see it, and such great, positive reviews. Absolutely it's the most ambitious.

What sparked the idea to use evolution as the subject matter?

The concept of Evolution was something that Celestial have been toying with for a while. The way in which our drones transform and morph from one object to the next felt very apt for the concept of evolution, which is a constant morphing of objects. We really like the scale of the story. It felt like the right tale to tell as our opening show.

Do you personally have a favourite moment in Evolution?

I really like the cave-painting sequence that we created in the third act of the show. It was one of the hardest to get right with the animation design. I think now that I look at it, it brings me more pleasure.

What are your hopes for Celestial in the future?

The ethos of Celestial - that we are an entertainment company who use drones to tell stories - is very important. We're not just a drone-show company that puts a logo in the sky. We want to take this new genre of drone art in a completely different direction. We feel like we're only scraping the surface of what's possible. Ultimately, all of the stories we want to tell carry a meaningful purpose that we build the show around. With this beautiful, epic, and very emotionally powerful new art form, we want not just to entertain crowds but inspire people to live greener, healthier, more connected lives.

.....
Celestial presents Evolution at Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium on Saturday 26 October. Visit yuup.co/evolution for tickets

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*Offer not valid on VIP tickets, added extras, or with any other offer. Not all celebrities appear on all days and line-up is subject to change. Ends 23:59 8 November 2024. £3.95 transaction fee per e-ticket order. Details correct at time of print. Organised and presented by Immediate Live, the trading name of River Street Events Ltd. Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, Hammersmith, London W6 7BT. Company number 02708675.

Events previews from around the region



Severn Valley Railway Ghost & Scream Trains

Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster, Sat 26, Wed 30 & Thurs 31 October

Are you brave enough to ride the Ghost Train at Severn Valley Railway this Halloween? Kickstart your fright night with tricks and treats for the whole family to enjoy at Kidderminster Station; then take your reserved seats and settle back to experience a ride out into the darkness. Scary characters will join you on board, sneaking along the corridors of the train as it passes through haunted stations to Arley.

The Ghost Train experience lasts for approximately 75 minutes and comes complete with a free goodie bag for every child. Severn Valley Railway is also hosting a similar but 'more fearsome' event for older guests. The Scream Train is aimed at visitors aged 18-plus and features 'petrifying ghouls' who will be looking to scare the life out of commuters as they make their way to Arley.

Pumpkinfest

Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, Shropshire, Fri 11 - Sun 13, Fri 18 - Sun 20, Fri 25 October - Sun 3 November

Park Hall Country Experience is having a spooky takeover this month with the return of Pumpkinfest. As well as providing youngsters with free pumpkins to carve in the farm's huge pumpkin shed, the venue is also hosting numerous Halloween attractions (Pumpkin Alley, The Little Scare House and a spooky trail) and activities (Pass The Pumpkin and Mummy Wrap). Also included in the price of a ticket are all the usual farm attractions, including barrel train and tractor rides, the planet room and science area.



Car Design: Tech Takes the Wheel

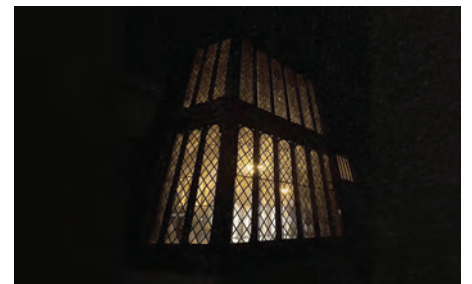
British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Sat 26 October - Sun 3 November

The British Motor Museum's family-friendly selection of half-term activities are inspired by the evolution of car design. From the classic sketchbook to 3D digital imagery, visitors can learn how technology has made possible some of history's finest designs. Activities include Dottie & Dougie's Tracing Tech Family Tours and an 'electrifying' Graphite Lights craft activity. Families visiting the venue from Tuesday 29 October to Friday 1 November can join the scientists in the lab for a series of mind-blowing experiments. A spooky Black Cat Trail also features.

After-Dark Tours

The Commandery, Worcester, Tues 15, Thurs 17, Tues 22, Thurs 24, Tues 29 and Thurs 31 October

The Commandery is one of Worcester's oldest buildings and a place that harbours lots of ghostly secrets for visitors to uncover. Suitable for people aged 14-plus, the venue's after-dark tours include tales of strange sightings and mysterious rumours, with your guide for the evening giving the history of the building a hair-raising Halloween twist.



Canal-O-Ween

Dudley Canal & Caverns, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 October

Climb aboard a Canal-O-Ween boat this Halloween and embark on a mystical journey that delves into the heart of Dudley's ancient limestone mines and caverns. Crazy Kris and his Groovy UV gang will be back to provide a glow-in-the-dark extravaganza for the whole family to enjoy. The trip lasts approximately one hour and is designed to be a delightful Halloween treat rather than a fright fest - a fact which ensures that guests of all ages can join in the fun.

Halloween Trail

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Sat 26 October - Sun 3 November

Families visiting Compton Verney this October half term can enjoy a spooky Halloween trail. Inspired by Chila Kumari Singh Burman and Louise Bourgeois' on-site Spider sculpture (see picture below), visitors will take a journey through the grounds and uncover neon spider pumpkins concealed in hidden areas.



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Events previews from around the region



The Creative Craft Show

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 31 October - Sun 3 November

The Creative Craft Show is the UK's biggest mixed craft exhibition, featuring everything from stamps to threads and patterns to embroidery kits. In addition to shopping, workshops and offering plenty of inspiration both for new and established crafters, the event also includes demonstrators and influencers sharing new ideas, and stallholders poised

and prepared to provide the very latest tools, allowing visitors to fully refresh their craft cabinet. A ticket to the event also buys access to sister shows Sewing For Pleasure (Winter Edition, see below), Simply Christmas (see below), Cake International (Friday to Sunday only) and Bake International (Friday to Sunday only).

Sewing For Pleasure Winter Edition

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 31 October - Sun 3 November

If you have a passion for sewing, knitting, patchwork or stitching, then Sewing For Pleasure is the show for you. Now boasting a brand-new Winter Edition, the event features must-have fabrics, yarns, patterns and threads, as well as plenty of inspiring ideas from a host of sewing celebrities. Attractions include Make & Take sessions - mini workshops (hosted on-stand by stallholders) which offer visitors the chance to try out a new material or tool before making a purchase.



Simply Christmas

NEC, Birmingham, Thurs 31 October - Sun 3 November

Simply Christmas is a 'crafty' show offering a diverse range of gifts to help visitors with all their present-buying conundrums. Over 150 stall holders will be showcasing exclusive ranges of bespoke and unusual gifts, with glassware, jewellery, art, candles, ceramics and clothing (plus plenty more) all featuring. Visitors can get stuck into the festivities with a themed workshop, soak up the atmosphere with Christmas food, drink and live music, and even say hello to Santa Claus himself as he spreads some early yuletide cheer.

Grand Designs Live

NEC, Birmingham, Wed 2 - Sun 6 October

It's the 25th anniversary of Channel Four's Grand Designs television series - and this accompanying live version of the show is marking the occasion in style. The UK's leading home design & innovation exhibition, the five-day event comes complete with an abundance of 'expert advice and endless inspiration'. Highlights include live talks, eco innovations with Kevin's Green Heroes, The Grand House showhome and an 'outdoor living' showcase.



Historic Rally Festival

Apley Estate and Willey Estate, Shropshire, Sat 5 & Sun 6 October

Returning for 2024, the Historic Rally Festival features stages at two new venues: Apley Estate and Willey Estate. The new stages will take place on a mixture of surfaces, including tarmac, gravel and hard compact dirt roads. Apley Estate will host the start of this year's dusk stages and a meet & greet on the Saturday afternoon, providing enthusiasts with a not-to-be-missed opportunity to get up close to the cars and chat with the drivers.





CHILDREN OF THE REVELATION

New family drama at the Coventry Belgrade...

When director Jay Zorenti-Nakhid started working on Daniel J Carver's Caribbean family drama, Revealed, little did he know it would change his life. Now an associate director at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre, Jay is hoping the show will have a similarly profound impact on its audience - as he recently explained to What's On...

A variety of tough issues and secrets are laid bare when three generations of a Caribbean family are forced to spend an evening together in Daniel J Carver's acclaimed drama, Revealed. An exploration of differing attitudes to racism, sexuality, parenting and love, the production comes to the B2 stage of Coventry's Belgrade Theatre this month.

The 'kitchen sink'-style drama is set in the family's restaurant, where 16-year-old Luther, his father Malcolm and grandfather Sidney are taking refuge from rioters who have taken to the streets following an incendiary incident in police custody.

Designed to be hilarious and heart-warming as much as angry and edgy, the play features three men who, although initially struggling to see eye to eye, ultimately overcome their prejudices to demonstrate their love for, and connection to, one another.

The play has become something of a passion project for the Belgrade's recently appointed associate director, Jay Zorenti-Nakhid. Jay has not only been involved from the outset but has first-hand experience of the profound impact the work can have.

Originally developed by Birmingham's Red Earth Collective, the play was a response to a provocation about what black men think and feel but don't say. It was workshopped at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) five years ago, premiering at Bristol's Tobacco Factory in 2022. Jay was in the director's chair for the show, and right from the start he was so affected by the drama's themes of identity and connection that he decided to track down his own biological father. And that was when things got really interesting...

"I'd never met my biological dad," he recalls. "All I knew was that he left a letter with my mum when I was a one-year-old because they weren't really together. My mum told me about the letter when I was nine, and then it got demon-ed away, locked in a cupboard, and we never spoke about it again.

"Doing the show and unpicking what it means to be a father, especially among Caribbean families - my dad's from Trinidad - made me want to do something about my situation. So I read the letter, which turned out to be a love letter and the opposite to the narrative that I had in my head."

Jay managed to track his father down in Trinidad, only to discover that the parent he'd never met had been searching for him too, but with far less information to go on. Not only had Jay moved and his mum

changed her surname, but he had shortened his first name from the original Jacob.

The timing of their reconnection was particularly poignant - Jay's dad had just buried his own father.

"The day I tracked him down he was actually at the funeral, so he was going through this mad thing where he'd lost his dad but then his lost son had appeared."

The coincidences snowballed from there.

"We got talking about what I do for a living. He told me he liked going to theatre - which was interesting - and then asked me about the last show I'd worked on. I told him about the R&D [Research & Development] shows, and he said 'at the MAC, in April, about the Caribbean family?' and I was like 'yeah, yeah, yeah', and he said 'I saw it'.

"So this R&D version of the show, which had just two performances, my dad was sat in the auditorium for one of them... and a few days later I was trying to track him down."

Did he like the show?

"He did!"

The links go even deeper, because Jay's father knew playwright Daniel J Carver through the church, as well as a few people from his son's social circle. "It was six degrees of separation," laughs Jay incredulously. "We've got a great relationship now, and he'll be coming on opening night." Jay believes his own story shows the power of the play to motivate someone to connect - or reconnect - with people in their lives. He is suitably enthusiastic about getting the message across.

"As well as the play itself, hearing this story about me being activated to track down my dad has inspired other people to do the same. So when I talk about activating audiences, I genuinely, legit, 100 per cent, first-hand feel what that's done for me."

He also keenly believes part of the narrative of Revealed is creating the space for those types of conversations to happen.

"Without going into too much detail about the plot, this play can leave you with the feeling that you need to do something, tell your loved ones you love them and reconcile with family.

"It [also] has the potential to create more stories, and that's what excites me. It can be enjoyed and consumed, but that triggers us to tell a story about ourselves or someone we know - it starts that connection. We talk about how theatre can connect people, and

it's through a shared experience of watching the show, as well as talking afterwards."

Revealed is the first production that Jay will direct at the Belgrade, but if he feels any pressure, he's not showing it.

"I'm quite emotionally attached to the play, so it feels like an exciting piece of work to be the first thing that I do here.

"There's always a pressure, but sometimes pressure is alleviated by having belief, and I've seen the impact this piece can have."

It doesn't do any harm that he not only knows the play, but two of the three cast members (Daniel J Carver and Everal A Walsh - middle initials are a theme) from the Bristol production are returning. They are joined by Jayden Hanley, best known as Darcy from TV's Phoenix Rise, who is making his stage debut as the youngster Luther.

Jay says having the play's writer in the cast is far more of a blessing than a curse.

"For me, it's always about collaboration, but we have clear boundaries; Dan is either in actor mode or writer mode, and the lines are never blurred."

Jay is also acutely aware of what the play means to its creator.

"It's very much in Dan's blood - I'm sure he won't mind me saying that this piece of work lives and breathes his life experience. He worked for Geese Theatre Company for a number of years and was in and out of different prison settings, working with men in the criminal justice system and often talking about some of these things.

"We are both excited about the impact this work can have with audiences, and the things people may be inspired to do as a result of engaging with it."

But as much as he hopes the show will be a conversation starter for those who see it, Jay is comfortable with the idea that it's also just a great evening's entertainment.

"It's a beautiful story about a family, what happens when their secrets become exposed, and how they deal with that. I'm biased, but if you like family dramas that are heart-warming, funny, sad, angry - all the emotional range - then that's what this is."

.....
Revealed shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Friday 18 October to Saturday 2 November



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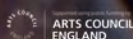
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Your week-
by-week
listings guide
October 2024

the list



Chitty Chitty Bang Bang at Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent - Tues 22 - Sun 27 October

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

What's On

Tues 1 - Sun 6 October



Shropshire Oktoberfest -
The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury
Fri 4 & Sat 5 October

Mon 7 - Sun 13 October



Jason Manford -
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre
Wed 9 & Thurs 10 October

Mon 14 - Sun 20 October



Kerry Ellis: Queen of the West
End - Dudley Town Hall
Wed 16 October

Mon 21 - Thurs 31 October



Cara Dillon -
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury
Wed 30 October

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

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

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR Exhibition of powerful photographs showcasing animal behaviour, spectacular species and the fragility of our planet, Thurs 24 Oct - Sun 20 Apr

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

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

REUNITED: THE LAMENTATION ALTERPIECE After 30 years of its central panel being housed in the National Gallery of Scotland's collection, this is a chance to see a rare masterpiece, reunited, until Fri 28 Feb

THE REFLECTED SELF A 'sumptuous' exhibition diving into the fascinating history of portrait miniatures, until Sun 23 Feb

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

WASTE AGE: WHAT CAN DESIGN DO? Group exhibition focused on a new generation of designers who are rethinking our relationship to everyday things, from fashion to food, electronics to construction, and even packaging... Sat 26 Oct - Sun 23 Feb

RUBBISH REDESIGNED: INNOVATIVE DESIGNERS FROM THE MIDLANDS Group exhibition exploring the rise of imaginative approaches to circular design and waste innovation across the West Midlands, and addressing the pressing need to reconsider how we utilise and recycle our planet's resources, until Sun 2 Mar

New Art Gallery, Walsall

A PLACE TO RETURN TO West Midlands-based artist Daniella Turbin combines long-distance walking with photography, drawing and writing, until Sun 6 Oct

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD Major exhibition of new and previously unseen work by Barcelona-based artist Carlos Bunga. Through painting, drawing, video and sculpture, Bunga explores themes of home, transformation, possibility and adaption, until Sun 27 Oct

COMMUNION Exhibition of work from emerging Black Country artists Leah

Hickey, Jamal Lloyd Davis and Tomilola Olumide. Their works share themes of being in communion with oneself and others, sharing intimate space, and the re-contextualisation of faith, until Sun 17 Nov

EQUAL + ABLE = NOT A LABEL Exhibition exploring ableism through the New Art Gallery Walsall Collections, until Sun 18 May 2025

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

WILD WOODS Interactive journey through a year in the life of a woodland. For all ages, until Sat 2 Nov

NO GOING BACK Display of photographs and memorabilia by North Staffs Miners Wives, to mark the 40th anniversary of the Miners' Strike, until Sun 2 March 2025

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

DISCOVERING LILY CHITTY Exhibition and film exploring the pioneering work of archaeologist Lily Chitty and her impact on our understanding of Stone Age Shropshire, until Thurs 14 Nov

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

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:

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, Stourbridge Glass Museum

BEAR STEPS GALLERY: SOLO EXHIBITIONS Featuring works by Jon Young, Stephen Hopper & Audacious Art, Sun 13 - Sat 26 Oct, Bear Steps Gallery, Shrewsbury

J L PETIT: THE LOST TREASURES OF LICHFIELD Exhibition of previously undiscovered works featuring traditional subjects, as well as harsh rural landscapes and depictions of the realities of the Industrial Revolution, Saturdays from Sat 5 - Sat 26 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral



Squeeze - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Gigs

THE LAST DINNER PARTY + LUCIA & THE BEST BOYS + KAETO Tues 1 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CELTIC CONNECTIONS Tues 1 Oct, Aston Hall, Wrexham

CRYSTAL TIDES Wed 2 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DAN WHITLAM Wed 2 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE STRUTS & BARNES COURTNEY + JAMES BRUNER Wed 2 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SPREAD EAGLE + NEW GENERATION SUPERSTARS Wed 2 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

ROBERT VINCENT + JESSIE REID Wed 2 Oct, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

WE THREE KINGS - OF ROCK 'N' ROLL Wed 2 - Thurs 3 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE LIBERTINES Thurs 3 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

OYSTERBAND & JUNE TABOR Thurs 3 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE ROD STEWART EXPERIENCE Thurs 3 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

GUITAR HEADS Thurs 3 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

FROG LEAP Thurs 3 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

ROBERT MITCHELL SOLO Thurs 3 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

ELO EXPERIENCE Thurs 3 Oct, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

WUNDERHORSE + HIGHSCHOOL Fri 4 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

KABAKA PYRAMID + THE BEBBLE ROCKERS Fri 4 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

PEARL JAM UK Fri 4 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

TOM VEK Fri 4 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

ASHLEY ALLEN & FRIENDS Fri 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

SAMANTHA FISH Fri 4 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SALT PEANUTS Fri 4 Oct, Tower Of Song, B'ham

THE MADCHESTER EXPERIENCE + OASIS Fri 4 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

BIG COUNTRY + MIKE PETERS Fri 4 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

ONE NIGHT IN DUBLIN Fri 4 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE BOHEMIANS Fri 4 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

FLASH - A TRIBUTE TO QUEEN Fri 4 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

HOLDING BACK THE YEARS Fri 4 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

STEVIE JONES AND THE WILDFIRES Fri 4 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SCARLET REBELS + MORGANWAY + THE HOT ONE TWO Fri 4 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, W'hampton

THE BOOTLEG BEATLES Fri 4 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE DOORS RISING Fri 4 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

10CC Fri 4 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MELROSE QUARTET Fri 4 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

KEZIA GILL Fri 4 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

OH, WHAT A NIGHT - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI Fri 4 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DURAN Fri 4 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

FINNEGAN'S REVIVAL Fri 4 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

DARTS LIVE IN CONCERT Fri 4 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

RED BASTARDS + OFFICES + RATTLEBACK Fri 4 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

DESPERADO - THE EAGLES TRIBUTE Fri 4 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

MANOR HEIGHTS + ALVIN AND THE ANGRY BARRELS Fri 4 Oct, Ludlow

Assembly Rooms,
South Shropshire

A CELEBRATION OF SIMON & GARFUNKEL Fri 4 Oct, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

THE ULTIMATE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW Fri 4 Oct, Aston Hall, Wrexham

AFRICAN HEAD CHARGE Sat 5 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

TOM MEIGHAN Sat 5 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

IN FLAMES + ARCH ENEMY + SOILWORK Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE DOORS ALIVE Sat 5 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE DARTS Sat 5 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

NEGATIVE FRAME + RUST Sat 5 Oct, The Asylum, Birmingham

GARETH GATES SINGS FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS Sat 5 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ERASURED Sat 5 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

BIG COUNTRY + MIKE THE ELECTROMANTICS Sat 5 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SOUL'D OUT UK Sat 5 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE LEYLINES Sat 5 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

CLASSIC ROCK AMERICAN HIGHWAY SHOW Sat 5 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

KEVIN PAUL AS ELVIS Sat 5 Oct, Churchill's, Wednesbury

UZUK Sat 5 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

LEGENDS OF SOUND Sat 5 Oct, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

THE KOPYCAT KILLERS + SCAM FENDER + OASIS 96 + SUBARCTIC MONKEYS Sat 5 Oct, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ROD STEWART EXPERIENCE Sat 5 Oct, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

ABBAMANIA Sat 5 Oct, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

ALL4INDIE + BRITPOP UNITED Sat 5 Oct, The Station, Cannock

THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROS Sat 5 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE JOURNEYMEN - ERIC CLAPTON TRIBUTE Sat 5 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

CALL OF THE KRAKEN Sat 5 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE THING + OCEAN IVY Sat 5 Oct, The Firefly, Oakengates, Telford

WANDERLUST Sat 5 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

A DIFFERENT THREAD Sat 5 Oct, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shrops

OLD TIME SAILORS Sat 5 Oct, Whitchurch Blackberry Fair, North Shropshire

MOUNTAIN SONG Sat 5 Oct, Millborough Village Hall, South Shropshire

SQUEEZE Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

REELIN' IN THE DAN Sun 6 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KERR MERCER Sun 6 Oct, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

GEOFF TATE + KIM JENNETT Sun 6 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

YEAT Sun 6 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JET Sun 6 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WE THREE KINGS OF ROCK 'N' ROLL Sun 6 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

OLIVIA RODRIGO TRIBUTE Sun 6 Oct, The Quarter at Potbank, Stoke-on-Trent

TAYLORMANIA Sun 6 Oct, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

RHIANNON HILL Sun 6 Oct, The Station, Cannock

NICK HARPER Sun 6 Oct, Morris Hall, Shrewsbury

WANDERLUST Sun 6 Oct, Quatt Village Hall, South Shropshire

DANCING IN THE STREETS - MOTOWN'S GREATEST HITS Sun 6 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Classical Music

GORDON STEWART ORGAN RECITAL SERIES Tues 1 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Parry, S Wesley, Stanford & Widor, Thurs 3 Oct, St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham

HARRY RAYBOULD PIANO CONCERT Fri 4 Oct, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

RICHARD TANNER ORGAN RECITAL Sat 5 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

CHELTENHAM BACH CHOIR Programme includes works by Fauré, Rachmaninov, Lauridsen & more..., Sat 5 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow, South Shropshire

ANGELA STONES ORGAN RECITAL Programme includes works by Cocker, Bach, Fletcher & more..., Sat 5 Oct, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

PAUL CARR ORGAN CONCERT Programme includes works by Wolstenholme, Scarlatti, Whitlock & more..., Sun 6 Oct, Holy Trinity Church, Wordsley

ECHO RISING STARS: BENJAMIN KRUIHTOF Also featuring Marco Sanna (piano). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Boulanger, Beamish & Britten, Sun 6 Oct, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LONDON CONCERTANTE CHAMBER ENSEMBLE: VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS BY CANDLELIGHT Sun 6 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

ST ALKMUND'S CHARITY CONCERT Featuring musicians from Shrewsbury School, Sun 6 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

Comedy

MAUREEN YOUNGER, SUSIE MCCABE, BARBARA NICE, MAPLE & KATE SHARP Tues 1 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COUNT BINFACE Wed 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RED RICHARDSON Wed 2 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BEN ELTON Wed 2 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, MARJOLEIN ROBERTSON & CRAIG HILL Thurs 3 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

ADAM KAY Thurs 3 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

ALISTAIR WILLIAMS, PATRICK MONAHAN, DOUG CARTER, RICK GOODMAN & DAVE TWENTYMAN Thurs 3 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

GERRY K, LAURA LEXX, ALFIE DUNDAS & ANDY WHITE Thurs 3 Oct, Lichfield Sports Club

RICHARD BLACKWOOD & TOMMY SANDHU Fri 4 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

EDDIE NESTOR MBE, ROBBIE GEE, MICHELLE DE SWARTE, LIM AHL GERMAIN & RICHARD BLACKWOOD Fri 4 Oct, Bilston Town Hall

MAISIE ADAM Fri 4 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ALYSSA KYRIA Fri 4 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

TOM DEACON, RYAN CULLEN, MARJOLEIN ROBERTSON & CRAIG HILL Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL SMITH Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

ALFIE MOORE Sat 5 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall



MILTON JONES Sun 6 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ROBBIE GEE, EDDIE NESTOR, JACKIE FABULOUS, ERIN JACKSON & MARLON DAVIS Sun 6 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SCHALK BEZUIDENHOUT Sun 6 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

ANU VAIDYANATHAN Sun 6 Oct, Old Joint Stock, Birmingham

AL MURRAY Sun 6 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MARKUS BIRDMAN Sun 6 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

NIPPER THOMAS Sun 6 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

NISH KUMAR Sun 6 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



Theatre

THE COMPANY OF WOLVES Theresa Heskins and Vicki Amedume co-direct an imaginative staging of Angela

Carter's gripping horror story... until Sat 12 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

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 Wigle On present an amateur version of the Disney classic, Mon 30 Sept - Thurs 3 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FOOTLOOSE THE MUSICAL Amateur version presented by Sutton Coldfield Musical Youth Theatre, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

SANCTUARY Red Ladder Theatre Company present a new musical telling the story of 'one man's hope for help and support in a time when not all strangers are welcome', Wed 2 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BULLRING TECHNO MAKEOUT JAMZ Nathan Queeley-Dennis' debut play is described as a love letter to Birmingham, exploring masculinity through Beyonce lyrics, techno raves and the deeply intimate relationship between a man and his barber, Wed 2 - Sat 5 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham

LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL Acton AOS present an amateur version of the heartwarming story, Wed 2 - Sat 5 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

COMING TO ENGLAND Floella Benjamin's award-winning book about her moving to England as a child is brought to life through music, storytelling and song, Wed 2 - Sun 6 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BECOMING NANCY A new musical about first love and finding your voice. Based on Terry Ronald's best-selling novel, Wed 2 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Rep, B'ham

DEVILLED EGGS A two-hander from acclaimed theatre makers Black Liver. Expect stories of celebrity and notoriety from the most glamorous B&B this side of Blackpool, Thurs 3 Oct, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

HOWARD'S END Mark Farrelly (Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope) stars alongside Simon Cartwright in a two-hander which explores the clandestine relationship between one of Britain's best-loved comedians, Frankie Howard, and his long-term partner, Dennis Heymer, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



WOLVERHAMPTON



WHAT'S ON

Autumn 2024



JACK + FRIENDS

Interactive dance show with live music for all ages and abilities.

SUN 6 OCT - FAMILY THEATRE



ROB NEWMAN

Rob's epic stand-up show spans history from cave paintings to car-free cities.

THU 10TH OCT - COMEDY



KATHRYN ROBERTS + SEAN LAKEMAN

Catch this acclaimed British folk duo live at NAC for a memorable performance.

WED 11TH OCT - FOLK AT THE NAC



STORY BAZAAR

Ana Lines & Peter Chand share spooky, gruesome tales.

SUN 27TH OCT - THEATRE



THE AMAZING BUBBLE MAN

Giant bubbles & tricks, sparking laughter & amazement.

FRI 1ST NOV - FAMILY THEATRE



EMPIRICAL

Nathaniel Facey, Tom Farmer & Shaney Forbes join guitarist David Preston.

THU 7TH NOV - JAZZ AT NAC



THE CARRIVICK SISTERS

UK's top young bluegrass act, twins Laura and Charlotte.

SAT 16TH NOV - FOLK AT THE NAC



IMOGEN RYALL

Singing the Charles Mingus/Joni Mitchell Songbook.

THU 12TH DEC - JAZZ AT NAC

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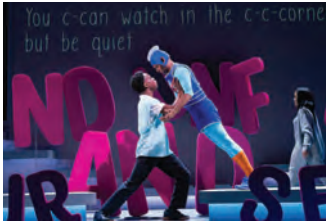
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	4 October, 8pm Melrose Quartet Tickets: £16		19 October, 7.30pm Windrush Secret Tickets: £15
	10 October, 7.30pm Terence Blacker The Shock of the Old Tickets: £12.50		25 October, 8pm Brew-ha-ha-house Comedy Tickets: £14
	17 October, 7.30pm Fairport Convention Tickets: £30		26 October, 8pm Riding The Low Tickets: £15

WONDER BOY Ross Willis' heart-warming and inspiring story about the power of communication, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



THE RETURN OF THE WICKED WIZARD OF FIZZOG Multi-award-winning company Fizzog Productions present a parody of Wicked and The Wizard Of Oz, Thurs 3, Sat 5 Oct & Sun 6 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

THE NEW REAL David Edgar's epic, panoramic play about how the political fault-line was redrawn, Thurs 3 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Other Place, Stratford-upon-Avon

WISE WOMEN The story of two women treading the same path 375 years apart, Fri 4 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

DIARY OF A BADMINTON PLAYER A show about the difficulties of ageing and finding things to do while trying to remain a local hero, Fri 4 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire



FROZEN JR Get Your Wiggle On present an amateur version of the Disney favourite, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Kid's Theatre

AWFUL AUNTIE LIVE ON STAGE! Birmingham Stage Company present David Walliams' adventure story, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

SWAN LAKE Crown Ballet presents the classic ballet, set to Tchaikovsky's iconic score, Tues 1 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET: LUNA Powerful and moving new ballet in which five female choreographers from around the region tell stories tackling universal themes, taking their inspiration from the pioneering women of Birmingham, Thurs 3 - Sat

5 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

COME FLY WITH ME Showcase by students at the Dene Dance School, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JACK & FRIENDS SLIDE Dance Company - a community of disabled and non-disabled dancers and musicians - present an interactive dance show for children aged five-plus and their families, Sun 6 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Light Entertainment

THE RITUAL A horror comedy show featuring two vampires intent on terrifying audiences in the most extravagant and charming way... Wed 2 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR - THE LOST EPISODES Three episodes of the legendary sitcom, recreated live on stage: The Bequest, The Auction and The Russian Prince, Thurs 3 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

OCEAN FILM FESTIVAL Featuring a new collection of 'the world's most incredible ocean films', Thurs 3 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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, Thurs 3 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

LIFE ON OUR PLANET: LIVE IN CONCERT WITH THE CBSO Immersive concert experience in which Morgan Freeman narrates the story of life's epic battle to conquer and survive on planet Earth. The live soundtrack is performed by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Fri 4 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



JOHN HEGLEY: AN AMERICAN IN LUTON John returns with a story of family, fantasy, love, loss - and the long-unseen son's stamp album... Fri 4 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

JOHN NICHOL'S: THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR A moving and revealing production exploring the concepts of sacrifice, camaraderie and remembrance, Fri 4 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

OH WHAT A NIGHT! - THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI & THE FOUR SEASONS Fri 4 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

PINK FLOYD BY CANDLELIGHT 'What The Floyd' play the iconic hits by candlelight, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH GUENTHER STEINER The star of Netflix smash-hit docuseries Drive To Survive reveals what really takes place behind the scenes, Wed 2 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

SHEILA'S MENTAL HEALTH SHOW - SUICIDE PREVENTION Join the mental-health counsellor & author as she contemplates the stigma, shame and silence that surrounds talking about suicide, Sat 5 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Events

GANDEYS HOLLYWOOD SPECTACULAR Featuring circus magic and Hollywood glamour, until Sun 6 Oct, Pye Hayes Park, Erdington

BIRMINGHAM ANIME FILM FESTIVAL The festival returns with another selection of visually striking and often mind-bending anime films, until Sun 6 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

GRAND DESIGNS LIVE The grand home event, full of inspiration and expert advice, Wed 2 - Sun 6 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

SHREWSBURY TOWN GHOST TOUR Learn about the history of the town and the ghosts that haunt it, Thurs 3 Oct, meet at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

THE BACK TO BACKS BY CANDLELIGHT Enjoy a tour of the Birmingham Back to Backs in the atmospheric glow of candlelight, Thurs 3 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

AUTUMN DIESEL BASH A celebration of heritage diesels, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

SHROPSHIRE OKTOBERFEST 2024 Featuring over 150 real ales, ciders, gins, wine, cocktails and more, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, The Quarry Park, Shrewsbury



PILLOWS AND PILOTS Youth groups aged seven to 15 are invited to set up base-camp at the museum and sleep amongst the aircraft, tanks and missiles, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

TWISTED PUMPKIN - FEAR THE VALLEY Live-action horror experience bringing fun and scares to Sandwell, Fri 4 - Sat 5 Oct, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, West Bromwich

THE NATIONAL WEDDING SHOW Pick the brains of hundreds of top wedding suppliers, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Oct, NEC, Birmingham



CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING DBP return with another event, Sat 5 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

RIDE TO THE WALL Thousands of motorcyclists from around the UK come together to remember the names engraved on the walls of the Armed Forces Memorial, Sat 5 Oct, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

WHITCHURCH BLACKBERRY FAIR Annual event bringing the streets of Whitchurch to life with music, performance and fun. Five stages, with live performances all day, Sat 5 Oct, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

OKTOBERFEST Bavarian fun and 'thrilling' horse racing, Sat 5 Oct, Wolverhampton Racecourse

THE HISTORIC RALLY FESTIVAL Witness historic rally cars tackling the historic stages of rallying yesteryear, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Apley Estate and Willey Estate, Shropshire

STEAM IN MINIATURE WEEKEND Check out miniature steam engines around the town, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

PYO PUMPKINS Hop on the trailer ride to pick your pumpkin from the patch, then carve it in the new indoor carving barn, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge, Staffordshire

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pumpkin-picking experience with live music, stalls and food & drink, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

MEGASLAM WRESTLING Team Megaslam do battle with Team Nasty in an action-packed head-to-head, Sun 6 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SPIRITUAL PSYCHIC NIGHT With Phil Phillips, Sun 6 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

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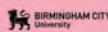
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Gigs

STEVE HACKETT Mon 7 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MARTIN SIMPSON Mon 7 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

SEA GIRLS + DAYDREAMERS Tues 8 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

SAINT MOTEL + SARAH CREAM Tues 8 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, W'hampton

CHINA BEARS Wed 9 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

KOCH MARSHALL TRIO Wed 9 Oct, The Jam House, Birmingham

BAR STOOL PREACHERS Wed 9 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE VAN MORRISON ALUMNI BAND Wed 9 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

PP ARNOLD Wed 9 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

ORANGE GOBLIN + CONAN Wed 9 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, W'hampton

IST IST Wed 9 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

10CC Wed 9 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

SHAE UNIVERSE Thurs 10 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

MICHAEL STARRING BEN Thurs 10 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

WISHBONE ASH Thurs 10 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JOE MCELDERRY Thurs 10 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

QUINT STARKIE & DORRIE JACKSON Thurs 10 Oct, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

BOWJANGLES REVUE Thurs 10 Oct, Priest Weston Village Hall, South Shropshire

REG MEUROSS Fri 11 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ONE NIGHT IN NASHVILLE Fri 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PUNK ROCK FACTORY Fri 11 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ASTON MERRYGOLD + JAMIE GREY + MAX RAE

Fri 11 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

PARTYNEXTDOOR Fri 11 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

LUKE COMBS UK Fri 11 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE VINTAGE BOYS Fri 11 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

AUDIOSHIFTERS Fri 11 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

MARK STANWAY'S KINGDOM OF MADNESS + GABRIELLE DE VAL Fri 11 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN Fri 11 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

NIK KERSHAW Fri 11 Oct, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

PORK PIE + PRETTY GREEN Fri 11 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

PETE, ANNIE & ROB Fri 11 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

JIVE TALKIN' - BEE GEES TRIBUTE Fri 11 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

LEGEND - THE MUSIC OF BOB MARLEY Fri 11 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

ALICIA BEST + BANJO JEN + AND ELLIE GALVIN Fri 11 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE RESIDENTS Fri 11 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

PUPPINI SISTERS Fri 11 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

TASHA LEAPER AS MADONNA Fri 11 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

DAN DONNELLY & JON SEVINK Fri 11 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

HANNAH SCOTT Fri 11 Oct, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shrops

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PARADISE CIRCUS Sat 12 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ST CECILIA + BACKSEAT JOYRIDE + HEADRUSH + STRANGE WAYS Sat 12

Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE REAL PEOPLE Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JAMES ALLSOPP QUARTET PLAYS STAN GETZ Sat 12 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS + LITTLE DUKE Sat 12 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

LEO SAYER Sat 12 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE HISTORY OF ROCK - LED ZEPPELIN Sat 12 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PARAMORE GB + FALLEN Sat 12 Oct, 45Live, Kidderminster

CARLY PAOLI Sat 12 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

GAZ BROOKFIELD Sat 12 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SETH LAKEMAN Sat 12 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

PAUL CARRACK Sat 12 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

MARK CHADWICK Sat 12 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

BIG WOLF BAND Sat 12 Oct, The Cavern Room, Tamworth

THE DOORS RISING Sat 12 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

DIRTY DC Sat 12 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

AVERAGE DAD BAND Sat 12 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

PETE BENTHAM & THE DINNER LADIES + DEAD RAZE Sat 12 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

PRATEEK KUHAD Sun 13 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SKINNY LIVING Sun 13 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

CAT BURNS + MEGA Sun 13 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

STEVE HACKETT Sun 13 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

UK PINK FLOYD EXPERIENCE Sun 13 Oct, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

SALT HOUSE Sun 13 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT: 190 YEARS OF TOWN HALL Featuring Anthony Peers (presenter), Mon 7 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

LVIV NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA OF UKRAINE Featuring Theodore Kuchar (conductor), Oksana Hretchyn (violin) & Jiří Bárta (cello). Programme includes works by Rossini, Sibelius, Brahms & Beethoven, Tues 8 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Mia Serracino-Ingloft (mezzo soprano) & Declan Hickey (guitar). Programme includes works by Faure, Britten & Jonty Lefroy-Watt, Tues 8 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO RUSH HOUR CONCERT Featuring Thomas Søndergård (conductor). Programme comprises Brahms' Symphony No.2, Wed 9 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO: BRAHMS 2 Featuring Thomas Søndergård (conductor) & Leila Josefowicz (violin). Programme includes works by Strauss, Adès & Brahms, Thurs 10 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GINA TAYLOR HARP RECITAL Fri 11 Oct, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

AN EVENING WITH SOPRANO CARLY PAOLI Sat 12 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

ULRICH HEINEN (CELLO) & JOHN HUMPHREYS (PIANO) IN CONCERT Programme includes works by Beethoven & Schubert, Sat 12 Oct, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

EX CATHEDRA Featuring CBSO Wind & Brass & Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme includes works by Bruckner, Palestrina & Allegri, Sun 13 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

GIG CARITAS ORCHESTRA Featuring Irena Josifoska (cello). Programme includes works by Dvořák & Glinka, Sun 13 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

POLYPHONICA RECORDER TRIO Featuring Grace Barton, Simone Reid & Michael Piraner, Sun 13 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

FRENCHY Mon 7 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PETER KAY Mon 7 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

MAISIE ADAM Tues 8 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

LLOYD GRIFFITH & LEE PEART Tues 8 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PIERRE NOVELLIE Wed 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SAM JAY Wed 9 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JASON MANFORD - WORK IN PROGRESS Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RACHEL PARRIS Thurs 10 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE Thurs 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM COMEDY FESTIVAL BREAKING TALENT AWARD Thurs 10 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LAURA LEX Thurs 10 Oct, Old Joint Stock, Birmingham

GARY POWNDLAND Thurs 10 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

RHOD GILBERT Thurs 10 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

KANE BROWN Thurs 10 Oct, The Wulfrun at The Halls W'hampton

ROB NEWMAN Thurs 10 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

JASON BYRNE Fri 11 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SUKH OJLA, OLA LABIB, SHAZIA MIRZA & KYRAH GRAY Fri 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Fri 11 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, ROSCO MCCLELLAND, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE & LOU TAYLOR Fri 11 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NOREEN KHAN, SHAZIA MIRZA, KYRAH GRAY & SUKH OJLA Fri 11 Oct, Birmingham Hippodrome

MICK MILLER Fri 11 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

SARAH KEYWORTH Fri 11 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RHOD GILBERT Fri 11 Oct, Aston Hall, Wrexham

MICHAEL AKADIRI Sat 12 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, ROSCO MCCLELLAND, THE RAYMOND & MR TIMPKINS REVUE & COMIC TC Sat 12 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Sat 12 Oct, Bilston Town Hall

STEVE HARRIS, PIERRE HOLLINS, MARK ROW & SUSAN MURRAY Sat 12 Oct, Molineux Stadium, Wolverhampton

JASON MANFORD Sat 12 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SARAH MILLICAN Sun 13 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GEORGE LEWIS Sun 13 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DARREN HARRIOTT Sun 13 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

SOOZ KEMPNER Sun 13 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Comedy

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MILTON JONES
RACHEL PARRIS
JASON BYRNE
MAISIE ADAM
GEORGE LEWIS
LADIES OF LAUGHTER
LLOYD GRIFFITH
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Theatre

& JULIET Matt Cardle and Ranj Singh star in a touring production of the award-winning West End musical, which flips the script on the greatest love story ever told, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

FRANKENSTEIN Tilted Wig Productions present a new show inspired by Mary Shelley's classic novel, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

CRANFORD Elizabeth Gaskell's 19th-century novel is brought to life by Stoke Rep Players, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

DRACULA Liz Lochhead's faithful adaptation of Bram Stoker's classic horror novel, Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Oct, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

DISNEY'S ALADDIN Escape to a whole new world with this touring production of the hit Broadway and West End musical, Wed 9 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Birmingham Hippodrome

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'... Thurs 10 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

UNDERMINED Danny Mellor's one-man show, inspired by the accounts of miners who lived through the strikes of 1984/85, Thurs 10 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

WE'RE NOT GOING BACK Red Ladder Theatre Company present Boff Whalley's hard-hitting musical comedy, which 'tackles the resilience of working communities, the make-and-mend fabric of family and the power of sticking two fingers up to a government hell-bent on destruction'... Thurs 10 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

MANBAND THE MUSICAL Brand-new musical comedy featuring 'a score of songs by popular music team Pete and Jo Hanlon', Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ROCK OF AGES Nicole Louise Lewis (Six The Musical) stars in a new version of the smash-hit musical, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS Brierley Hill Musical Theatre company present an amateur production of the cult musical, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Amateur version of the kooky musical, Thurs 10 - Sat 19 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

OTHELLO John Douglas Thompson takes the lead in a new production of Shakespeare's tragedy, Juliet Rylance (McMafia, Perry Mason) stars as Desdemona, with Will Keen

(Operation Mincemeat, Wolf Hall) as Iago, Fri 11 Oct - Sat 23 Nov, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

SHED Northern Rascals present 'a portrait of love, loss and the essential humanity that resides in all of us', Sat 12 Oct, Wem Town Hall

PIAF Sally Jones' one-woman show pays homage to the life of iconic French singer Edith Piaf, Sat 12 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL Amateur version performed by RockSchool UK, Sun 13 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

Kid's Theatre

THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY The People's Theatre Company fuse animation, puppetry and storytelling, Sat 12 Oct, Festival Drayton, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

CURIOUS INVESTIGATORS A new stage adventure for three to seven-year-olds, Sun 13 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

FIREMAN SAM - THE GREAT CAMPING ADVENTURE Theatrical adventure for younger audiences, Sun 13 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE PINK PRINCESS PARTY Featuring Aurora from Sleeping Beauty and Rapunzel from Tangled, plus special guest Barbie, Sun 13 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Dance

DISCONNECT: A DANCE JOURNEY THROUGH CONNECTION AND MOVEMENT Happy Feet Studios present a high-energy show blending movement and storytelling to explore human connections and solitude, Mon 7 - Tues 8 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

JASMIN VARDIMON: NOW New production in which Jasmin uses dance theatre to tell 'a story of our time', Tues 8 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

UNFURL Thrive Dance present a contemporary work that explores the environment on both global and intimate scales, Tues 8 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

Light Entertainment

HIGH JINX Afternoon of magic, illusion and circus, Sun 6 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

BEAUTIFUL WORLD CABARET WITH JANIE

DEE The award-winning West End star confronts the climate crisis and celebrates 'our beautiful world' through song and spoken word, Tues 8 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE REST IS POLITICS; ELECTION TOUR 2024 Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart lift the lid on Westminster, Wed 9 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH SIR GEOFF HURST Join England's 1966 World Cup-winning hat-trick hero as he shares stories from his illustrious West Ham and England career, Thurs 10 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

TERENCE BLACKER: THE SHOCK OF THE OLD Join the songwriter & author as he celebrates one of life's great challenges - the art of ageing with style, Thurs 10 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

ALED JONES: FULL CIRCLE One-man show in which the classical crossover artist looks back on his remarkable career, Sat 12 Oct, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

JUMPROV The UK's first Black and Brown Improv group present a unique performance made up entirely on the spot from audience suggestions, Sat 12 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

MATT DANIEL BAKER - THE MIND READER Watch as Matt gets inside the audience's minds, manipulates their thoughts and influences their decisions, Sat 12 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

DICK AND ANGEL: FOREVER HOME Join the stars from Channel Four's Escape To The Chateau as they share tales from their adventures, Sun 13 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

BIRMINGHAM IMPROV FESTIVAL: ENSEMBLE SHOW The Ensemble Players demonstrate the skills they've learned from team coach Rebecca Macmillan, Sun 13 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

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', Sat 12 Oct, Walsall Arena

DR LOUISE NEWSON: HORMONES & MENOPAUSE Medical expert Louise and Dublin-based comedian Anne Gildea challenge misconceptions about menopause and advocate better health for women, Sun 13 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Events

VICTORIAN BLACKSMITH EXPERIENCE DAY Pull on some gloves, pick up a hammer and feel the heat of the furnace, Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Oct, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW 2024 The 75th edition of the popular equestrian event, Wed 9 - Sun 13 Oct, NEC & bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

SHREWSBURY TOWN GHOST TOUR Learn about the history of the town and the ghosts that haunt it, Thurs 10 Oct, meet at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

DARTS MASTERS EVENING World champions compete in a round-robin competition, Fri 11 Oct, Uttoxeter Racecourse, Staffordshire

TWISTED PUMPKIN - FEAR THE VALLEY Live-action horror experience bringing fun and scares to Sandwell, Fri 11 - Sat 12 Oct, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, West Bromwich

PUMPKINFEST Halloween entertainment including Pumpkin Alley, The Little Scare House and a spooky trail, Fri 11 - Sun 13 Oct, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SCAREFEST The award-winning event returns with all sorts of tricks and treats, Fri 11 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire

BIRMINGHAM VEGAN FESTIVAL Enjoy a series of stalls, talks, demos and much more... Sat 12 Oct, Edgbaston, Birmingham

THE CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS SHOW Featuring club stands, private entry displays, the Classic Racer GP Paddock, a competition hall and live stunt displays, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pumpkin-picking experience with live music, stalls, and food & drink, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

PYO PUMPKINS Hop on the trailer ride, pick your pumpkin from the patch, then carve it in the new indoor carving barn, Sat 12 - Thurs 31 Oct, Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge, Staffordshire

MADE IN SHROPSHIRE MARKET Meet and buy from local, independent makers and producers, Sun 13 Oct, Dudmaston, nr Bridgnorth, Shropshire

WEDDING FAIR Join EverAfter Wedding Shows & Events for 'the ultimate wedding shopping experience', Sun 13 Oct, Himley Hall & Park, Dudley

WEDDING OPEN DAY A chance to plan your perfect wedding, Sun 13 Oct, Weston Park, Shropshire

Gigs

THE GHOST INSIDE + GIDEON + BOUNDARIES Mon 14 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

WALLOWS + MATILDA MANN Mon 14 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOE JACKSON Mon 14 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD Mon 14 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HEALTH + GOST + ZETRA Tues 15 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PALE WAVES Tues 15 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE SKINTS Tues 15 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

SQUEEZE Tues 15 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

VONDA SHEPARD Tues 15 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ISHMAEL ENSEMBLE Wed 16 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MALLORY KNOX Wed 16 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

ALICE COOPER + PRIMAL SCREAM + THE MEFFS Wed 16 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

TOBY LEE Wed 16 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

TAILGUNNER + BATTLE BORN Wed 16 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, W'hampton

COLLAPSED LUNG Thurs 17 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DECO Thurs 17 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

THE COVASETTES Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

NEW MODEL ARMY + THE AUTUMN SAINTS Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ASLAN Thurs 17 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CROWDED HOUSE Thurs 17 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

FEROCIOUS DOG + THE O'REILLYS AND THE PADDYHATS Thurs 17 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

DIZZEE RASCAL Thurs 17 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

FAIRPORT CONVENTION Thurs 17 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

JOE MCELDERRY Thurs 17 Oct, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THE MUSIC OF THE CARPENTERS Thurs 17 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

LOUIS COUPE Thurs 17 Oct, The Loft at The Old Post Office, Shrewsbury

STREISAND - WOMAN IN LOVE Thurs 17 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SOFT PLAY Fri 18 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

BÔA Fri 18 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE ENEMY + THE SUBWAYS + THE HOLLOWAYS Fri 18 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

RAZORLIGHT Fri 18 Oct, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

KENNY THOMAS Fri 18 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BEATLEMANIA Fri 18 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

THE UNDERCOVER HIPPIE + MATT JOHNSON Fri 18 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE CARPENTERS STORY Fri 18 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BEATLES COMPLETE Fri 18 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

BYWATER CALL + LAUREN HOUSLEY & THE NORTHERN COWBOYS Fri 18 Oct, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

LEO SAYER Fri 18 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FLEETING RUMOURS + A FOREIGNERS JOURNEY Fri 18 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GINGER PLAYS WILDHEARTS Fri 18 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SAMUEL MOORE Fri 18 Oct, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SLACKRR + CAPESTHORNE + PAN!K ATTACK Fri 18 Oct, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North

Shropshire

INTO THE SHADOWS Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

GARY CLARK JR. Sat 19 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

INIKO Sat 19 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE CLONE ROSES + DEFINITELY MIGHTBE + THE JAMES EXPERIENCE Sat 19 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CASH... A TRIBUTE TO THE MAN IN BLACK Sat 19 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BECKY HILL Sat 19 Oct, Utilita Arena B'ham

THE FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY Sat 19 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

BOOT LED ZEPPELIN Sat 19 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

PHIL BEER Sat 19 Oct, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley

THE UNDERTONES + THE REZILLOS Sat 19 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

STONE Sat 19 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ELO EXPERIENCE Sat 19 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SCOUTING FOR GIRLS Sat 19 Oct, Keele University, Stoke-on-Trent

THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY Sat 19 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

THE JAM'D Sat 19 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

RULE THE WORLD - TAKE THAT TRIBUTE Sat 19 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SONS OF YODA Sat 19 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

ABC - AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH MARTIN FRY Sun 20 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

THE EVERLY BROTHERS' STORY Sun 20 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE CARPENTERS SONG-BOOK Sun 20 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

MARIA LINARES PIANO CONCERT Tues 15 Oct, St Alkmunds Church, Shrewsbury

JAN ERNST ORGAN RECITAL Tues 15 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

CBSO: CONDUCTED BY SIR MARK ELDER Featuring Sir Stephen Hough (piano). Programme includes works by Brahms, Janáček & Shostakovich, Wed 16 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GILES STYLES & RICHARD WALKER PIANO CONCERT Fri 18 Oct, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

MOZART VESPERS Featuring Andrew Farrow (trumpet). Programme includes works by Mozart, Hummel & Galuppi, Sat 19 Oct, St Alkmunds Church, Shrewsbury

CLASSICAL GALA EVENING Featuring Richard Lloyd Owen (tenor) & Tina Fung (soprano), Sat 19 Oct, Four Oaks Methodist Church, Sutton Coldfield

BIRMINGHAM MALE VOICE CHOIR: AUTUMN CONCERT Featuring Steve Roche (musical director), Lesley Delo (guest artist), Chris Walk, Clare Ray & Jobe Baker Sullivan (instrumentalists). Sat 19 Oct, Emmanuel Church, Sutton Coldfield

INTERNATIONAL PIANO RECITAL Featuring Alim Beisembayev (piano). Programme includes works by Haydn, Beethoven, R Schumann & Brahms, Sun 20 Oct, Maidment Auditorium, Shrewsbury School

THE CITY OF LICHFIELD CONCERT BAND: EVENING AT THE PROMS Sun 20 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

Comedy

JACKIE FABULOUS Mon 14 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

FINLAY CHRISTIE Tues 15 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LAURA SMYTH & JOEY PAGE Wed 16 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARRETT MILLERICK Wed 16 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ALFIE BROWN Wed 16 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

JOE PASQUALE Wed 16 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DANIEL O'REILLY Wed 16 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JIMMY MCGHIE & CHARLIE BAKER Thurs 17 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL F TAYLOR, KATE BARRON, JIMMY MCGHIE, CHARLIE BAKER & MARK ROW Fri 18 Oct, The Glee Club, B'ham

JONNY COLE Fri 18 Oct, The Glee

Club, Birmingham

BARRY DODDS, LOUISE YOUNG, SACHIN KUMARENDRAN & JULIAN DEANE Fri 18 Oct, Bilston Town Hall

ALFIE BROWN Fri 18 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

JASON MANFORD - WORK IN PROGRESS Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

NOREEN KHAN Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL F TAYLOR, KATE BARRON, JIMMY MCGHIE & CHARLIE BAKER Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MUHSIN YESILADA, MICHELLE DE SWARTE, NABIL ABDULRASHID & JOSH PUGH Sat 19 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAT B, MICHELLE DE SWARTE, NABIL ABDULRASHID & LIMIAHL GERMAIN Sat 19 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Sat 19 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

OMID DJALILI Sat 19 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HAYLEY ELLIS Sun 20 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SERENA TERRY Sun 20 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LUCY BEAUMONT Sun 20 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Theatre

PRIDE & PREJUDICE* (*SORT OF) A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

SHIT FACED SHAKESPEARE: MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Acclaimed production combining an entirely serious adaptation of Shakespeare's classic with an inebriated cast member, Tues 15 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Amateur version of the Disney classic, presented by Newcastle Amateur Operatic Society, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

SHEILA'S ISLAND Amateur version of Tim Firth's comedy, set during an outward-bound team-building weekend in the Lake District, Tues 15 - Sat 26 Oct, Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield

SHOW & TELL Alan Ayckbourn's dark farce lifts the lid on 'the performances we act out on a daily basis', Tues 15 - Sat 26 Oct, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Wed 16 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic

BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE

Apphia Campbell's acclaimed play follows a singer & civil rights activist as she seeks redemption for the death of her father. Nicholle Cherrie stars, Wed 16 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre



UNSEEN: A GRIPPING NEW AUDIO DRAMA Extant presents a live event to accompany Unseen, a new audio drama that examines the subtle and insidious effect of domestic abuse on the blind and visually impaired community. Wed 16 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

A STEADY RAIN 'Gripping' crime drama inspired by the vicious Dahmer murders, Wed 16 - Sat 19 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Thurs 17 Oct, Wednesbury Library

MACBETH BY CANDLELIGHT Shakespeare's bloody tale is brought to life using poetry, soundscapes, shadows and movement, Thurs 17 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

MURDER FOR TWO Chipping Norton Theatre presents an anarchical musical murder mystery with a twist... Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Oct, Lichfield Garrick



WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Fri 18 Oct, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Amblecote

SHÔN DALE-JONES: THE DUKE Playful show that 'gently challenges our priorities in a world full of crisis', Fri 18 Oct, Arena Theatre, W'hampton

WINDRUSH SECRET One-man drama starring Rodriguez King-Dorset as three characters, Fri 18 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MAKE GOOD: THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL New musical directly informed by conversations with affected sub-postmasters, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for

audiences aged 10-plus, Sat 19 Oct, Gatis Community Space, W'hampton

WINDRUSH SECRET One-man drama starring Rodriguez King-Dorset as three characters, Sat 19 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

NIGHTMARES Three classic ghost stories live on stage: Bram Stoker's The Judge's House, Algernon Blackwood's The Kit-Bag and E Nesbit's John Charrington's Wedding, Sat 19 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

A WARNING TO THE CURIOUS One-man show in which Robert Lloyd Parry presents two of MR James' most haunting tales, Sun 20 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Sun 20 Oct, Dorothy Parkes Centre, Smethwick

Kid's Theatre

THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN Julia Donaldson's heart-warming tale about friendship and helping those in need, Wed 16 - Thurs 17 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

AWFUL AUNTIE LIVE ON STAGE! Birmingham Stage Company present David Walliams' much-loved adventure story, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Dance

THE NUTCRACKER Imperial Classical Ballet presents its version of the magical festive fairytale, Sun 13 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SWAN LAKE Imperial Classical Ballet fuses dance and live music to tell the timeless tale of good versus evil, Mon 14 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

JAMES WILTON DANCE: LORE A folklore-inspired journey into a pagan world of gods, demons and humans, Sat 19 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Light Entertainment

MOST HAUNTED: THE STAGE SHOW Spinechilling theatre show presented by Yvette Fielding and based on the paranormal investigation TV series, Mon 14 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

CARRIE HOPE FLETCHER: LOVE LETTERS LIVE West End leading man Bradley Jaden accompanies Carrie in a concert performance of musical theatre favourites, Mon 14 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

KERRY ELLIS: QUEEN OF THE WEST END

See and hear the West End's biggest hits in an intimate setting, Wed 16 Oct, Dudley Town Hall



JOHN BARROWMAN: LAID BARE An uncensored insight into John's passion for life and his profound love of song and story, Wed 16 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Popular theatre show fusing rock'n'roll, pop and comedy, Fri 18 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RICHARD HERRING'S LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE PODCAST Join Richard as he interviews top comedians, often asking questions too controversial for broadcast, Sun 20 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

RICHARD JONES: SOLDIER OF ILLUSION Family show from the Britain's Got Talent magician, Sun 20 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

MUSICALS - THE ULTIMATE LIVE BAND SING-ALONG A 'wild, interactive, and seriously rockin' musical theatre experience', Sun 20 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

Talks & Spoken Word

DR LOUISE NEWSON: HORMONES & MENOPAUSE Medical expert Louise and Dublin-based comedian Anne Gildea challenge misconceptions about menopause and advocate better health for women, Tues 15 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

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 16 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

JON RONSON'S PSYCHOPATH NIGHT Join the renowned journalist, filmmaker & author as he explores madness and the psychopathic mind, Thurs 17 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

Events

FIERCE FESTIVAL Six-day programme of daring international contemporary live art and performance, Tues 15 - Sun 20 Oct, various venues in Birmingham

THE MOTORHOME AND CARAVAN SHOW Spanning 11 halls, this huge event is

the UK's national leisure-vehicle showcase, Tues 15 - Sun 20 Oct, NEC, Birmingham

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 16 Oct, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

GANDEYS CIRCUS Brand-new 'Halloween spooktacular big-top show for all the family', Wed 16 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

THE BACK TO BACKS BY CANDLELIGHT Enjoy a tour of the Birmingham Back to Backs by the atmospheric glow of candlelight, Thurs 17 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

SHREWSBURY TOWN GHOST TOUR Learn about the history of the town and the ghosts that haunt it, Thurs 17 Oct, meet at Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

INTRODUCTION TO HOUSE HISTORY AT SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES Learn how to research the history of your house, Fri 18 Oct, Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury

TWISTED PUMPKIN - FEAR THE VALLEY Live-action horror experience bringing fun and scares to Sandwell, Fri 18 - Sat 19 Oct, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, West Bromwich

PUMPKINFEST Halloween entertainment including Pumpkin Alley, The Little Scare House and a spooky trail, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Oct, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, North Shropshire

ACWEST Tabletop gaming convention, Fri 18 - Sun 20 Oct, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

HALLO-WEEN DACHSHUND PUP UP CAFE Enjoy some spooky fun with your dogs, Sat 19 Oct, The Yard, Stafford

BACKSTAGE TOUR Explore the hidden secrets of The Rep and take a look at spaces usually closed to the public, Sat 19 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

GCCF SUPREME CAT SHOW Featuring cats of all shapes, sizes and coat textures, Sat 19 Oct, NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

PUMPKIN VILLAGE Pumpkin-picking experience with live music, stalls, and food & drink, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, National Forest Adventure Farm, Burton upon Trent

O GAUGE GET TOGETHER Celebration of railway modelling in 1:43.5 scale, Sat 19 - Sun 20 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

HAGLEY'S HAUNTED HOUSE & PYO PUMPKIN TRAIL Encounter the restless spirits of the area's dark past and pick your own pumpkin from the grounds of the Haunted House, Sat 19 - Thurs 31 Oct, Webbs, West Hagley, nr Stourbridge

Gigs

VICTORIA CANAL Mon 21 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN Mon 21 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BEARTOOTH + POLARIS + LANDMVRKS Mon 21 - Tues 22 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM Tues 22 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

ADAM ANT Tues 22 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

CHRIS STAPLETON Tues 22 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

LACUNA COIL + BLIND CHANNEL Tues 22 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

PAUL WELLER Tues 22 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

ALBERT CUMMINGS Tues 22 Oct, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

DAN CROLL Wed 23 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

CASISDEAD Wed 23 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

FUCKED UP + THE TUBS Wed 23 Oct, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

BLACKBEARD'S TEA PARTY Wed 23 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, B'ham

MAXIMO PARK Wed 23 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

STEELEYE SPAN Wed 23 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DASOM BAEK + LEAVING Wed 23 Oct, Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury

TAPIRI Thurs 24 Oct, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

STEPHEN WILSON JR. Thurs 24 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KÄÄRIJÄ Thurs 24 Oct, O2 Academy, B'ham

WALTER TROUT Thurs 24 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

EVAN DANDO Thurs 24 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE DRIFTERS Thurs 24 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

MAMAS GUN Thurs 24 Oct, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

MJ - THE LEGACY WITH CJ Thurs 24 Oct, The

Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GLAM CAMS + THE RAGING MABELS Thurs 24 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT Fri 25 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

UK FOO FIGHTERS + ROYAL MONSTER Fri 25 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

INEZA Fri 25 Oct, 1000 Trades, Birmingham

TINDERSTICKS Fri 25 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE LACK OF COMMITMENTS Fri 25 Oct, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

SOUNDS OF SEATTLE Fri 25 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

FRED ZEPPELIN Fri 25 Oct, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE DEVOUT Fri 25 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

BOY GEORGE TRIBUTE Fri 25 Oct, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

BLACK PARADE Fri 25 Oct, The Station, Cannock

MAN OF THE WORLD - THE MUSIC OF PETER GREEN Fri 25 Oct, Lichfield Guildhall

A DIFFERENT THREAD Fri 25 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BROKEN PROMISE Fri 25 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

GIGSPANNER BIG BAND Fri 25 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

KIMBERS MEN Fri 25 Oct, The Hive, Shrewsbury

ESSENTIALLY CHER Fri 25 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

ETERNITY ROAD Fri 25 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

PURE WELLER Fri 25 Oct, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

ROXY MAGIC Fri 25 Oct, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

LIANA FLORES Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

RAF-SAPERRA Sat 26 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

FELL OUT BOY + BLACK

CHARADE Sat 26 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

HENRY MOODIE Sat 26 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MAELIVE AND THE NEVER NEVERLAND EXPRESS Sat 26 Oct, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE SPECIALS LTD Sat 26 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

Y&T + CHEZ KANE Sat 26 Oct, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE CLASSIC BLUES SHOW Sat 26 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

OCTOBER DRIFT Sat 26 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

NICKELBACK UK Sat 26 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC - ABBA TRIBUTE Sat 26 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

RIDING THE LOW Sat 26 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE MAGIC OF THE BEE GEES Sat 26 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

THE ENDINGS Sat 26 Oct, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

JULIE JULY BAND Sat 26 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shrops

LEIGH-ANNE Sun 27 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

THE PRETENDERS Sun 27 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

MIKE OLDFIELD'S TUBULAR BELLS LIVE IN CONCERT Sun 27 Oct, The Alexandra, B'ham

BEN SHANKLAND Sun 27 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE ELVIS YEARS Sun 27 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

FASTLOVE - GEORGE MICHAEL TRIBUTE Sun 27 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

TALON Sun 27 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE SOUTHERN COMPANION - CHRIS STAPLETON TRIBUTE Sun 27 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT: CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH Programme includes works by Bolcom, Sowande, Price, Wallen, Dring & Flagler. Mon 21 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

PAUL NEVINS (TRUMPET) IN CONCERT Tues 22 Oct, St Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury

YOMIURI NIPPON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF TOKYO Featuring Sebastian Weigle (conductor) & Christian Tetzlaff (violin). Programme includes works by Akira Ifukube, Beethoven & Rachmaninov, Wed 23 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

WEDNESDAY CONCERT: ENSEMBLE ARCADIANA Featuring Thomas Bowes & Oscar Perks (violins), Elliott Perks (viola) & Leo Melvin (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven, E Alberga & Mendelssohn, Wed 23 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

CBSO: PROKOFIEV & SIBELIUS Featuring Jonathon Heyward (conductor) & Yeol Eum Son (piano). Programme includes works by Prokofiev, Still & Sibelius, Thurs 24 Oct, Symphony Hall, B'ham

FAURE REQUIEM Featuring Beverley Minster Choir & Robert Poyser (director), Sat 26 Oct, Shrewsbury Abbey

PAUL CARR ORGAN RECITAL Sun 27 Oct, New Road Methodist Church Centre, Stourbridge

Comedy

COLIN HOULT Wed 23 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

AURIE STYLA Wed 23 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

THE ALTER COMEDY CLUB Wed 23 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

GARY DELANEY & TONY LAW Wed 23 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JIMEOIN Thurs 24 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MARK STEEL Thurs 24 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

OLA LABIB Fri 25 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

STELLA GRAHAM, DAVE WILLIAMS & JASON NEALE Fri 25 Oct, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

RICH HALL Fri 25 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

TAMER KATTAN, BRENNAN REECE, MIKE RICE & LOST VOICE GUY Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RICHARD BLACKWOOD, JOSH PUGH, SUKH OJLA, ALEX EGAN & JO ENRIGHT Sat 26 Oct, The Rep, Birmingham

DUNCAN OAKLEY, ARCHIE KELLY & MASAI GRAHAM Sat 26 Oct, Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

FREDDY QUINNE Sun 27 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RICH HALL Sun 27 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Theatre

ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES THE MUSICAL Critically acclaimed musical inspired by the hit BBC TV sitcom, Mon 21 - Sat 26 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

NIGHTMARES Three classic ghost stories live on stage: Bram Stoker's The Judge's House, Algernon Blackwood's The Kit-Bag and E Nesbit's John Charrington's Wedding, Tues 22 - Wed 23 Oct, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, B'ham

DEAR EVAN HANSEN Multi-award-winning musical concerning an anxious schoolkid wanting nothing more than to fit in, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

CHICAGO: TEEN EDITION Amateur version, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Oct, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG Adam Garcia, Liam Fox & The Vivienne star in a brand-new production of the much-loved family musical, Tues 22 - Sun 27 Oct, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SHÔN DALE-JONES: THE DUKE Playful show that 'gently challenges our priorities in a world full of crisis', Wed 23 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Wed 23 Oct, Bromwich Hall, West Bromwich

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL Amateur version of the Dolly Parton musical, presented by Musical Theatre Stafford, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ALBERT NOBBS Lichfield Players present an amateur version of Gordon Steel's comic play, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Thurs 24 Oct, Central Library, West Bromwich

EARLY WEAVES Ascension Dance Company present a show about re-connecting with loved ones, Thurs 24 Oct, SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

DEATH BY FATAL MURDER Amateur production by Tower Players, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 Oct, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

BONNIE & CLYDE Amateur production by TADLOP, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

BRIGHT PLACES Autobiographical story about growing up in the shadow of chronic illness, Thurs 24 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham



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'... Fri 25 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

PAGLIACCI Mid Wales Opera presents Ruggero Leoncavallo's operatic thriller, Fri 25 Oct, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

WILD Brand-new theatre production exploring 'the wild within us and the wild that surrounds us'. Suitable for audiences aged 10-plus, Sat 26 Oct, Aaina Community Hub, Walsall

THE JUDGE'S HOUSE Actor Richard Usher reads Bram Stoker's chilling Gothic vampire tale, Sat 26 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

Kid's Theatre

CURIOUS INVESTIGATORS New stage adventure for three to seven-year-olds, Mon 21 Oct, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

THE DAISY DONALD SHOW Stage adaptation of Jade Bryne's much-loved children's book about a young girl with a hidden disability, Sat 26 Oct, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

CHARLIE COOK'S FAVOURITE BOOK Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's children's book is brought to life with puppetry and enchanting songs, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

MR SLEEPYBUM High-energy and seriously silly comedy show for the whole family, Sun 27 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

WHERE'S MRS LADYBIRD Moon On A Stick present a hide & seek story 'for tiny people to share with their grown ups', Sun 27 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

Light Entertainment

QUEENZ: DRAG ME TO THE DISCO! Brand-new drag-stravaganza in which the Dancing Queenz and disco

dreams collide, Tues 22 - Wed 23 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

VOICES OF EVIL Lachlan Werner's 'acclaimed ceremony of paranormal tricks and treats', Thurs 24 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

MOVING WORLDS An evening of dance on film, presented by renowned choreographer & filmmaker Rosemary Lee, Thurs 24 Oct, Glasshouse Arts Centre, Amblecote

BUBLÉ BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring Josh Hindle and his live swing band, Fri 25 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

FATHER TED CELEBRATION Featuring Irish stand-up Joe Rooney. Audiences can expect a dancing-priest competition and appearances from a nursery-rhyme-singing Ziggy Stardust, Fri 25 Oct, Halesowen Town Hall

IL DIVO An evening with the globally renowned classical crossover group, Sat 26 Oct, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SHELL SUIT CHER: I BELIEVE IN BINGO Imagine if Cher left showbiz behind, swapped leather for leisure wear, and became a shellsuit-wearing, chain-smoking bingo host... Sat 26 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HARRY PANTO - THE UNNECESSARY SEQUEL A 'ghoulishly spooktacular' parody production featuring magical illusions, pop songs and things that go bump in the night, Sat 26 Oct, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

TRÉS TRÉS CABARET A 'saucy and silly night' of entertainment with a unique line-up at each show, Sat 26 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

AN EVENING WITHOUT KATE BUSH Award-winning show paying homage to the music, fans and mythology of the Wuthering Heights star, Sun 27 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Talks & Spoken Word

STEVE BACKSHALL - OCEAN Dive deep into the wonders beneath the waves and learn more about what we need to do to save our seas, Tues 22 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

BILLY BILLINGHAM: ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER Join the decorated SAS leader and bodyguard to Hollywood stars as he shares his inspirational story, Tues 22 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

STORY BAZAAR: HUSBANDRY Brazilian storyteller Ana Lines tells stories from Barbecued Husbands whilst Peter Chand shares deliciously gruesome tales from both near and far, Sun 27 Oct, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

BILLY BILLINGHAM: ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER Join the decorated SAS leader and bodyguard to Hollywood

stars as he shares his inspirational story, Sun 27 Oct, Walsall Arena

Events

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, Tues 22 Oct, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

GANDEYS HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR Featuring an international cast of skeletons, vampires, Jack-o'-lanterns and circus artistes, Wed 23 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Merry Hill, Dudley

SHREWSBURY TOWN GHOST TOUR Returning for its winter edition, Thurs 24 Oct, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

THE BEATLES BY CANDLELIGHT Featuring a cast of West End Singers and a live band, Thurs 24 - Sat 26 Oct, Lichfield Cathedral

BIRMINGHAM COCKTAIL WEEKEND Returning for its winter edition, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Oct, various venues in Birmingham

ORIENTAL EXPRESS Chinese-inspired dining experience, Fri 25 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, nr Kidderminster

GHOSTLY GASLIGHT Explore the Victorian town under the cover of darkness and meet some of the town's shadier inhabitants, who come out but once a year, Fri 25 - Sat 26 Oct, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

PUMPKINFEST Halloween activities include Pumpkin Alley, The Little Scare House and a Spooky Trail, Fri 25 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, North Shropshire

SPOOKS & SLIDE Venture down into the ice crypt, where the spirits of yesteryear still linger, Fri 25 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, SnowDome, Tamworth

GHOST TRAINS Join the storytellers for some spooky tales, Sat 26 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

SCREAM TRAIN Hold on tight as the train roars away, passing through haunted stations on the way to Arley, Sat 26 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

PEAKY BLINDERS THEMED EVENING Interactive show offering the chance to meet the Shelby brothers and family, Sat 26 Oct, Telford Steam Railway, Shropshire

BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS Featuring a full bar, catering and family entertainment as well as the renowned fireworks, Sat 26 Oct, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

BONGO'S BINGO - THE HAUNTED HOUSE Halloween-themed version of the

original bingo rave sensation, Sat 26 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

EVOLUTION An epic drone light show that promises to take audiences on a mesmerising journey through time and space. The narrated story starts with the Big Bang - the explosive birth of the universe, before journeying into the remarkable origins of conscious life on Earth, Sat 26 Oct, Edgbaston Stadium, B'ham

HALLOWEEN NIGHTS Experience a night of tricks and treats around the historic streets, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

CHRISTMAS GIFT FAYRE Featuring a wide range of gifts and products, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

TRENTHAM HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL Featuring a fire show, live music, a pumpkin trail and makers' market, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Oct, Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire

HALLOWEEN AT APLEY Featuring pumpkin picking and carving, rides, face painting and more, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Apley Estate, nr Shifnal, Shropshire

CANAL-O-WEEN Family-friendly Halloween boat trip featuring a UV underground show, Sat 26 - Thurs 31 Oct, Dudley Canal & Caverns

SPOOKY SPIRITS & SPIDERS Use the black & white art materials to make a ghost or spider, Sat 26 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, The New Art Gallery, Walsall

SHRIEKS AND TREATS The Victorian townspeople celebrate Halloween with a host of activities for the whole family to enjoy, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge

POTIONS AND NOTIONS Drop-in event during which kids can make spooktacular clay creations to hold their imaginary potions and spells, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

DETECTIVE SCIENCE WORKSHOP Solve a whodunnit mystery using science experiments, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Ingenuity, Ironbridge

CREEPLY CRAWLIES AT THE CASTLE Explore the creepy crawlly trail and experience up-close animal encounters, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Ludlow Castle, South Shropshire

HALLOWEEN HALF-TERM Solve creepy clues and gruesome tasks, Sat 26 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Stokesay Castle, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

ULTIMATE STANCE Featuring over 350 of the best stanced show cars from the UK & Europe, Sun 27 Oct, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

BIG FISH LITTLE FISH HALLOWEEN FAMILY RAVE Halloween-themed event, Sun 27 Oct, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

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Blossoms - Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Gigs

BARBICAN ESTATE Mon 28 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

EVAN DANDO Mon 28 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

LIZZY MCALPINE Mon 28 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

JOHN GRANT Mon 28 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE HUNNA Mon 28 Oct, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

BLOSSOMS Mon 28 Oct, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

EDDIE CHACON Tues 29 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

OLD SEA BRIGADE Tues 29 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

CRADLE OF FILTH + BUTCHER BABIES + HIGH PARASITE + BLACK SATELLITE Tues 29 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

RUSSIAN CIRCLES + REZN Tues 29 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

ALTERED IMAGES + VANITY FAIRY Tues 29 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

IRON & WINE Tues 29 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

THE EVERLY BROTHERS' STORY Tues 29 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

TOM ROBINSON BAND Wed 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

MASS HOUSE + OTHERLESS + GILL Wed 30 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

DINGUS KHAN Wed 30 Oct, The Sunflower

Lounge, Birmingham
GAVIN DEGRAW Wed 30 Oct, O2 Institute, B'ham

RANAGRI + CALUM GILLIGAN Wed 30 Oct, Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

THE DRIFTERS Wed 30 Oct, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

TOWN OF CATS Wed 30 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

CARA DILLON Wed 30 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GOOD NEWS Thurs 31 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

SMOOVE & TURRELL Thurs 31 Oct, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

PINS & KNUCKLE + VARIALS + TO THE GRAVE Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Institute, Birmingham

KOE WETZEL + GIOVANNIE AND THE HIRED GUNS Thurs 31 Oct, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BOSSTRIA Thurs 31 Oct, Castle & Falcon,

STAY IN NOTHING Thurs 31 Oct, The Victoria, Birmingham

FASTLOVE - A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE MICHAEL Thurs 31 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JAMES KIRBY Thurs 31 Oct, The Robin, Bilston

BEN HOWARD Thurs 31 Oct, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

THE VACCINES Thurs 31 Oct, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

LESBIAN BED DEATH + BLACK MAGIC ORGY Thurs 31 Oct, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC Thurs 31 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

AC/DSHE Thurs 31 Oct, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

BOOM BOOM WOMB + PHWOAR + WEEKEND DAD Thurs 31 Oct, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury



Cara Dillon - Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

CBSO: KAZUKI & MILOŠ Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor) & Miloš Karadaglić (guitar). Programme includes works by Rodrigo, Rimsky-Korsakov, Falla & more... Wed 30 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

GARTH MARENGHI Mon 28 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

URZILA CARLSON Tues 29 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KAI HUMPHRIES Tues 29 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SARAH KEYWORTH & PRIYA HALL Wed 30 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BBC NEW COMEDY AWARD Wed 30 Oct, The Alexandra, Birmingham

KEVIN BLOODY WILSON Wed 30 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

JACK RHODES Thurs 31 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JARRED CHRISTMAS & COMIC TBC Thurs 31 Oct, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

MR CLEVERLY'S TRANS-CONTINENTAL DELIVERY SERVICE Multi-rolling fast-paced immersive storytelling experience, presented by the award-winning Living Records Productions, Mon 28 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

GWYNETH GOES SKIING Critically acclaimed musical telling a story of love, betrayal... and skiing! Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE PILLOWMAN Different Animal Theatre present Martin McDonagh's darkly humorous and twisted exploration of the power of storytelling, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

PERFECT PITCH John Godber's acclaimed comedy follows Matt and Rose as they're inducted into the world of caravanning and karaoke, Tues 29 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

PRIDE & PREJUDICE* (*SORT OF) A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, Tues 29 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

WINDRUSH TALES The story of six-year-old Dawn and her journey to England from Jamaica on 'the big ship', Wed 30 Oct, Smethwick Library

ONE MAN POE Threedumb Theatre

present four gothic tales by Edgar Allan Poe, performed back-to-back by one actor, Wed 30 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE ADDAMS FAMILY Amateur version of the kooky musical, Wed 30 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

MUKHTAR DAR: PARTITION OF THE HEART Live music, soundscapes, multi-lingual spoken word, dance, visual projection and theatre combine in a performance that captures both the horrors of Partition and the resilience and solidarity that emerged from it, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

ATTENTION ALL SHIPPING - A CELEBRATION OF THE SHIPPING FORECAST Charlie Connelly's one-man show promises to bring the Shipping Forecast 'vividly to life as never before', Thurs 31 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SUPERNATURAL SHROPSHIRE Shropshire Drama Company's self-penned production, inspired by local folklore, Thurs 31 Oct, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

WINDRUSH TALES The story of six-year-old Dawn and her journey to England from Jamaica on 'the big ship', Thurs 31 Oct (11am), Oldbury Library

WINDRUSH TALES The story of six-year-old Dawn and her journey to England from Jamaica on 'the big ship', Thurs 31 Oct (2.30pm), Central Library, West Bromwich

PIED PIPER A raucous and musical re-imagining of a medieval fairytale, featuring a talented cast of beatboxers, musicians and special guest performers from the local community, Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, The Rep, Birmingham

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM Starcross Theatre Company present an amateur version of the Steven Sondheim classic, Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

THE WIZARD OF OZ Amateur version of the iconic musical, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, The Little Theatre, Donnington, Telford

Kids Theatre

MILKSHAKE! LIVE ON HOLIDAY All-singing, all-dancing family show featuring children's favourites Paw Patrol, DORA, Pip & Posy, Milo and more... Mon 28 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE LITTLE MERMAID A fin-tastic family panto, Wed 30 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

DISNEY ON ICE: ROADTRIP ADVENTURES Mickey Mouse and friends take audiences on a wild ride to some favourite Disney destinations, Wed 30 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, Utilita Arena, Birmingham

GOOSE Interactive production for children, bringing to life Laura Wall's humorous illustrations and loveable characters, Thurs 31 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE A 'roar'some interactive family show, immersing audiences in the pre-historic world of dinosaurs. Post-show meet & greets are available, Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Lichfield Garrick

Dance

SWAN LAKE Presented by Imperial Ballet and featuring a live orchestra, Mon 28 Oct, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

BALANCE Keneish Dance present a high-spirited dance-theatre performance in celebration of the human body. Suitable for the whole family, Mon 28 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Thinktank, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

DEVILS AND DEMONS AND GHOULS - OH MY! Professional storyteller Maria Credali returns with 'a pocketful of new tales to terrify and tickle audiences'. Expect ghosts, ghouls, bogeymen, beasties and all manner of things that go bump in the night... Mon 28 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

WONDERS OF OUR UNIVERSE Inspiring family entertainment featuring 'distinctive storytelling, soundtrack and live presenter', Mon 28 Oct, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE MYSTERY OF DRACULA Occult Illusionist David Alnwick investigates the supernatural folklore behind Bram Stoker's acclaimed novel, Tues 29 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



MUSICALS - THE ULTIMATE LIVE BAND SING-ALONG A 'wild, interactive, and seriously rockin' musical theatre experience', Tues 29 Oct, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

KERRY ELLIS: QUEEN OF THE WEST END Enjoy the West End's biggest hits in an intimate setting, Wed 30 Oct, Lichfield Garrick

I SCREAMED A SCREAM: A VILLAINS CABARET Concert performance featuring songs from the best baddies of stage and screen, Wed 30 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

JACK RHODES Comedy, magic and nonsense combine in this performance from the Britain's Got Talent 2024 finalist, Thurs 31 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

BEYOND THE BARRICADE The UK's longest-running musical theatre concert tour, featuring songs from The Phantom Of The Opera, West Side Story, Les Miserables, Miss Saigon, Hamilton and more... Thurs 31 Oct, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ROCK ON TOMMY - AN EVENING WITH TOMMY CANNON AND FRIENDS Variety show featuring clips, stories, laughter, audience Q&As and more... Thurs 31 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

VILLAINS UNLEASHED Hour-long show featuring spiningtling songs, chilling choreography and devilish party dances. Suitable for audiences aged four-plus and their families, Thurs 31 Oct, Stourbridge Town Hall

TRICK & TREAT CIRCUS LIVE ON STAGE Featuring family-friendly characters, rib-tickling laughter, mind-blowing magic and fang-tastic tricks and treats galore, Thurs 31 Oct, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

CIRQUE DU MAGIQUE Featuring 'mind-blowing magic, world-class circus acts and death-defying stunts that will leave you on the edge of your seat', Thurs 31 Oct - Sat 2 Nov, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Talks & Spoken Word

KENTON COOL - K2 THE SAVAGE MOUNTAIN Join Britain's most successful Himalayan climber for a talk about the history of one of the world's most notorious mountains, Tues 29 Oct, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

SIR RANULPH FIENNES: MAD, BAD AND DANGEROUS Spend the evening with 'the world's greatest living explorer', Wed 30 Oct, Birmingham Town Hall

SIMON REEVE: TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH The author, TV presenter & adventurer tells stories to inspire audiences to move outside their comfort zone, Wed 30 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

DRINKS WITH A DETECTIVE: THE DARK SIDE OF SERIAL KILLERS Join crime expert Steve Gaskin as he guides audiences through the different



The Creative Craft Show - NEC, Birmingham

aspects of serial killing, Thurs 31 Oct, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH JEFF STELLING The Sky Sports legend shares anecdotes from his career. Bianca Westwood hosts, ex-Aston Villa favourite Paul Merson is the special guest, Thurs 31 Oct, Dudley Town Hall

Events

WITCH AND WIZARD SCHOOL Create your very own magic wand and practise your spells with Professor Bumbledum, Mon 28 - Thurs 31 Oct, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

PUMPKIN CARVING Pick out a pumpkin from the patch, have fun scooping out all the seeds, and draw your own design, Mon 28 - Thurs 31 Oct, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

HOGWEED'S SCHOOL OF MAGIC Calling all young witches and wizards... your classes await..., Mon 28 Oct - Fri 1 Nov, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shrops

CERAMIC GREEN MAN WORKSHOP Make your own Green Man from clay, Tues 29 Oct, Coalport China Museum, Ironbridge

DINOSLAM LIVE! - HALLOWEEN SPECIAL Travel back to prehistoric times to meet some of the most formidable dinosaurs that ever lived, in a spooky live show for children of all ages, Tues 29 Oct, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

THE GHOST WALK Take a guided walk through the ghostly avenues and alleyways of ancient Bridgnorth, where 10 ghosts will tell the eerie tale of how they met their grisly ends, Tues 29 - Wed 30 Oct, starting point Bridgnorth Town Hall, South Shropshire

CREEPY CRAWLERS Get 'up close and personal' with rats, frogs, tarantulas and snails, Tues 29 - Thurs 31 Oct, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

FASCINATING FUNGI Find out about the fascinating world of fungi and the species that live around Thinktank,

Wed 30 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

FEEDING THE FUTURE: USING INSECTS AS FOOD AND FEED A topical panel debate hosted and organised by the Royal Entomological Society, Wed 30 Oct, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

HALLOWEEN NIGHTS Enjoy a night of tricks and treats around the historic streets, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

GHOST TRAINS Dare to take a thrilling trip into the night... Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

SCREAM TRAIN Hold on tight as the train passes through haunted stations on the way to Arley, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, nr Kidderminster

SHREWSBURY TOWN GHOST TOUR Learn about the history of the town and the ghosts that haunt it, Wed 30 - Thurs 31 Oct, Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

SCREAMPUNK PARTY Featuring live music, artists, and dancing throughout the evening, Thurs 31 Oct, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE BACK TO BACKS BY CANDLELIGHT Enjoy a tour of the Birmingham Back to Backs by the atmospheric glow of candlelight, Thurs 31 Oct, Birmingham Back to Backs

OOOARGH! PIRATES Join the ghostly pirates for some supernatural fun, Thurs 31 Oct, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

SEWING FOR PLEASURE WINTER EDITION Featuring must-have supplies and workshops, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS Featuring stall holders showcasing bespoke and unusual gifts, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

THE CREATIVE CRAFT SHOW The UK's biggest mixed-craft event offers visitors access to five shows via just one ticket, Thurs 31 Oct - Sun 3 Nov, NEC, Birmingham

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FAULTY TOWERS
Original
the Dining Experience

SUN 10 NOV

SUN 23 MAR

FRI 15 NOV

BON JOVI

★ THE WORLD'S NUMBER 1 TRIBUTE TO BON JOVI ★

THE WORLD'S BEST
P!NK
TRIBUTE SHOW

Vicky Jackson
& HER FULL LIVE BAND!

FRI 22 NOV

LUKE GOMBS
UK

SUN 24 NOV

R.E.M.
BY STIPE
the definitive tribute

"THESE GUYS ARE AWESOME"
MICHAEL STIPE, R.E.M.

FRI 29 NOV

KICKIN' IT
COUNTRY

FRI 29 NOV - THE CELLARS

Jason Allan

SUN 1 DEC

MASSAOKE
CHRISTMAS
LIVE

FRI 6 DEC

★★★★★
LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU

STARRING
Don Stedid
AND HIS LIVE BAND!

THURS 12 DEC

SAT 14 DEC

EM FEST

THE GREATEST TRIBUTE NIGHT TO THE MUSIC THAT WAS NEVER JUST A PHASE.

LEGENDS OF MOTOWN

SUN 15 DEC

Christmas PARTY

The RAT PACK
Christmas in VEGAS

WED 18 DEC

GORDON HENDRICKS
AS
ELVIS
THE KING'S VOICE

THURS 19 DEC

SHOWADDY WADDY

FRI 20 DEC

SAT 21 DEC

MERCURY
The Ultimate Queen Tribute



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Museums

Unveiling Birmingham's People and their Impact on the World

Museum & Art Gallery Re-Opens 24 Oct 2024



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