

Birmingham

ISSUE 459 APRIL 2025

What's On

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LARGER THAN LIFE IT'S GONNA BE ME



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inside:

THE DETECTIVE DOG

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an evening of comedy and jazz at the Conservatoire



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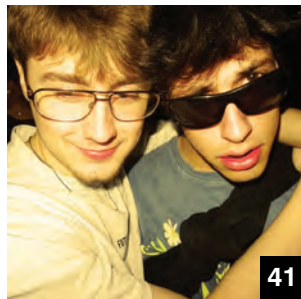
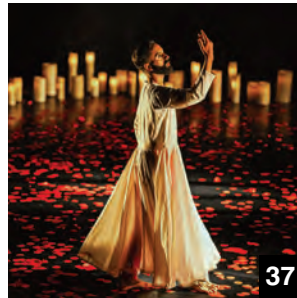
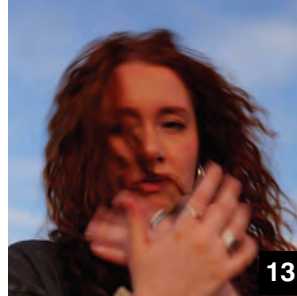


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freedom/leisure
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What's On

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Birmingham What's On



Slava's Snowshow to return to Birmingham

The award-winning Slava's Snowshow will return to the Midlands in the autumn. The hit production, which bagged an Olivier Award for Best Entertainment way back in 1998, is described by its official publicity as 'a visual and musical extravaganza, offering a dream-like vision that overflows with theatrical magic and humorous antics'. The show stops off at Birmingham theatre The Alexandra from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 November as part of a UK tour. To find out more and book tickets, visit the production's website at slavasnowshow.com

West End weekend at the Old Joint Stock Theatre

Birmingham's Old Joint Stock Theatre plays host to Kerry Ellis next month. The West End and Broadway star, whose CV includes appearances in *Wicked*, *We Will Rock You*, *Les Misérables* and *Cats*, will perform an intimate concert on Friday 30 May, and again on Saturday the 31st... To find out more and purchase tickets, visit designmynight.com



Murder in the museum...

Fancy turning detective to unravel a series of museum-based mysteries? If so, then head for the University of Birmingham's Lapworth Museum of Geology, where a crime-solving adventure will see participants needing to find hidden clues and 'cardboard' characters to make sense of a baffling puzzle. Taking the title *Murder In The Museum* - and described by its originators, *Cardboard Clues*, as 'a fusion of murder-mystery, escape room, scavenger hunt, and even *Where's Wally?*' - the family-friendly game can be played by teams of up to six players and is available to enjoy at the venue until early next month (Sunday 4 May). To find out more, visit the website at cardboardclues.com

B:Music charity launches She:Music initiative

B:Music, the charity responsible for Birmingham's Symphony Hall and Town Hall, has launched a new creative project to help women carve out lasting careers in the music industry. Titled *She:Music*, the initiative aims to

promote cross-genre collaborations and 'break down the barriers that women face in creating innovative, genre-defying music'. Applications to take part in the first year of the project open this month. For further information about how to get involved, visit the website bmusic.co.uk

Spinetingling West Ender returns to the Midlands

The *Woman In Black* will tour to Birmingham theatre The Alexandra early next year. Stephen Mallatratt's stage adaptation of Susan Hill's bestselling novel stops off at the venue from Tuesday 27 to Saturday 31 January. To book your seat, visit atgtickets.com



Custard Factory to host popular wine festival

Glasses at the ready... the Laithwaites Wine Festival is on its way to Birmingham. Producers from around the world will be gathering at The Custard Factory on Saturday 10 May to serve their wines and share the stories behind them. As well as offering festival-goers the opportunity to sample a wide range of wines, the event also features numerous masterclasses and interactive wine experiences. To find out more, visit the website at laithwaites.co.uk/winefestivals

Star names to appear at Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Cheltenham Jazz Festival returns at the end of the month, with the 2025 edition of the annual event featuring, among other performers, Roger Daltrey, Lulu, Tom Walker, Macy Gray, Amadou & Mariam and Nubya Garcia (pictured). Taking place at various venues across the town, the festival runs from Wednesday 30 April to Monday 5 May. More information and tickets are available by visiting the website: cheltenhamfestivals.org



Woodland Adventures at The Belfry Hotel & Resort

The Belfry Hotel & Resort is launching a multiple-zone attraction this month. Woodland Adventures - opening for the Easter holidays - is being described as 'a nature-inspired playground' featuring huge climbing towers, swooping slides, camo nets, zipwires, low-level hopping stones and sunken trampolines. To find out more about the new feature, as well as the venue's other family-friendly attractions, visit thebelfry.com



Disney in concert at Symphony Hall

A symphonic celebration of Disney music, animation and memories is coming to the Midlands early next year. Disney In Concert: The Sound Of Magic - performed by the Novello Orchestra and featuring memorable songs and moments from some of the Mouse House's best-loved movies - will visit Symphony Hall in Birmingham on Saturday 21 February. Tickets can be purchased at disneytickets.co.uk

Matrix on Brum's biggest screen

Midlands fans of The Matrix can enjoy the cult movie on Birmingham's biggest screen late this month. Having last year celebrated its 25th anniversary, the sci-fi spectacular will show at the city's Millennium Point on Saturday 26 April. Tickets can be purchased at millenniumpoint.org.uk

Laughs aplenty with Gobby Flicks

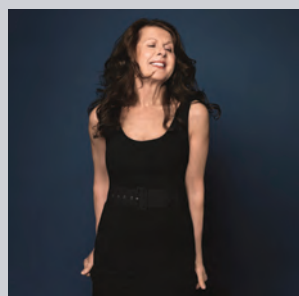
Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre is this month hosting a new event bringing together stand-up comedy and a short-film screening. Gobby Flicks Comedy takes place at the venue on Friday 25 April. Money raised from the night will go into the Gobby Girl Film Fund, to support female writers and directors in producing comedy shorts that will be screened as part of future similar events. To buy tickets for the show, head to macbirmingham.co.uk



RSC's smash-hit musical to return to the Midlands in 2026

The Royal Shakespeare Company's much-loved Matilda The Musical is heading to Birmingham. The smash-hit production will make a stop-off at the city's Hippodrome theatre in the summer of 2026 (Wednesday 1 July - Sunday 2 August) as part of a brand-new tour which begins at The Curve in Leicester later this year. Commenting on the news, the show's composer & lyricist, Tim Minchin, said: "Our aim was to make a lovely little jewel of a musical for the

RSC's Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. We never imagined that all these years later it would still be running in the West End, have been made into a film, and is now about to embark on its second tour of the UK & Ireland... "I'm deeply proud of Matilda The Musical, and every single talented person who continues to work on it with passion and enthusiasm." Visit birminghamhippodrome.com to purchase tickets for the show.



More dates for Elkie's farewell

Elkie Brooks' Long Farewell Tour is now even longer. The 80-year-old singer has added a host of new dates to her schedule, including the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday 17 September and Birmingham Town Hall on Saturday 7 February 2026. Tickets are available at elkiebrooks.com

Sports festival heading to the region

Warwickshire's Packington Estate will this summer host the UK's largest sports-focused weekend festival. Featuring family-friendly fun and games, Festival Of Sport takes place from Friday 1 to Monday 4 August and comes complete with a wide selection of activities to enjoy, including athletics, zumba, rugby, hockey, rowing and skateboarding. Live bands, DJs, an open-air cinema, a food village, circus performers and 'a whole host of sporting legends' also feature. To book your place at the event, visit festivalofsportuk.com



'Joyous' Nonsense with City of Birmingham Choir

University of Birmingham's Elgar Concert Hall will host an afternoon of 'joyous English songs and pieces' on Saturday 7 June.



Presented by the City of Birmingham Choir, the concert will feature Elgar part-songs, John Rutter's Birthday Madrigals, George Shearing's Music To Hear settings of Shakespeare, and Richard Rodney Bennett's Nonsense, all performed alongside madrigals from the 16th century onwards. To find out more and book tickets, visit the website at citychoir.org.uk

St Paul's Market to open in the Jewellery Quarter

A 10,000 square feet food hall is set to open this summer in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter.



Located on Mary Ann Street, just off Saint Paul's Square, the hall will feature six kitchens and two bars, with 500 seats available across its two floors. An opening date for the new attraction has yet to be confirmed.

Misfits at Stirchley Baths

Birmingham's Stirchley Baths is this month hosting an accessible concert for people with learning disabilities and/or autism, their families and carers.

Presented by Misfits Music Foundation, The Music Seekers features a 50-piece orchestra and explores 'some of Birmingham's coolest places through music - with lots of singing, dancing, games, and other fun surprises'. The event takes place on the afternoon of Sunday 6 April. Tickets can be purchased at the website misfitsmusic.org.uk

Making Hay in the city

The world-famous Hay Festival is staging its first-ever event in Birmingham this summer. Hay Festival After Hours: Birmingham - taking place at the city's Old Rep Theatre on Thursday 24 July - is being promoted as 'a night of big ideas, performances, provocations and new thinking, with a surprise line-up of emerging and established artists'. Tickets are on sale at hayfestival.org and oldrep.co.uk



Midlands dates for Strictly legends on autumn tour

Strictly Come Dancing favourites Brendan Cole, James Jordan, Pasha Kovalev, Vincent Simone and Ian Waite will be teaming up and hitting the road together in the autumn with a brand-new show.

Stopping off at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Sunday 5 October and visiting Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre the following night

(Monday the 6th), The Return Of The Legends will see the fleet-of-foot fellas sharing numerous stories from their illustrious careers and paying heartfelt tribute to their dance icons.

For further information about the show and to purchase tickets, visit the website at legendsofthedancefloor.com

New event to showcase local innovation at BIMM

SXSW London - the premier event for the convergence of tech, music, film, TV, arts & innovation - is bringing a free-to-attend roadshow to Birmingham this month. Taking place at BIMM Birmingham on Thursday 24 April, the event will showcase the UK's creativity, cultural diversity and cutting-edge tech industry. For further information, visit sxswlondon.com

Say Cheese! Popular foodie event in Moseley

Birmingham's Uffculme Centre is hosting a pop-up festival of cheese late this month. Featuring a mixture of street food and traders, bars, DJs, stalls and more, Cheese Fest takes place at the Moseley-located venue on Saturday 26 April. Tickets for the event can be purchased at designmynight.com



Rock It Out with Circus Extreme at the NEC

The circus is coming to town. Or, to be more precise, Circus Extreme -



presenting a show which promises 'a ground-breaking fusion of live rock music and world-class circus stunts'. Visiting Birmingham's NEC from Friday 16 May to Sunday 1 June, and taking the title Rock It Out, the 'high-octane' show combines 'death-defying acrobatics, extreme motocross and gravity-defying aerial acts with the pulse-pounding energy of a full live rock band'. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit circusextreme.co.uk

Panto is back at Solihull's The Core... Oh yes it is!

The Core theatre in Solihull will this Christmas host its first pantomime since 2022.

Featuring 'spectacular sets, breathtaking special effects, gorgeous costumes and mountains of mayhem', the award-winning Little Wolf Entertainment's production of Aladdin will show at the venue from Saturday 6 December to Sunday 4 January. To find out more about the production, visit thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk

B:Music

Town Hall & Symphony Hall

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Natalie Tenenbaum
02 Apr | JBPS at Symphony Hall



Good Friday St Matthew Passion with Ex Cathedra
18 Apr | Symphony Hall



Pop in & try!

The Codfather
B:Eats at Symphony Hall:
11am-4pm Mon-Sat & pre-show



The 'Million Dollar Bash': Ashley Hutchings 80th Birthday Celebration
18 Apr | Town Hall



Gregory Porter
23 & 24 Apr | Symphony Hall



Guenter Steiner Live: Unfiltered
25 Apr | Symphony Hall



Kiell Smith-Bynoe & Friends: Kool Story Bro
25 Apr | Town Hall



Lionel: The Music of Lionel Richie
26 Apr | Town Hall



Top Gun: Maverick - In Concert
27 Apr | Symphony Hall



Just My Imagination: The Music of The Temptations
27 Apr | Town Hall



Anastacia: Not That Kind
28 Apr | Symphony Hall

bmusic.co.uk

Great Nights Out
start with **B:Music!**

Celebrating individuality at Birmingham's Ikon

A photography showcase, celebrating the individual personalities of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), will be exhibited at Birmingham's Ikon art gallery in the middle of the month. Presented by Changing Our Lives, an organisation which tackles social injustice and health inequalities, Front And Centre features portraits of 14 individuals from across the West Midlands. The exhibition - which aims to challenge the absence of disability representation in mainstream art spaces - is available to view from Wednesday 16 to Monday 21 April.



Family-friendly theatre production forging ahead

A brand-new family-friendly theatre show is coming to Birmingham this month. The Story Forge: Make Your Own Myth is a co-production between the award-winning Rubbish Shakespeare Company and comedic podcasters the Silly History Boys. Described by its publicity as 'a hilarious, high-octane adventure, told through a distinctive fusion of clowning, silly storytelling, physical comedy and live music', the show visits the city's Midlands Arts Centre on Sunday 27 April, with performances at 11.30am & 2.30pm. For further information and tickets, visit the venue's website at macbirmingham.co.uk



Trigger Happy TV goes live to celebrate birthday

If you fondly remember hidden camera/practical joke comedy series Trigger Happy TV, you may want to make a beeline for Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday 7 October. The show's presenter, Dom Joly, will be bringing his most iconic characters and sketches to the stage to celebrate the series' 25th anniversary. Audience members are being advised to stay on the lookout for pranks and unexpected events. They may also find themselves starring in their very own Trigger Happy TV sketch! To book your seat, visit b:music.co.uk



Stop the bus! Priscilla heading back to the Midlands

Hit musical Priscilla Queen Of The Desert will be making a springtime stop-off at Birmingham Hippodrome next year as part of a new UK & Ireland tour. The much-loved show, which is based on the same-titled 1994

Oscar-winning film, shows at the theatre from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 March 2026. To find out more about the production and purchase tickets, visit the venue's website at birminghamhippodrome.com

Makers Central returning to the NEC next month

Makers, hobbyists and artists from all over the world will be celebrating their passion for all things creative at Birmingham's NEC next month, when the Makers Central show returns to the venue on Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 May. Further information about the event is available by visiting the associated website at makerscentral.co.uk



Birmingham Incantations

Incantations Fest, a two-day event dedicated to post-punk, experimental music and artistic expression, is making a welcome return this month. The festival takes place at Birmingham's Centrala on Friday 11 & Saturday 12 April. To find out more and purchase tickets, visit centrala-shop.co.uk

Hollywood icon brings new tour to Birmingham

Hollywood film star Bill Murray is visiting Birmingham in the summer with his New Worlds tour. The Ghostbusters and Groundhog Day actor will appear at the city's Symphony Hall on Wednesday 25 June alongside cellist Jan Vogler, pianist Vanessa Perez and violinist Mira Wang. To the accompaniment of the classically trained musicians, Bill will be singing songs and reading from American literary classics by authors including Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway. For more information about the show and to purchase tickets, visit the Symphony Hall website at bmusic.co.uk



Young performers to tell a true story of orphans

The talented young performers of British Youth Music Theatre are presenting a brand-new musical in association with Birmingham Hippodrome late this month. Taking the title The Naughty Carriage On The Orphan Train, the show is based on the true story of orphans who were taken out of New York on trains and paraded in front of families for adoption. The production will be performed in the Hippodrome's Patrick Studio from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 April. For tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com



'THIS IS A MUST. DON'T MISS IT'

WHATSONSTAGE

SIMON FRIEND ENTERTAINMENT AND JOSH ANDREWS PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS A WILTSHIRE CREATIVE PRODUCTION

THE THRILLER THAT GRIPPED THE WORLD

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING NOVEL BY PAULA HAWKINS
AND DREAMWORKS FILM
ADAPTED BY RACHEL WAGSTAFF & DUNCAN ABEL

STARRING

LOUISA LYTTON

DIRECTED BY LOVEDAY INGRAM

THE ALEXANDRA BIRMINGHAM
AN ATG ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

TUE 29 APR – SAT 3 MAY
[ATGTICKETS.COM/BIRMINGHAM*](https://atgtickets.com/birmingham)

*FEES APPLY



A DYING ART

Ore Oduba makes his crime-drama debut in a stage adaptation of Peter James' novel *Picture You Dead*

Peter James' popular DSI Grace novels might be set in the sunny south-coast location of Brighton, but they feature the dark and unsavory subjects of crime and murder. The books have not only been adapted into a number of ITV dramas, but also a series of hit stage plays. The seventh such adaptation, Picture You Dead, tours the UK this year and features Strictly winner, TV presenter & musical theatre star Ore Oduba, who here talks to What's On about the brand-new show and his glittering career...

Ore Oduba is a familiar face on the nation's screens, having regularly featured as a TV presenter since he began on CBBC's Newsround in 2008. In recent years, he's embarked on a flourishing career in musical theatre, touring the UK with Grease, The Rocky Horror Show, Pretty Woman: The Musical and - most recently - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, in which he took the lead role of Caractacus Potts.

Ore's next venture swaps sequins for suspects, as he appears on stage in his first non-musical endeavour: an adaptation of Peter James' thriller Picture You Dead. Playing the antagonistic Stuart Piper, he's appearing alongside George Rainsford as DSI Roy Grace, the Brightonian detective who features in many of James' novels.

"It's really, really exciting," says Ore. "Not only the fact that you get to do something new, and be at the beginning of a new journey, and meet amazing creatively talented people, but this is a brand-new stage production. No-one's ever done it before; it's the first time it's ever been created. That's such a thrill, because it gives you free rein to put your stamp on it, and hopefully make it a really epic trip to the theatre."

The adaptation, just like the novel, takes a foray into the fine-art world - as you might have guessed from the play's punny title.

"Picture You Dead is the seventh stage adaptation of the very successful Peter James novels," says Ore. "They're all thrillers, and in this story, a very ordinary couple happens to find a very expensive piece of artwork at a car boot sale. From that point, their whole world turns upside down, and we find out about all of the characters that are affected by this serendipity. There's an intensity to it, but there's also a lot of humour - and at the end of the day it's a thriller, so there might be some trouble on stage, too!

"My character is Stuart Piper, who is a little bit of a villain of the piece. It's actually my 'villain era' that we're all going into! I find it quite unnervingly natural to just slip into that mode. It's a really lovely part, and

there's a lot of eccentricity that I'm going to be able to bring to it."

It's not Ore's first venture into the world of Peter James, and he has a theory as to why the books, and their adaptations, have proved such a hit.

"I came to watch another one of the series - my friend Laura Whitmore was in one [entitled Not Dead Enough] a few years ago. I think the audiences for the Peter James novels love where it's set, and they love the way Peter creates these characters - always in a relatable world, set down in the Sussex and Brighton area. It feels like the kind of capers that could happen within your community."

Ore might have found fame on the TV screen, but his first love was performing in the theatre.

"It was the place that I always felt most at home when I was school-age. I was desperate to be in a school production, well before I was of age. I remember getting my first school role when I was 11, and just falling in love with being under that spotlight - being able to thrive. I think from a kid's perspective, if that's where you thrive, it's where you find your voice and where you find your calling. Actually, it's only hit me in the last couple of years that this is always where I was meant to be - or certainly where I was always going to find my happy place. It feels like a very natural space to be."

And while he's taken to musical theatre like a duck to water, he hopes this side-step into crime drama will broaden his theatrical horizons.

"I've been wanting to work with the wonderful producer of this show for many, many years. We've been friends for a long time, just trying to find the right project and fit it in within the schedule. We tried really, really hard to make this work, so I'm thrilled. I'm so at home in the theatre; it really is my happy place. I've been wanting to continue to develop the craft, and doing a play like this - it's hopefully going to be hugely popular and successful, but also the other talent on stage is mind-blowing - I feel very inspired."

Ore explains that each role he plays adds something new to his repertoire, with every experience carrying him forward to the next project - a fact which makes it hard for him to decide which character he's most enjoyed playing.

"The most important thread is that they've all allowed me to keep progressing. I hope that my career is long and always moving on an upward curve - I guess that's what you hope for. I certainly feel more confident now, going into an unknown - this is going to be my first play. I feel more confident, doing it off the back of all the work I've already done. The last job I did was Pretty Woman: The Musical. I had an amazing time - a really big role in an amazing, huge, commercial vehicle that was all around the country.

"I'm grateful for all of the roles - they've all been wonderful. I think you're only ever going to choose to do a job if you feel like you can offer something to it, and that's where the excitement comes. They've all been brilliant, whether that's Caractacus Potts in Chitty, or Happy Man in Pretty Woman, or Brad Majors in The Rocky Horror Show - all of them have been very, very special to me. I look back with the fondest of memories."

On the other hand, jumping into something new brings its own challenges - but as Ore says, there's always an element of the unexpected when it comes to the theatre. And that's what it's all about!

"The unknown - that's what's exciting about live theatre; every day is brand new. We're doing the same show, but there are always new challenges. I love music, so it will be, how do I get my music fix, outside of being in a musical? I'll probably keep putting the Wicked soundtrack on in my dressing room every day, and that will give me the hit that I need. I'm really looking forward to it!"

.....
Picture You Dead shows at Birmingham's The Alexandra from Tuesday 24 to Saturday 28 June

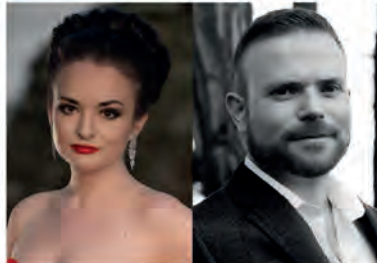


Lunchtime Music



Mondays at 1.05pm

Poulenc: La Voix Humaine



3 Apr

A Laugh Supreme
With Maria Shehata,
Eric Rushton and Alex Milner
& The Aidan Pope Quartet



11 Apr

Constest featuring Year of the
Dog & Karate Bandana



12 Apr

Neil Cowley Trio



23 Apr

Quatuor Bozzini



1 May

Global Traditions: Track Dogs &
Banter



9 May

Dido and Aeneas & Fêtes
Galante



12 - 14 June

Rachmaninoff's Symphonic
Dances



20 June

Fanna-Fi-Allah's 25th
Anniversary World Tour



26 June

Max ZT & Dan Whitehouse:
Ten Steps



29 June

RBC Folk Ensemble



4 July

Live music from across the city...

NATI.

O2 Institute, Birmingham, Sat 26 April

Multiple guitar parts, warm synths, bright keys and dynamic percussion are brought together to excellent effect in the thought-provoking compositions of fast-rising Scottish singer NATI., whose songs present reflective narratives about the challenges of finding peace and embracing oneself...

She visits the city's O2 Institute as part of a UK tour to support latest EP Golden.



Gregory Porter

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 April

Gregory Porter's warm baritone vocals and earthy brand of jazz, soul and gospel shot him to stardom more than a decade ago. Now, with two Grammy Awards to his name, the Sacramento-born singer is visiting Symphony Hall as part of a globetrotting tour that also includes numerous other UK venues. Outside of London, though, Birmingham is the only destination he's playing for more than one night - a sure sign of his enduring appeal here in the Midlands.

The 53-year-old is returning to these shores three years after performing at the late Queen Elizabeth II's platinum Jubilee celebrations - and six years after becoming the first celebrity to sing a lullaby on CBeebies Bedtime Stories.



The Flaming Lips

O2 Academy, Birmingham, Fri 25 April

Psychedelic rock band The Flaming Lips formed in Oklahoma 42 years ago and are widely considered to be one of the greatest live acts around. Their shows are certainly memorable; their huge energy is just part of

a package that also includes laser beams, confetti-filled balloons, pink inflatable robots and giant zorb balls (great for crowd surfing). The boys visit Birmingham to play two full sets: the classic Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots album in its entirety, and a programme of greatest hits and fan favourites.

Ghost

Utilita Arena Birmingham, Sun 20 April

Grammy-winning Swedish sensations Ghost have racked up nearly 10 billion streams and played many a style of rock music, including hard, arena, occult, progressive, pop, shock, psychedelic and gothic.

They are no slouches when it comes to the business of bashing out symphonic, doom, death, black and heavy metal either. Famed for their on-stage theatricality - lead singer Tobias Forge performs as Papa V Perpetuas (with the rest of the band known as the Nameless Ghouls) - Ghost are stopping off in Birmingham in support of their sixth studio album, *Skeletá*, due for release five days after this gig.



Neil Cowley Trio

Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Wed 23 April

Making an initial splash via his time with the Brand New Heavies, Neil Cowley has since become known for performing music that's very much from the sophisticated end of the rock genre.

His Trio first came together 19 years ago, their muscular anthems and galloping grooves placing them at the forefront of a new jazz movement. Their current UK tour marks the first time they've performed together in seven years.

"In my life, there have been no closer allies in musical support and brotherhood than my beloved Trio cohorts, Rex Horan and Evan Jenkins," says Neil. "So, in my quest to end a period of musical solitude, it was obvious to me who I should call!"

This month's Conservatoire concert will see Neil, Rex and Evan performing fan-favourite Cowley classics alongside music from their brand-new album, *Entity*.

Sari Schorr

Hare & Hounds, Birmingham, Sat 26 April

Coming from humble beginnings working the music scene in the legendary South Bronx of New York and on Manhattan's Lower East Side, the operatically trained Sari Schorr boasts a five-octave range. Sari first made the blues-rock world sit up and take notice in 2016, when she released debut offering *A Force Of Nature*. The critically acclaimed album has been followed by two further records and a collaboration with guitarist Robin Trower. She plays the Hare & Hounds this month as part of her *Unbreakable* tour.



LIFE OF BRYAN

Bryan Adams talks about doing what he does best
and doing the best he can...

Fifty years into his musical career, Canadian rocker Bryan Adams is still going strong, with an arena tour and a new album on the way. “What else am I gonna do?” he asks What’s On...

Readers of a certain vintage will doubtless find it hard to digest the fact that Bryan Adams is now 65, or that he’s been in the music business for half a century.

By way of mitigation, the raspy-voiced rocker started young. He bought his first electric guitar at the age of 10, was performing in bands by the time he was 15, signed his first record deal at 18, and released his debut album when he was 20.

That was in 1980, and the next couple of decades saw his career skyrocket. A conveyor belt of hit singles included Run To You, Somebody, Summer Of 69, All For Love (with Sting and Rod Stewart), When You’re Gone (with Mel C) and of course (Everything I Do) I Do It For You, which spent 16 weeks at number one in the UK. That song alone sold a staggering 15 million copies worldwide, with Adams’ total album sales now close to 100 million.

It was an incredible era, but the softly spoken Canadian admits much of it is now a blur. “It was such a big touring time for us,” he says. “We did thousands of gigs, but I don’t remember a lot of it. If it hadn’t been for videos, I don’t think I’d remember any of it. I wonder if it’s just because your brain only has the capacity to store a certain amount of information, and the rest of it falls by the wayside.”

The singer’s profile might have dipped in the subsequent decades - like many other rock acts from the era - but falling by the wayside was never likely to happen, not least because Adams has kept writing (including a Pretty Woman musical), recording and performing live throughout.

The tour for his last album, So Happy It Hurts, spanned three years and 16 countries, wrapping in Australia in February, and after what seems like an indecently brief pause, he’s already back on the road. After squeezing in a few shows in Las Vegas in March (“to keep my agent happy”), his upcoming UK tour kicks off another lengthy trek round the globe. What on earth keeps his foot so hard on the gas?

“I don’t really think about it - I just keep going. I run the ideas past my band and make sure they’re okay to do the work. We take a break, see our families and then go back out. I was saying to Keith [Scott, his long-term

sidekick and guitarist] the other day - what else are we gonna do? I love what I do, and to be fair, for example, our Australian tour was the biggest tour of Australia we’ve ever done. It was absolutely massive, and we could’ve played another week if we’d known it was gonna go so well.”

The latest tour is ostensibly to promote new album Roll With The Punches, although the LP won’t actually hit the shops or streaming services until September. Instead, Adams plans to drip-feed individual tunes to audiences over the next few months - although he insists the live shows won’t be dominated by tunes people don’t know.

“You’ve gotta play the songs that people love - that’s the whole point of being on tour. Then you pepper it with a couple of new ones if they go over well. So far, Roll With The Punches is going over really well, so we’ll keep it in there.”

The album’s title track already sounds like a classic Adams rocker. The positive reception, and success of the recent shows, sees him on an upward curve after a few tough years during which he lost his record deal and parted company with his long-term manager. He now manages himself, runs his own record label (the sarcastically titled Bad Records) and is a lot happier - and less frustrated - as a result.

“I’m completely independent now, and it’s such an amazing thing. For me, there’s no point having a record deal. A few years ago, I went in to see a big label, as I had this album, Get Up, that I’d done with Jeff Lynne. I was super excited about it, but the record company’s head of PR just looked at me and said ‘It might be a great record, but I wouldn’t know what to do with you.’”

There’ll be no such conundrum when Roll With The Punches is released on Bryan’s own label. The song’s title is all about carrying on in the face of adversity.

“I think it’s timely in the sense that there’s all kinds of things happening in the world - for example, the Americans going after Canada,” he starts, before diverting to more generic, as well as personal, concerns. “People are always going to try and drag you down, but you’ve just gotta get back up and live another day. Over the last few years, I’ve had my own ups and downs - getting dropped by my label, forming my own record company,

being an independent artist and other things associated with my business going back a few years. So a lot of it comes from this new-found independence. Nothing’s gonna get me down.”

Bryan has initially chosen to move forward by looking back. The new label’s first release was newly recorded versions of two songs he wrote when he was 21... for Kiss. Rock And Roll Hell and War Machine appeared on the glam rock band’s 1982 album, Creatures Of The Night, and helped give him the confidence to write with and for other artists. As well as delving into the archives for new material, he also released live versions of three of his early albums, all recorded during a three-night residency at the Albert Hall in 2024.

“It’s been really fun to look at the past and try to find ways to bring it into the future. At the same time, the ideas don’t stop coming - I still write songs, and I’m happy to put those out as well.”

Whether any of the songs turn out to be hits seems largely inconsequential. That’s partly because Bryan is happy to still be doing what he loves, but also because he knows he’s unlikely to get played on the radio - something that really gets the bee flying round his bonnet.

“I think the record business is quite ageist, really - once you’re out, you’re not allowed back in. I could put out Summer Of 69 now and it wouldn’t get played. Although thinking about it, it didn’t get played at the time either!

“There’s just a load of gatekeepers now that don’t let certain things get played on the radio. One of the songs on Get Up was called Go Down Rocking, which is kind of my raison d’etre - I don’t give a sh*t what’s gonna happen with all the different types of music that are out there; I’m just gonna do what I do best, and that’s rock out.

“Believe me, I have no expectations about any of this - for the tour, for the music. I’m just doing what I do and doing the best I can.”

.....
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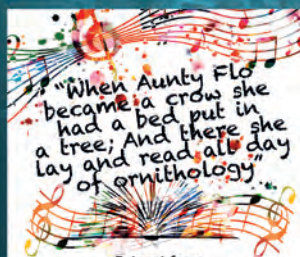


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Ex Cathedra: Good Friday St Matthew Passion

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 18 April

A favourite at Easter, Bach's dramatic telling of the Passion of Christ continues to be one of classical music's most profound experiences. Sung in German with English surtitles, St Matthew Passion is here performed by Ex Cathedra's choir & baroque orchestra and Academy of Vocal Music, coming together under the direction of conductor Jeffrey Skidmore. "Education and participation are central to our work," explains Jeffrey, in talking about

the concert. "The traditional Good Friday Bach Passion in Symphony Hall has evolved into a powerful and poignant opportunity for 'historical' participation.

"This brings all the elements of our work together through a liturgical reconstruction similar to that which might have been heard in the St Thomas Church in Leipzig in the 18th century [where the earliest verified performance of the work took place, on Good Friday in 1727]."

CBSO: Kazuki Conducts Ravel & Poulenc

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 16 April

Music Director Kazuki Yamada once again takes the helm for a City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra concert, this time leading them in a programme of work that features pieces by two of France's greatest 20th-century composers.

The concert opens with Suite No1 from the largest work ever written by Maurice Ravel: Daphnis et Chloé.

Suite No2 also features, presented on the other side of Fazil Say's performance of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major.

The evening comes to a close in the company of soprano Eleanor Lyons (pictured), who takes on the challenge of Francis Poulenc's Stabat Mater. Based on a medieval text, the work was written by the French composer in response to the untimely death of artist and friend Christian Bérard.



Poulenc's La Voix Humaine

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Thurs 3 April

Francis Poulenc composed his one-act opera for soprano and orchestra in 1958, basing it on a play of the same name (in translation, The Human Voice) by Jean Cocteau. Its focus is the final telephone conversation which a woman has with her lover, whose abandonment of her leads to a suicide attempt...

Soprano Mary McCabe is joined by pianist David Quigley (pictured) and the Northern Ireland Opera for this 50-minute presentation of a work which has been widely acclaimed for its extraordinary intensity.

The opera is preceded by performances of Poulenc by students from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.



Birmingham Bach Choir Mass In B Minor

Lichfield Cathedral, Sat 5 April

"Bach's B Minor Mass is one of the greatest works of the human mind," says Birmingham Bach Choir's conductor, Paul Spicer. "It is at the pinnacle of his achievement, which places it as high as we can measure greatness. The range of moods and emotions Bach covers in this huge work see us revelling in some of the most beautiful aria-like movements, such as the Agnus Dei, and at the other end of the spectrum, positively dancing with joy and excitement, like the opening of the Gloria, with everything in between and beyond.

"We are joined for this concert by a wonderful period instrument orchestra and some truly international soloists, including our patron, Roderick Williams."



Image: Roderick Williams

James McVinnie Organ Recital

Birmingham Town Hall, Mon 28 April

James McVinnie's impressive CV includes organ-playing positions at St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. Hailed for his innovative programming and captivating musicianship, the talented 42-year-old here presents a lunchtime-concert programme that features compositions by, among others, Ralph Vaughan Williams and JS Bach.

Phoenix Singers

St Francis of Assisi Church, Bournville, Sat 12 April

Rising from the ashes of Chorus 2000 - a large choir created in 1996 in the lead-up to the millennium - the Birmingham-based Phoenix Singers here present 'a Choral Serenade for Holy Week' to mark the centenary of St Francis of Assisi Church.

See website for full line-up

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Comedy previews from across the region...

Kurtis Conner

Birmingham Town Hall, Thurs 10 April

Life is very much sunny-side-up for Kurtis Conner at the moment. With millions of subscribers to his YouTube channel, a hugely popular podcast, and sold-out signs going up at gigs across the globe, there's little wonder the Canadian funnyman has been hailed 'one to watch' by Variety. Peddling an often absurdist style of humour, Kurtis is visiting Birmingham this month with The Goodfellow World Tour, a show which he's promising is chock-a-block with his freshest and funniest material. "There's still a part of me that's like, all these people are just here by accident - they don't mean to be here," the 30-year-old comic told themudmag.com, in contemplating the ever-increasing popularity of his stand-up shows. "It's weird because I feel like I don't do anything to deserve it - but they're there, so it's really cool."



Shaparak Khorsandi

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Fri 11 April; Norbury Theatre, Droitwich, Sat 31 May; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 12 June

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



Harry Hill

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Wed 9 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sat 26 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Sun 27 April; Malvern Theatres, Wed 7 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Fri 16 May

"Join me on my Diamond Jubilee lap of honour," says Harry Hill, "as I celebrate 60 glorious years of fun, laughter and low-level disruption."

"Marvel! As I offer new insights into the hot topics of the day, such as the demise of the SCART lead, the 'culture wars', the differences between crab sticks and rhubarb and the origins of tiramisu!

"Plus, one lucky audience member will get to join me in a double act! "So get on board the laughter train!"



Andrew Lawrence

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 10 April & Thurs 8 May

It's fair to say that Andrew Lawrence's profile has been considerably raised by his involvement in various social-media controversies over the years.

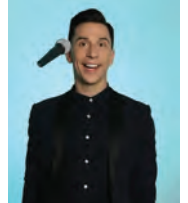
On Facebook a decade ago, he accused television panel shows of indulging in "liberal back-slapping", claiming they featured "ageing, balding, fat men, ethnic comedians and women posing as comedians" who spent their time making jokes at the expense of Nigel Farage. More recently, he caused a stir when, following the defeat of the England football team in the final of the Euros - on penalties - he tweeted: "All I'm saying is the white guys scored." He then followed up with "I can see that this has offended a lot of people, and I'm sorry that black guys are bad at penalties." The controversy resulted in the Surrey-born comedian being dropped by his agent. He visits the Gatehouse this month and next with latest show Still On The Naughty Step.



soiling merriment that will leave you with rickets."

In short, Russell Kane is a very funny man - and it's not just his publicist who thinks so. Russell has been drawing a crowd since bursting onto the scene

more than 20 years ago, serving up liberal doses of humour at a frenetic pace. The London-born comedian visits the Midlands this month with latest touring show HyperActive.



A Laugh Supreme

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Fri 11 April

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's Laugh Supreme evening makes a welcome pre-Easter return mid-month.

Described as 'a show bringing together the best of comedy and jazz in the incredible Eastside Jazz Club', the event's April edition features top-ranking Conservatoire jazz musicians the Aidan Pope Quartet and comedians Maria Shehata and Eric Rushton. Alex Milner is the host.



Russell Kane

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Sun 27 April; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 5 & Sat 6 December

Past publicity blurb for this fella said it all: "Strap in for some super-speed sunderings and inconvenient sociology in a show of self-



RAZZLE DAZZLE

Strictly's Janette Manrara talks about making her musical theatre debut as Roxie Hart in Chicago

Janette Manrara might be better known for her moves than her voice, given her status as one of the pros on Strictly Come Dancing, but this year sees her making the most of her musical theatre training. Janette is taking to the stage as Roxie Hart, one of the iconic leading ladies of Chicago, in a production which tours to the region this month and then returns in June. What's On spoke to her about her journey into the spotlight, finding a work/life balance, and All That Jazz...

Janette Manrara might be best known in the UK as a professional dancer on Strictly, appearing on the BBC series between 2013 and 2020, but now she's taking to the stage in a brand-new way. This year sees Janette making her professional musical theatre debut, playing the iconic character of Roxie Hart in a touring production of Chicago, which visits the Midlands this month.

"It's my musical theatre debut at 41," she says, "and I don't think I could have had a better role to kickstart this chapter of my career! I've been a fan of Chicago for many, many years. I've seen it many times and I've seen the film loads, as I'm sure many of us have. Roxie is such a fun leading lady to play because she's not your 'good girl next door' type at all. There's not many musicals where you get women misbehaving as leads, so it's really fun to play her."

The story centres around chorus girl Roxie, who is on trial for murder. With the help of flashy lawyer Billy Flynn, she steps into the media spotlight - vying for notoriety and celebrity with her fellow inmate Velma Kelly. "I'm so in love with the cast - they're all so talented. Djalenga Scott - DJ we call her for short - she plays my Velma. She's so talented, so good. I watch her from the side as she's doing her thing, and I'm just in awe of her. That's the same for the whole cast. Velma's a big part of the show for me; she's my partner in crime - quite literally."

With her husband and one-time Strictly co-star, Aljaž Škorjanec, Janette has a daughter, Lyra, born in 2023 - so the three of them will be hoping to find that ever-elusive work/life balance as she tours to 21 UK venues.

"That is the big puzzle of life, which I don't think there will ever be an answer for. I have to give massive, massive credit to Aljaž because, as my husband, as a man, and as my best friend, he's really going to hold the fort at home with Lyra. I'm just so grateful that we have that kind of relationship, where we really co-parent and we really are a team. I'm going to run home on my days off, straight after the show, so I can wake up in the morning at home as much as I possibly can. Aljaž and Lyra are going to come and visit me and stay with me some weeks. I said to him, I can't be more than a week away from her, so he's going to help make sure I spend as much time as I can with him and her.

"Having a partner like him by my side makes that work/life balance easier to accomplish. It's never easy. I had a big moment a few days

ago, just thinking 'Wow, I'll be putting Lyra to bed myself just once a week...' If you think about it, that's not a lot of nights that I get to put my own daughter to bed."

Janette is, of course, best known for her dancing, but some fans might be surprised to learn that her love of dance grew from a beginning in musical theatre. She began formal dance training at the age of 19, finding it was the skill at which she truly excelled. Returning to her roots as a 'triple threat' musical performer (dancing, singing and acting) is proving to be quite a journey down memory lane...

"I've always enjoyed musicals, and I started in musical theatre. I've done A Chorus Line, I've done Cats, I've done West Side Story, I've even done Chicago - but as a kid, as a teenager. Now, to be in my 40s doing my first-ever musical - it's such a full-circle moment for my career. I'm not Jeanette on stage, I'm Roxie. And the people around me - it's not Kevin Clifton, it's Billy Flynn; it's not DJ, it's Velma; it's not Brenda Edwards, it's Mama. To be in a room where all the people are going with you creatively, and not being afraid to be those characters, is so fascinating. You kind of feel like a kid again. You're playing 'imagination' - it's really cool to go back into that space, as an adult."

Preparing to play the role of Roxie has involved Janette looking back on previous renditions of the show - as well as looking forward to her own interpretation.

"I've been doing a lot of work with my acting coach - he's been incredible. We've dissected the script a hundred times and sat and watched different women play her throughout the years, finding inspiration from all the different, epic women who have been Roxie in the past, taking bits from each of them, and finding my own version of her. I think that's what's nice about Roxie Hart: you can play her your own way."

And while Janette is truly in her element when dancing, the sheer physicality of singing, acting and dancing in musical numbers has brought with it a few surprises.

"I have to sing on a ladder, in Funny Honey, and the ladder is quite high. I have to climb the ladder, swing around the ladder, up and down the ladder, on music, on time; so that's interesting - and different!"

Outside of the performance world, last autumn saw the publication of Janette's first book: *Tiny Dancer, Big World*. The book is subtitled 'How to find fulfillment from the inside out' and provides an insight into

Janette's motivational and inspirational life lessons.

"I always really liked writing - but I didn't want to write a book unless I had something really meaningful to say. I was nearing the cusp of turning 40, I had just become a mother with Lyra, and I had done my wellbeing certification. I learned so much about the human mind and how it works, and I found that a lot of the tools that I learned really changed my approach to a lot of things in life - made me a calmer person. "A really special aspect of the book is that I wrote it with my sister. My sister's a writer - she kind of stepped in, and I would say that she zhuzhed it up a bit and gave it a twist here and there. I wrote the whole book myself, which I'm really proud of - not a lot of people do that. That process was gruesome, but so therapeutic at the same time. Lesly, my sister, helped make it that little bit more special and that little bit more beautiful to read."

And while she's got plenty on her plate for now, Janette hasn't closed the door on writing.

"I have a lot of life and career left to do before I can do the autobiography! But this book felt really nice because it's not about me. You learn about me in the book, but it's not *about* me; it's about the reader finding what works for them... I really hope it helps people."

With her musical theatre career now (high) kicking off in fine style, what's next for Janette? After all, it's quite unusual for a performer to make their debut playing one of theatre's great leading ladies...

"I said to my agent, if I'm starting at Roxie Hart, where do I go? Roxie is so iconic. I really enjoy the whole musical theatre process: learning a script; working on the singing; dancing, obviously, which is a huge passion of mine anyway. We'll see! There are so many great musicals out there - and there are also some really amazing new productions that I would love to go and watch, just to see which character pops out and makes me feel like I'd love to play it. There's so much new stuff happening in the world of musical theatre. Watch this space!"

Chicago shows at The Alexandra, Birmingham, from Monday 14 to Saturday 19 April, and the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 23 to Saturday 28 June



& Juliet 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 Wanted

band member and 2015 Strictly Come Dancing winner Jay McGuiness taking on the role of the Stratford bard himself. The part of Lance, meanwhile, will be played at the Hippodrome by TV presenter Dr Ranj Singh and at the Regent next month by Steps star Lee Latchford-Evans. Featured pop anthems include Britney Spears’ Baby One More Time and Katy Perry’s Roar, as well as chart toppers Since U Been Gone, It’s My Life and Can’t Stop The Feeling.

Ghost The Musical

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 1 - Sat 5 April

The ever-popular stage version of the award-winning film makes a welcome return to the region. For those not in the know, the production tells the story of a ghost named Sam, who, caught between this world and the next, is desperately attempting to communicate with girlfriend Molly, to warn her that she’s in mortal danger from his murderer... A timeless tale about the power of love - and beautifully blending the genres of romance and comedy - Ghost features The Righteous Brothers’ Unchained Melody and numerous songs co-written by Eurythmics’ Dave Stewart.



Tambo & Bones

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 9 - Sat 12 April

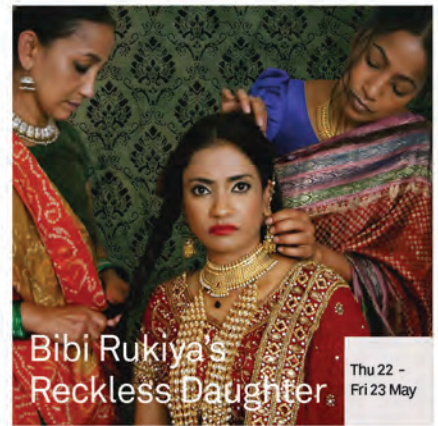
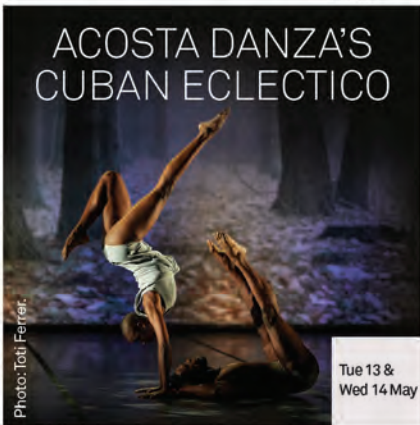
Slam poet & playwright Dave Harris has scored a significant hit with Tambo & Bones. A satire about America’s racial history, which also takes a peek into a wildly imaginative vision of the future, the show has not only been hailed a necessary piece of theatre but also ‘unpredictably bonkers’, ‘clever and prickly’ and every bit ‘as entertaining as it is unnerving’.



The story starts in the past and follows the fortunes of the initially down-on-their-luck title characters, a comedy double-act stuck in a minstrel show. But as time moves forward, Tambo & Bones’ fortunes radically change - and so too does the world around them... The Thursday performance of the production will be followed by a free-to-attend discussion hosted by theologian, broadcaster & documentary filmmaker Professor Robert Beckford.



CAP



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CAP



CAP



Dear Evan Hansen

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 1 - Sat 5 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 17 - Sat 21 June

Olivier, Tony and Grammy award-winning musical Dear Evan Hansen makes a welcome return this month.

Packed with some of the biggest musical theatre songs of the last decade, and here presented by Nottingham Playhouse, the hit 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 soon leads to a series of lies and confrontational events...

"Ultimately, Dear Evan Hansen is about hope," says Ryan Kopel, who plays the title character. "No matter what you're 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."

Just Between Ourselves

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tues 29 April - Sat 3 May

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 in the 1960s and 70s. This particular offering sprang from his ever-fertile imagination way back in 1976 and is widely considered to be his most emotionally charged play.

Bringing together five birthdays with two unhappy marriages and one possessive mother, Just Between Ourselves has been hailed a masterclass in suburban comedy and heartbreak. The production is presented by London Classic Theatre and forms part of the company's 25th-anniversary celebrations.



Ordinary Days: The Musical

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 9 - Sun 20 April

The success eight years ago of Ordinary Days' initial run at the Old Joint Stock Theatre no doubt played its part in the venue's decision to make the show its latest in-house production. Hailed by its publicity as 'a life-affirming and heartfelt musical that will leave audiences laughing one second and weeping uncontrollably the next', the show follows the fortunes of four young New Yorkers whose lives intersect as they search for fulfillment, happiness, love... and cabs.

The Pocket Dream

Lichfield Garrick, Thurs 24 April - Sat 3 May

Lichfield Garrick's next in-house production is this reworking of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Written by Elly Brewer & Sandi Toksvig - and first performed by Nottingham Playhouse more than 30 years ago - The Pocket Dream tells the story of a company of strolling players whose production of the bard's most popular comedy hangs in the balance. Can a motley crew of makeshift mechanicals possibly save the day?...

The Garrick's longtime pantomime favourites, Sam Rabone and Ben Thornton - here reuniting far earlier in the year than

usual - are joined in the show by Joe Feeney. Joe starred alongside Sam and Ben in last Christmas' production of Jack And The Beanstalk, playing the character of the ne'er-do-well Luke Backinanger (geddit?).

Only Fools & Horses

Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sat 12 April

A major hit in the West End, the stage-musical version of long-running BBC TV comedy series Only Fools And Horses will no doubt prove itself to be a nice little earner - as Del Boy himself might say - during its early-month run in Birmingham.

Starring much-loved Fast Show and Gone Fishing comedian Paul Whitehouse - who's co-written the show - in the role of Grandad, the production not only features material from the television series but also boasts 'an ingenious script and 20 hilarious songs'.

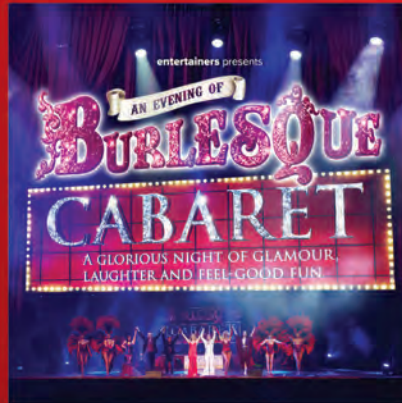


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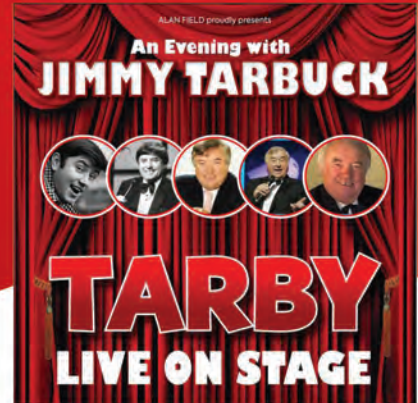
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Theatre previews from around the region



Kinky Boots

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Tues 15 - Sat 19 April

The newly appointed manager of his late father's shoe factory in Northampton, Charlie Price has got some tough decisions to make as he attempts to save the ailing business. After a chance meeting with drag queen Lola, Charlie identifies a potentially lucrative niche market: creating footwear to cater for men who like to dress as women... A topical story about diversity and acceptance, Kinky Boots is based on the 2005 film of the same name and features music & lyrics by 80s pop star Cyndi Lauper. Expect a feelgood evening of catchy tunes, fierce anthems and warm-hearted humour. Strictly Come Dancing's Johannes Radebe stars as Lola.

Pig Heart Boy

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 2 - Sat 5 April; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 8 - Sat 12 April

Cameron wishes his life was all about having friends, going to school, and diving to the bottom of his local swimming pool.

But it isn't. The 13-year-old desperately needs a heart transplant, and time is running out. When he's finally offered a new heart, he finds himself needing to choose how far he will go in order to get his life back...

Written by Malorie Blackman, the multi-award-winning author of Noughts And Crosses, Pig Heart Boy is here brought to life in a brand-new adaptation by Winsome Pinnock.



Edward II

Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,
until Sat 5 April

Edward II is perhaps best known for a scene in which the king is assassinated by having a red-hot poker thrust up his backside. But Christopher Marlowe's classic tale of love, lust and ambition has plenty to offer besides an eye-watering dose of fatal anal trauma. Here being presented by the Royal

Shakespeare Company, it tells the story of a young monarch who lets his passion for another man influence his every decision - even those which are concerned with the gravest matters of state...



A Matter Of Life And Death

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
until Sat 19 April

New Vic Artistic Director Theresa Heskins has adapted and directs this stage version of the much-loved 1941 film starring David Niven. The story's main character is World War Two pilot Peter Carter, who thinks he's about to meet his maker when his plane goes down just off the coast of England. Instead, he finds himself face-to-face with June, the American radio operator who kept him company on what he thought would be his final journey. Peter soon falls in love with her and looks ahead to a bright future - until, that is, a celestial entity makes contact to inform him that he should in fact have died in the plane crash...

Dracula

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 spiningtling 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.



Cabin Fever

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Fri 11 & Sat 12 April

The sky's the limit for Beth Miles and Aurelia Harris-Johnstone, who this month land their airborne comedy Cabin Fever in Coventry on the back of a host of positive reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Promising to take turbulence to a whole new level, the uber-talented duo bring to life a planes-worth of passengers travelling from London Heathrow to Los Angeles, delving into various characters' back stories along the way.

Given Cabin Fever's rapturous reception in the Scottish capital last summer, this could well be one flight you won't want to miss.





FAMILY

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Flow (PG)

Sat 12 – Sun 27 Apr

This Oscar-winning, animated fantasy adventure chronicles the survival of a cat and his companions as water levels rise.

Dinosaur World Live

Tue 22 – Thu 24 Apr

Dino 'Meet and Greet' after each performance.

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Minnie Stynker

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Age 3+

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Age 0-4yrs

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Nick Cope: I've Lost My Bobble Hat!

Sun 19 Oct 11am & 2pm

A new Nick Cope family show for 2025.

The Tiger Who Came To Tea

Sat 29 Nov – Sun 28 Dec. On sale Mon 3 Mar

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WARWICK

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Theatre for younger audiences



The Detective Dog

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sat 12 & Sun 13 April

Given the success of so many other stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson'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 Detective Dog.

The canine sleuth of the title is Nell, whose detective skills are certainly not in question; whether it's finding a lost shoe or discovering who left an unpleasant 'surprise' on the new gravel pathway, her ever-sniffing nose is always hard at work. So when the books at her owner Peter's school disappear one morning, it isn't long before Nell is on the case and sniffing out the culprit!...

Created with three- to seven-year-olds in mind, the show is being presented by Bristol-based Tiny & Tall Productions.

Horrible Histories: Terrible Tudors & Awful Egyptians

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 April

If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then Terrible Tudors and Awful Egyptians are two shows well worth catching.

Audience members attending the former will find out all about the fate of Henry's headless wives and his punch-up with the Pope, while families checking out the latter will be asked whether they're ready to rumble with Ramesses and - somewhat more alarmingly - if they dare to enter through 'the gates of the afterlife'!... Both productions show on each of the three days - visit The Alexandra's website to check starting times.

Shark In The Park

Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome, until Sun 6 April

Nick Sharratt has illustrated hundreds of books, a significant percentage of which have been his own.



One of these is the hugely successful Shark In The Park!, a children's story about a young lad named Timothy who goes to his local park to try out his new telescope. While there, he thinks he spots a shark - and not just on one occasion either, but several times

in several places!...

The popularity of the book prompted Nick to write and illustrate two follow-up offerings - Shark In The Dark! and Shark In The Park On A Windy Day!. All three stories are featured in this much-loved stage production from the highly rated Nonsense Room theatre company. The show is suitable for children aged two-plus.

Milkshake! Live On Holiday

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 22 April; The Civic, Brierley Hill, Mon 26 May; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Wed 28 May; Malvern Theatres, Tues 29 July

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...

The Smartest Giant In Town

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...



Bing's Birthday

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 12 April; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 April; Birmingham Town Hall, Sat 14 & Sun 15 June; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 1 & Wed 2 July

Bing's Birthday's promoters are confident that their brand-new show is a perfect 'first theatre trip' for pre-schoolers and their families. And why wouldn't they be, given that the production is awash with fun, laughter, music, puppetry and dressing-up?... Based on the animated CBeebies television series, the production runs for 70 minutes, including an interval.



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**Miss Americana:
 A Tribute to Taylor Swift**



Bing's Birthday



**The National Scout & Guide
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Theatre for younger audiences



Stories In The Dust

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Sun 6 April; Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Mon 14 April; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Tues 15 April; SpArC Theatre, Bishops Castle, Shropshire, Wed 16 April

Ideal for youngsters aged five to 12, *Stories In The Dust* follows the adventures of two travellers as they journey across a mysterious land in a contraption they've built themselves. As they go, they sing, play games and tell stories inspired by a collection of precious things they've gathered together from a time gone by. The pair are awash with ideas and full of hope - but they're also dangerously low on baked beans...

Wiltshire-based performers & theatre makers Iona Johnson and Anna Harriott here bring together live music and puppetry to present a play about the climate emergency.

Room On The Broom

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Wed 23 - Sat 26 April

Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, the creators of *The Gruffalo* are the duo behind this 'spellbinding' tale of a witch who makes the mistake of thinking she can fit a daft dog, a beautiful bird and a friendly frog - as well as her own cat - on her broomstick without it snapping in two. And when a hungry dragon appears, things really start to hot up... Presented by Tall Stories theatre company.



Rude Science

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 19 April; Malvern Theatres, Fri 25 April; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Mon 21 July

As science shows go, BBC Gastronomer Stefan Gates is pretty darned certain that his *Rude Science* production is the most revolting in the whole wide world. And he could well be right, given that it involves enormous bottoms, pee-powered fireworks, fabulous fart machines and vast whoopee cushions! Science stunts and spectacular experiments abound in a show that promises to be both entertaining and educational. Suitable for children aged five and older.



Mিনny Stynker

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 27 April

A bedroom becomes a forest and a school turns into a solar system in this Soap Soup Theatre family production. Telling the story of Kit - a child living in a strange new city - and celebrating the magic of creativity and the imagination. The show is ideal for children aged between three and eight.



The Family Magic Show

Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent, Wed 16 April; Mitchell Arts Centre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 15 June; Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 22 June; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Sat 25 October

Those unfamiliar with *The Great Baldini* are advised to imagine an amalgamation of arch Bond villain Ernst Blofeld and legendary magician/comedian Tommy Cooper. The self-proclaimed - presumably with his tongue firmly in his cheek - 'emperor of illusion, prince of prestidigitation and maharajah of mystery' is stopping off in the region this month to tell the story of his partnership with his faithful companion, Baldwin The Magical Dog... Bristol-based Baldini comes complete with a host of five-star reviews and is a firm family favourite, so be sure to check him out before he disappears in the proverbial puff of smoke...

Cinderella Ice Cream Seller

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 23 & Thurs 24 April; Macready Theatre, Rugby, Thurs 29 & Fri 30 May

Cinderella Ice Cream Seller's producers - Little Seeds Music company - are promising that their imaginative retelling of the classic fairytale will capture children's hearts and tickle their tastebuds. And well it might, courtesy of its sure-to-be-potent blend of thoughtful storytelling, 'stunning live music and theatrical magic'.



The show has been written and composed by Little Seeds Music's artistic director, Dave Gibb.

There's A Monster In Your Show

Lichfield Garrick, Mon 14 & Tues 15 April; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 10 & Sun 11 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 13 & Wed 14 May

Children's author Tom Fletcher's critically acclaimed *Who's In Your Book?* series here makes the leap from page to stage. The hit musical sees *Little Monster* being joined by friends Dragon, Alien and Unicorn for 50 minutes of comedy, chaos and high-energy fun.





LEARNING OPERA ON THE JOB

The internationally acclaimed Welsh National Opera (WNO) return to the Midlands next month to present Mozart's *The Marriage Of Figaro* and Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* - both of which will showcase the immense talents of the company's chorus. What's On recently caught up with members of the WNO Associate Artist programme (both old and new) to find out more...

Soprano Eiry Price was a student when she watched her first opera - Welsh National Opera (WNO) performing Puccini's *La bohème*. From that moment, Eiry, who was studying at the Royal College of Music in London, knew how she wanted her future to look.

"I knew I wanted to sing," recalls Eiry, who hails from Pencaenewydd in North Wales, "but I didn't know before watching that opera that I wanted to be an opera singer, really specifically. It clicked for me there: 'I

want to do this; I want to do what they're doing.' It came over me, the music, the text, the story. I remember listening to the orchestra, and with opera I always feel so overwhelmed with all these emotions, and it makes me feel something that I can't really describe. I just feel so whole after watching a piece of opera. It's also the drama, the tragedy, the love, the heartbreak - it just moves me."

Eiry's dream has come true, as she is currently a WNO Associate Artist, taking part

in a one-year programme in which young singers are offered support, training and mentorship early in their careers.

"The Associate Artist programme is amazing for young singers who have left studies and want to pursue a career in opera. There are so many opportunities for me on this programme and so much support available."

The scheme has introduced Eiry to a new world: "I'd never sung in a full opera before. I'd done opera scenes in college, but I've learnt so much already. I've had so many

lessons and coachings and so much support that I feel like it's really shaping me into a young artist."

One of the advantages of being part of WNO's Associate Artist scheme is the chance to sing roles in their productions. This spring, Eiry plays the young lover Barbarina and covers the servant Susanna in Mozart's *The Marriage Of Figaro*. She also performs Second Niece in Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

"I'm having coachings every day on the roles that I'm doing and just going through the music, adding layers to the roles, musically and artistically. It's all really helping, as I'm not doing it all by myself.

"I'm really excited for this production and looking forward to staging it with everyone. It's just a lovely atmosphere on the stage when you're all working together to try and create something amazing."

Soprano Harriet Eyley can vouch for the value of the programme, as she was an Associate Artist with WNO from 2018 to 2020. She too sang Barbarina and covered Susanna in *The Marriage Of Figaro*, as well as playing Oscar in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* and Norina in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*.

"The biggest thing about being an Associate Artist is the sense of community at WNO," she says. "I grew so much as an artist through the company, and it feels like home. I think we always remember those first big jobs out of university, and I'm forever grateful.

"You are taught your musicianship and your stagecraft at university. I honed that with WNO, and I had so much stage and rehearsal experience. That was brilliant, but it was also about the sense of teamwork on a collaborative artform and working together. And not just in the rehearsal room with other singers and musicians but also with other people in the company."

After completing her Associate Artist programme, Harriet, who was born in Derbyshire, returned to WNO as a visiting artist to play Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Krista in Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*. This season, she's performing the page boy Cherubino in *The Marriage Of Figaro*.

"What's interesting with this one is that when we went into lockdown, I was actually doing this production of *The Marriage Of Figaro* for WNO. And now I feel like I've come full circle, because I'm coming back to *The Marriage Of Figaro* but in a different role. Cherubino is a role that I really wanted to sing. So I'm looking at the production from a different perspective. In so many ways I'm quite like Cherubino. Although I'm much older, I'm quite small in stature and quite flighty in character, so I'm looking forward to finding my teenage voice - 'am I in love, am I not in love, what is love?' I'm excited by the challenge."

For bass William Stevens, being a current

Associate Artist with WNO is giving him an incredible opportunity - to cover the lead role of Figaro and play him in the final tour performance of the Mozart opera.

"It's an amazing thing for any bass baritone, and a singer of my age, to be singing the title role in this opera with WNO," he says. "It's daunting but very exciting.

"It's an opera I know very well. I've sung all the roles I can sing in that opera at some point or another, and I've directed it for Bath Opera Company all around the South West. But to do it in a main production with this company is probably the biggest thing I will have done so far in my career. It's a lot of work but very exciting - and I will be filling out half of the theatre with my family!"

William, from Keynsham in Somerset, was a choral scholar at Bristol Cathedral and went on to study singing at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff. He has held a love for opera since childhood.

"WNO have been an important part of my life for quite a long time. I've been watching their productions since I was quite young. The first time I saw WNO was *Madam Butterfly* in 2009 at the Bristol Hippodrome. I'd listened to a lot of opera by then and had done a lot of singing but not much opera. I had recently joined Bristol Opera Company, so I got my first opportunity to be on stage performing opera as part of the chorus in *The Pearl Fishers*. I thought I should go and see it done at the professional level, and the most obvious option was to see WNO at the Hippodrome."

Being offered a place on the Associate Artist programme by the opera company he had watched so often was a real bonus.

"The opportunity to have this big stepping stone in my career with WNO was particularly special for me. We get to have multiple coachings with the music staff on the repertoire we're doing with the company but also anything we're doing outside the company, and they are fantastic.

"There's also just the exposure of working with a company at WNO's level. I've been working as a professional singer for a while now, but this is my first real exposure to a national company; seeing how differently it's run and what's expected of you at this level." William recently toured in WNO's production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. He is keen to take on Mozart.

"I think *The Marriage Of Figaro* is some of the best music ever written for theatre; it's just remarkable. Also, it's a genuinely funny opera. There are a lot of ridiculous scenarios and farcical things, but there's also a lot you can relate to: silly relationship misunderstandings and relationships between you and your boss, or vice versa if you're the boss. It's timeless, funny, with wonderful music, and it's so relatable."

Fellow WNO Associate Artist soprano Erin Rossington says the programme was the next step as she builds her opera career.

"An Associate Artist is, I describe it, like an apprenticeship," she says. "You are part of the company and they are guiding you on the way, advising and helping. You're also doing some roles and working alongside people in the prime of their career.

"I was one of the nuns in *Suor Angelica*, and it's nice to be part of a production and see how other people learn things and how they work. It's learning on the job."

Erin, who is from Llanfair Talhaiarn in North Wales, covers the role of Countess Almaviva throughout the tour of *The Marriage Of Figaro*, and played her in Swansea.

"It's amazing for me to have WNO on my CV; there's so much more weight around it. To say I've studied and learned the role of Countess with WNO [as opposed to] just by myself - there's a massive difference because someone has believed in you and someone has trusted in your work."

For Erin, the Countess is a fascinating character.

"This is one of the core roles for a soprano within the repertoire, and I'm really excited to explore her more. She's quite an interesting character. She's developed a lot from when we see her in Rossini's *Barber Of Seville*. Then she was young, excited and passionate, but now she's being mistreated by her husband, who is being unfaithful.

"She's not happy to put up with it, and she's not sitting down and taking it. I think she's a very strong woman, but she's also aware that if she *did* take a stance, it wouldn't go her way. She's not stupid."

Erin is eager to bring the Countess to life: "I can't wait to be able to sing on the stage with the cast. It's a fantastic cast, and to be able to perform alongside them will be really exciting. I'm looking forward to embracing the nerves and throwing myself into the character.

"It's also really nice knowing that Harriet, a previous Associate Artist, is coming back to the company. I love WNO, and being from North Wales, I would love to return to my home company in the future for sure. It's nice to know Harriet had the same start as me - that's a good omen."

.....
Welsh National Opera perform Mozart's *The Marriage Of Figaro* at Birmingham Hippodrome on Thursday 8 May and Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* on Saturday 10 May

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Light entertainment from around the region



Kiell Smith-Bynoe & Friends: Kool Story Bro

Birmingham Town Hall, Fri 25 April

Taskmaster, Ghosts and The Great British Sewing Bee star Kiell Smith-Bynoe drops in to Birmingham Town Hall late this month with an entourage of fast-thinking comedians and a surprise celebrity host.

Sold-out performances in Edinburgh, London and Brighton mark out Kool Story Bro as a show worth catching, with the talented ensemble using anecdotes provided by the audience to spin a host of totally unscripted and hugely ridiculous sketches.

The production makes use of a rotating cast of improvisers, including Starstruck's Lola-Rose Maxwell and Nic Sampson, and Afterlife and Austentatious' Graham Dickson.

Previous special-guest hosts have included Lily Allen, Mo Gilligan, Mathew Baynton and Guz Khan.

Rainer Hersch Orkestra

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 27 April

Theatre reviewers routinely wax lyrical about the Rainer Hersch Orkestra. And well they might; the talented ensemble of madcap virtuosos really are the final word in stand-up comedy/classical music crossovers (although, to be fair, they don't face much by way of competition in that particular genre!).

Rainer and his band of merry musicians will not only be putting their unique spin on a wide selection of much-loved classics when they visit Theatre Severn late this month, they'll also be putting some icing on their concert cake by inviting the Midlands' very own Alistair McGowan to join in the fun. Should be good.



Magical Bones

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Sat 26 April

Magical Bones' inspiration for his Britain's Got Talent audition back in 2020 came via the story of Henry Box Brown, a 19th-century slave who, prior to becoming a magician, had escaped a life in captivity by hiding inside a box and posting himself to a free state... With a man like Henry as his hero, there's

little wonder the critically acclaimed magician, illusionist & Bboy - real name Richard Essien - is hitting the heights and turning some heads... A spellbinding evening of sleight-of-hand trickery awaits.



Craig Revel Horwood: Fab-U-Lous

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 18 April; Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 20 April; Dudley Town Hall, Fri 9 May

Craig Revel Horwood is best known as Strictly Come Dancing's longest-serving judge, but he's also an actor, choreographer, director and bestselling author. And he's recently added another string to his bow by releasing Revelations, his debut solo album, which he's publicising by way of this spring and early summer tour.

An evening of big songs, tall tales and bucketloads of glamour is very much in prospect when he makes two of three West Midlands stop-offs this month.

Comedy Hypnotist & Mind Reading Show

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Thurs 3 April

Now here's a theatrical production that does what it says on the tin. Described as 'the next Derren Brown' - and backed up by many a

five-star review and some admiring words from comedian Jimmy Carr - Daniel Sinclair is here presenting 'a night of wonder and laughter'. Audience members are advised by Daniel's publicity to prepare themselves for a jaw-dropping, edge-of-the-seat experience.

Queer Planet Presented By Bi-Curious George

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Tues 22 April

An award-winning drag king with a keen interest in the natural world?

It can only be London's loveable nature boy, Bi-Curious George, who this month provides Midlands theatre-goers with the chance to run the rule over his critically acclaimed Edinburgh Fringe sell-out show.

With his stated desire being 'to shatter the heteronormative binaries through which we view the natural world', George describes the production as a love letter to nature, presented in the form of a documentary, and combining stand-up comedy with parody songs and drag.

Expect to be both entertained and educated - and to leave the venue knowing far more about dolphin orgies and gay giraffes than ever you did before you arrived.



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Director Carlos Acosta

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ENGLAND

Dance previews from across the region

Aakash Odedra Company Songs Of The Bulbul

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 8 - Thurs 10 April

British South Asian dance star Aakash Odedra made a significant splash when he first appeared on the scene, quickly racking up collaborations with numerous high-profile choreographers, including Akram Khan, Sidi Larbi and Russell Maliphant.

Aakash's latest solo work is inspired by an ancient Sufi myth about a bulbul songbird. Captured and held in captivity, its melody serves as a metaphor for 'the fleeting moments of dance and an artist's life'. The work is described by Aakash as a sensitive dialogue between Islamic poetry and Sufi kathak, a form of music that blends orchestral and Indian Classical tradition.



Karen & Gorka: Speakeasy

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 6 April

Karen Hauer and Gorka Marquez here make a welcome return with a show in which they're promising to unlock the door to an undercover world of iconic dance flavours. The Mamba, Charleston, Foxtrot and Salsa are all present and correct as the talented duo call to mind the New York Speakeasy, Havana dancefloors, the Chicago Blues scene, burlesque cabaret clubs and the glittering mirror balls of Studio 54.



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Drop CERT 15 (100 mins)

Starring **Brandon Sklenar, Meghann Fahy, Violet Beane, Ed Weeks, Travis Nelson, Jacob Robinson**
Directed by **Christopher Landon**

If you think blind dates are nerve-wracking, spare a thought for Violet, a widowed mother who's going on her first one in years. When it turns out that the man she's meeting in an upscale restaurant is more charming and handsome than she'd expected, she relaxes a little. Until, that is, anonymous drops to her phone begin; personal memes that escalate from annoying to homicidal, pinged by an unnamed, unseen troll.

And things soon go from bad to worse. Via her home security cameras, Violet sees a hooded figure. It's made clear to her that the intruder will kill her young son and babysitting sister unless she follows her unseen tormentor's instructions - the final one of which is to kill the man with whom she's currently on a blind date...

Released Fri 11 April

A Minecraft Movie

CERT **PG** (101 mins)

Starring **Jennifer Coolidge, Kate McKinnon, Jason Momoa, Emma Myers, Jack Black, Jemaine Clement** Directed by **Jared Hess**

This first-ever big-screen, live-action adaptation of the best selling video game of all time finds four misfits - Henry, Natalie, Dawn and Garrett 'The Garbage Man' Garrison - suddenly pulled through a mysterious portal into a bizarre, cubic wonderland that thrives on imagination. Their only chance of getting home is to master the strange new world in which they find themselves - while simultaneously protecting it from the evils of Piglins and Zombies. Teaming up with expert crafter Steve, the group find themselves needing to reconnect with the qualities that make them uniquely creative... the very skills, in fact, which each of them will desperately need if they are ever to thrive back in the real world.

Released Fri 4 April



Death Of A Unicorn

CERT **tbc** (104 mins)

Starring **Jenna Ortega, Paul Rudd, Téa Leoni, Will Poulter, Richard E Grant, Jessica Hynes**
Directed by **Alex Scharfman**



As if accidentally hitting and killing a pedestrian isn't bad enough, Elliot and his daughter, Ridley, find themselves faced with an even worse set of circumstances: they inadvertently run over a mythological unicorn.

The pair, en route to the weekend retreat of Elliot's billionaire boss, Dell Leopold (played by Richard E Grant), take the unicorn with them, and become aware of the creature's miraculous curative properties - something which Leopold is eager to exploit for the purpose of financial gain. Problem is, the unicorn that's been hit and killed is a foal, and its bigger and far more monstrous-looking parents are soon on the war path and hell-bent on revenge... Expect a winning blend of gore and humour.

Released Fri 4 April

The Return CERT 15 (116 mins)

Starring **Juliette Binoche, Ralph Fiennes, Charlie Plummer, Claudio Santamaria, Roberto Serpi, Chris Corrigan** Directed by **Uberto Pasolini**

Uberto Pasolini's bland adaptation of the last sections of Homer's famous epic poem, The Odyssey, sees its heavyweight stars, Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche, teaming up for a third time in their illustrious careers. Haggard and unrecognisable after 20 years away fighting in the Trojan War, Odysseus (Fiennes) washes up on the shores of Ithaca. But much has changed in his kingdom. His beloved wife, Penelope (Binoche), is a prisoner in her own home, hounded by corrupt suitors who are eager to take the crown.

Scarred by his experience of the Trojan war and no longer the mighty warrior he once was, Odysseus must quickly rediscover his strength if he is to stand any chance of winning back everything that he's lost.

Released Fri 11 April



Warfare CERT tbc (95 mins)

Starring **Joseph Quinn, Noah Centineo, Will Poulter, Cosmo Jarvis, Kit Connor, Charles Melton**
 Directed by **Alex Garland and Ray Mendoza**

Alex Garland's previous offering, *Civil War* - released last year and set in a fractured near-future America in violent conflict with itself - met with waves of critical acclaim. So there's plenty of excitement surrounding the release of this latest offering from the London-born filmmaker.

Co-written and co-directed with Ray Mendoza - an Iraq War veteran who acted as an advisor on *Civil War* - the film is a real-time recreation of an actual battle in which Mendoza was involved while stationed in Iraq. "It uses the traditional grammar of cinema," Garland told *Entertainment Weekly*. "Closeups, mids, wides, push-ins, shots wrapping around actors. It is a continuous action... so it's not shooting everything in one take, but it is real-time.

"It opened up the possibility, in a strange way, to stage something almost as if it's theatre."

Released Fri 18 April



The Penguin Lessons

CERT 12a (110 mins)

Starring **Steve Coogan, Björn Gustafsson, David Herrero, Jonathan Pryce, Aimar Miranda, Nicanor Fernandez**
 Directed by **Peter Cattaneo**



The Penguin Lessons finds its inspiration in the true 1970s story of an emotionally constipated and thoroughly disillusioned Englishman (here played by Steve Coogan) who goes to work in a school in Buenos Aires in Argentina.

Expecting an easy ride, Tom Michell instead discovers a divided nation and a classroom of privileged but seemingly unteachable students.

But all is not lost... After rescuing an orphaned penguin from an oil-slicked beach, Tom's life is turned upside-down, and he soon finds himself undergoing both a personal and political awakening...

Released Fri 18 April

Sinners CERT tbc

Starring **Jack O'Connell, Hailee Steinfeld, Michael B Jordan, Wunmi Mosaku, Lola Kirke, Delroy Lindo** Directed by **Ryan Coogler**

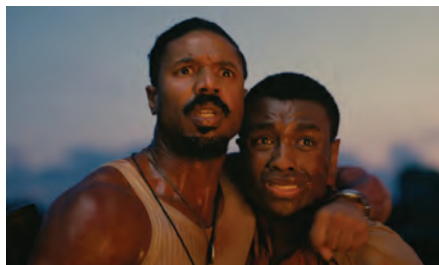
Creed star Michael B Jordan here follows in the footsteps of Robert De Niro by taking on dual roles (De Niro did so in last month's *The Alto Knights*).

Jordan plays twin brothers Smoke and Stack as they try to leave their troubled lives behind them. Returning to their hometown to start again, they discover a darkness far greater than ever they could have imagined. Ryan Coogler - who here takes the directorial reins for the first time since helming Marvel's *Black Panther* films - has revealed that, although *Sinners* will definitely feature vampires, the movie has plenty else to recommend it.

"The film is very genre fluid," he told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "It switches in and out of a lot of different genres..."

"Yes, vampires are an element, but it's not the only supernatural element in the movie. The film is about more than just that."

Released Fri 18 April



The Legend Of Ochi

CERT PG (96 mins)

Starring **Helena Zengel, Willem Dafoe, Emily Watson, Finn Wolfhard, Razvan Stoica, Carol Bors** Directed by **Isaiah Saxon**



In a secluded northern village on the island of Carpathia, a farm girl named Yuri is taught to fear the reclusive creatures known as the Ochi. However, when she discovers a lost and injured baby Ochi, she sets off on a journey to return it to its family...

Premiered earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival, the movie has received a mixed reception from the critics. But if you're in the market for a film that calls to mind fantasy-genre releases like *The Dark Crystal* and *Neverending Story*, it should definitely be worth an hour and a half of your time.

Released Fri 25 April

PIGS MIGHT FLY

Award-winning children's author Malorie Blackman talks about how science fiction can become reality...



A new stage adaptation of Malorie Blackman's 1997 children's novel, *Pig Heart Boy*, visits the Coventry Belgrade Theatre this month as part of a national tour. It's the story of 13-year-old Cameron, who has a heart condition and is in need of a transplant. Desperate to take part in normal activities, like other children of his age, Cameron must decide how far he will go to get his life back - and whether it's better to have a pig's heart that works than a human heart that doesn't. Multi-award-winning author Malorie here talks about the joys of seeing her novel adapted for the stage...

What originally inspired you to write *Pig Heart Boy*, Malorie?

Pig Heart Boy originally came about because I read a newspaper article by a doctor predicting that we'd soon have to start using animal organs for heart and kidney transplants due to a severe shortage of human donors - and I thought, what a wonderful idea for a story!

Before I started writing, I did a lot of research on transplants. There weren't many books about xenotransplantation at the time, but I was fortunate that a TV documentary called *Your Life In Their Hands* was airing, which provided useful insights into surgery and transplants.

The fact that *Pig Heart Boy* is now being adapted into a stage play is just amazing. When you read a book, you imagine the characters and their inner lives, but there's something magical about seeing real actors bring those characters to life on stage. It's almost like peeking into somebody's window and seeing that life unfold before you - and that's really special.

How does it feel to revisit this story such a long time after you wrote it?

I wrote *Pig Heart Boy* in the mid-90s, and back then xenotransplantation was still an idea the doctors were speculating about: would it ever happen? This type of transplant was still perceived as science fiction when I wrote the book. But then, a couple of years ago, surgeons in the US performed the first pig heart transplant. Unfortunately, I think the patient died a couple of weeks after the operation, but the doctors learned important lessons from it.

I've always loved science and exploring the subtle line between what's possible and what's probable. Many things once deemed 'science fiction' - like mobile-phone technology, for example - have now become reality. This evolving potential is what fascinated me about xenotransplantation.

What challenges did you face writing a children's story that deals with complex medical and ethical issues?

I had to make sure all medical details were correct, so I watched documentaries and read extensively about transplants. To keep the story relatable, I narrated it from [the main character] Cameron's perspective; a teenager facing these dilemmas. I also visited a lot of schools and talked to many children about how they felt about this subject. For me, there was no right or wrong; what I wanted to explore was 'what would you do in Cameron's shoes?' Many had reservations about animal transplants, even if they weren't vegetarians, which sparked lively debates about the ethics of it.

What I wanted to do with the book was to present Cameron and his own experiences. These are the choices he made; good or bad, right or wrong, these are his choices. What would *you* have done? Where do you think he got it right, where do you think he got it wrong? I hope the play sparks debate about xenotransplantation and how people feel about it, and what choices they would make. I think this approach is much more engaging than dictating what's right or wrong, especially for young readers.

What do you hope audiences will take away from the stage adaptation?

First and foremost, I'd like audiences to enjoy the show. But if there's a takeaway, I'd like it to be the importance of empathy and understanding for others who may be going through similar life experiences. I'd love audiences to consider not just the science, but also the ethics behind xenotransplantation, and ponder 'Would I be comfortable receiving an organ from an animal if needed? How would I feel about it?' I really hope audiences will understand why Cameron and his family made the choices they made, and feel connected to the story.

Do you think *Pig Heart Boy* can be used as a tool to discuss complex topics like this in the classroom?

I think teachers will be able to use both the novel and the play to spark discussions about these topics in a way that feels less intimidating. It's easier to discuss gritty

topics when you're talking about somebody else, whether a real person or fictional characters. I think the idea of being able to watch a character, in this case Cameron, and what he's going through - why he decides to have the pig heart transplant and what it does to his life - makes it easier to discuss than just saying 'Let's talk about xenotransplantation' in the abstract. I think this makes the subject matter much more engaging and accessible.

When writing the book, how did you make sure your work would resonate with your audience?

I engaged with my target audience directly. I visited a number of schools and asked students questions like 'How would you feel about receiving an organ from an animal? Would you go along with it? If not, why?' This always led to interesting debates, with roughly half the room open to the idea and the other half opposed. As always, there was no right or wrong answer - I was just genuinely interested in their opinions. I wanted Cameron's thoughts on xenotransplantation to mirror how a real teenager might think. His family dynamic plays a role, too - he's aware of his own mortality, even as the adults around him try to shield him from it. Capturing that mix of maturity and vulnerability was essential for me.

When I was Children's Laureate, I spent a day at Great Ormond Street Hospital, where I saw how much the children understood their situations and prognoses. I believe it's crucial to give young people the chance to talk about or read about these issues, allowing them the space to express and process their feelings.

.....

***Pig Heart Boy* shows at The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry from Wednesday 2 to Saturday 5 April and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12 April**

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John Davies (b. 1946), Head of a Man,
c. 1985-1988, resin, fibreglass, stone dust and acrylic paint.
© John Davies. Image courtesy of The Ingram Collection,
photo by John-Paul Bland.



This exhibition has been made possible as a result of the Government Indemnity Scheme. Rugby Art Gallery and Museum would like to thank HM Government for providing Government Indemnity and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England for arranging the indemnity.

Visual Arts previews from around the region



Image: Stanhope Forbes, Lighting Up Time, 1902, courtesy of the Boweman Charitable Trust.

Elizabeth And Stanhope Forbes: A Marriage Of Art

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Sat 5 April - Sun 29 June

Elizabeth and Stanhope Forbes were very much the power couple of British Impressionism, with both artists already well established and enjoying success at the time of their marriage in 1889. This brand-new exhibition features what's being described as a 'sumptuous' selection of their artworks. The show includes many pieces that are on loan

from Penlee House Gallery & Museum, and which are visiting Worcester for the very first time. Also on display in the exhibition is Stanhope's Chadding On Mounts Bay, one of the most widely admired and beloved paintings in Worcester City's Fine Art collection.



Emii Alrai: River Of Black Stone

Compton Verney, Warwickshire, until Sun 15 June

Blackpool-born and Yorkshire-based artist Emii Alrai produces sculptures and installations that imitate archaeological artefacts and which combine ancient mythologies from the Middle East with oral histories from her own Iraqi heritage. Her aim with her art is to highlight the contrast between the polished aesthetics of museums and the states of ruin which befall archaeological objects and the landscapes from which they are

excavated. Emii's Compton Verney commission sees her responding to the venue's nationally important Naples Collection. Through a sequence of darkening rooms, the artist dramatises the moment of archaeological discovery, at the same time considering 'themes of volcanic eruption and geological rupture as metaphors for our times'.

Suzanne Holtom: And Hills Bore Scars

New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 29 June

"During the pandemic, I lost my dad," explains Suzanne Holtom, "and as a result, my trips back home to the West Midlands became far more frequent. It was this continuing return to my original home, contemplating and experiencing this embodied landscape, that initiated a new direction in my work."

A deep mapping of place - encompassing geological time, personal experiences, social histories and memory - has become the primary motivation in Suzanne's art.

The paintings featured in And Hills Bore Scars - which draw from 'geosites' in the Black Country Global Geopark - contemplate bodily forms, land masses, histories, patterns of energy and industry, layered materiality and shifting terrains.

Visitors to the gallery on Saturday 10 May can join Suzanne for a printmaking session and a tour of her exhibition.



PRISM Photography Open

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, until Sun 18 May

Selected from an open call organised with PRISM Photography network, this thought-provoking exhibition presents portraits and landscapes - and both political and personal stories - which explore the themes of belonging and interconnectedness.



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Autumn Breeze, Elizabeth Forbes, courtesy of Penlee House Gallery & Museum
Chadding on Mounts Bay, Stanhope Forbes, 1902, Worcester City Collection

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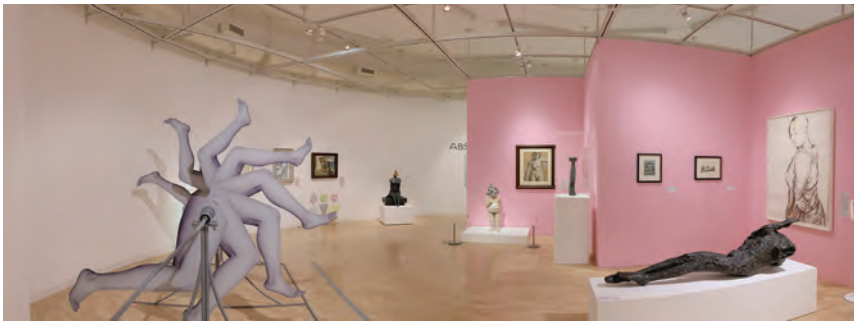
IKON Photoworks JOHN FEENEY



Ikon is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England,
and Birmingham City Council's Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered charity no. 522892.
Image: Mahtab Hussain, *Al Masjid Al Safes*, Birmingham (2024), courtesy Mahtab Hussain.



Visual Arts previews from around the region



Beyond The Canvas Rugby Art Gallery, until Sat 7 June

Taking the subtitle A Celebration Of British Sculpture From The Ingram Collection, Beyond The Canvas explores the diverse styles and techniques that defined British sculpture throughout the 20th century.

The Ingram Art Foundation boasts one of the most significant collections of modern British art in the UK. The collection is here sharing space with pieces from the widely admired Rugby Collection.

The display is being presented as part of the gallery's 25th anniversary celebration.



Hrair Sarkissian: Other Pains

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 22 June

"Keeping the same way of thinking is depressive," Hrair Sarkissian told whitehotmagazine.com. "I am someone who makes a lot of jokes, and my work is completely depressive, melancholic, and [tells] only sad stories. There is nothing that gives a positive feeling. It's all kinds of desperation."

An Armenian born in Syria and currently based in London, Hrair is considered one of the leading conceptual photographers

of his generation. He also works with moving image, sculpture, sound and installation, conveying stories of conflict, displacement, loss and hope. Comprising three bodies of work, Hrair's now-showing Other Pains exhibition features captivating landscapes and urban scenes which reflect sites of pain, trauma or melancholy, either from the artist's own personal history or the previous experiences of others.

Rembrandt: Masterpieces In Black And White

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, until Sun 1 June

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery is the only UK stop-off for this major new show, which marks the first time Rembrandt's etchings have been brought out of the Netherlands as a collection.

"We are delighted to be bringing his fascinating prints to Birmingham," says Epco Runia, head of collections at the Rembrandt House Museum, which has co-organised Masterpieces In Black And White with the American Federation of Arts. "With this exhibition, we hope to demonstrate that each of Rembrandt's prints is a work of art in its own right. If you take the time to look at them closely, a whole world opens up to you: a world in black & white, but with enormous visual richness."

Mahtab Hussain: What Did You Want To See

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until Sun 1 June

A new exhibition of work by Birmingham artist Mahtab Hussain, What Did You Want To See features photographs which celebrate the city's Muslim community. The installation includes portraits of Muslim people and places of worship, but also examines how cameras can be used as tools for surveillance. "I want visitors to leave the exhibition questioning how they see the world and the people around them," explains Mahtab.



"I want them to think about visibility... what it truly means to witness someone, rather than observing them. "I hope the show can challenge assumptions and create moments of recognition, and also make people look at Birmingham in a new way. If we can do that, I think that'll be a really lovely thing."

Coventry Open

Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry, until Sun 8 June

As with the previous dozen editions, the 13th Coventry Open showcases the creative prowess of artists throughout the West Midlands region. The exhibition features an eclectic mix of artworks created in a wide range of mediums.



FAB-U-LOUS!

Craig Revel Horwood talks about his latest touring show, in which he sings songs from his new album, Revelations...

He's known and loved by millions for getting to the point. And midway through our conversation, Strictly Come Dancing judge Craig Revel Horwood does just that...

He's talking about his new tour - Revelations - which is set to visit more than 50 theatres between the beginning of April and the end of June.

"This show is unlike anything I've ever done. People aren't going to see 'The judge, Craig'. They're going to see the real Craig. It's about my life; it's who I am. It's the most personal

tour I've ever done."

Craig, who turned 60 in January, started out in musical theatre. His first-ever job was West Side Story. Music was in his life throughout his schooling in his native Australia. "It just seemed to be a very natural journey for me to go into musicals. I just loved performing in musicals until I was 30. People don't really know me as a singer because I've been in the background doing it, I suppose."

Other areas of his life took over. He became

one of the UK's best and most influential directors and choreographers, winning Olivier Award nominations for Spend Spend and My One And Only. He directed the opening ceremonies of the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester and was invited to join the judging panel for BBC's Strictly Come Dancing in 2004. As of 2025, he's Strictly's only original judge.

Strictly has made him a household name as a stringent rule-follower who has dished out more low scores of '1' than any other judge.

The show has also seen him become famous for catchphrases and unique locutions - from chah-chah-chah to fab-u-lous.

And yet there are many more strings to his diamante-encrusted bow, and singing is foremost among them. So when the opportunity arose last year to record an album of songs with the UK's leading musical theatre record label, Westway, he jumped at the chance.

"I thought: 'Come on, you're 60. Do it.' My mum's always told me to get an album together, and do something. So I thought: 'Yeah, I'll do it.' I grew up in the era before things were recorded - so there are no recordings of my earlier performances in theatre. No one had mobile phones and all of that malarkey back then. Now, everything is recorded, no matter what you do. I walk out the hotel room, and it's recorded by someone."

So Craig went into the studio and recorded Revelations - Songs Boys Don't Sing. The release is a stunning collection of tunes that showcases a marvellous, emotive, pitch-perfect voice. His interpretations of such songs as Memory show a discombobulating degree of warmth and empathy. Don't Rain On My Parade reveals him as the ultimate razzle-dazzle showman, while As Long As He Needs Me, from Oliver!, is a song that takes on new meaning with Craig's thoughtful tenderness.

Just like the Great British public, who gave the singer his first chart hit, Craig was thrilled. "Singing is such a liberating experience. Each song on the album means something to me. You know, the first-ever musical that my mum went to see with the kids was Jesus Christ Superstar, so I've recorded I Don't Know How To Love Him.

"Waltzing Matilda is in there because I was born in Australia, and when we grew up, it was like a national anthem.

"I want to talk about the songs that I love and the reasons they are still with me and in my life. I know I've written three autobiographies, but my autobiographies were always about how I got Strictly. This show, for me, is strictly about music and my passion and love for it.

"That's what drives my life, and it's just so nice to be able to get up there and sing and entertain people, because that's what I was born to do."

Many of the songs will be familiar to Craig's fans - and will have a special place in their heart, just as they do in Craig's.

"I wanted to do Memory, from Cats, because I

was in that show, but I'd never get to sing that song because I'd obviously never get the part of Grizabella. It's the same with As Long As He Needs Me, from Oliver! It just goes without saying, you know, that I'll never play Nancy.

"So the record, and the tour, gives me an opportunity to sing songs that I know and love. The show will be about my love for the music and how it's affected my life. It'll be about relationships, too, because we all go through the same emotions in relationships. "I'll be talking about that, and heartbreak, and where it can lead. You know, Adele has proven how much emotion heartbreak can evoke, not just for singers, but for the audience, too."

Craig will be joined on stage by super-talented musician Ben Goddard, who fans will recall from their double-act on Celebrity Gogglebox. He can't wait to hang out with one of his best mates, and is expecting plenty of laughter along the way.

"The tour will be the opportunity to have a good time along with Ben, who I love. I've worked with him quite a lot, directing with him, and we did a one-man show together, which was hilarious.

"For me, this is about the real Craig Revel Horwood, not the judge Craig Revel Horwood. It's about my life before I became a judge, and then my life after being a judge, because that, of course, is the only thing that I'm famous for."

Here's the thing. Music is our universal language. All of us have songs that we love - and for a myriad of reasons. In Craig's case, listening to his selection of favourite songs, and understanding the meanings of them, helps us get to know him. So, for instance, My Way is a song he associates with his father's death and is deeply personal.

"That was my father's favourite song, and I had to sing it when he died, just before Christmas, 10 years ago. And I've been singing that sort of ever since in pantomime, but it always reminds me, you know, of my father, because that was one of his favourite tunes.

"So there's a lot of emotion behind each one of the songs that I sing, which I think is good, you know. And there's a lot of fun in there as well, because, of course, I have nothing really to do with Disney, The Lion King."

There will be other tributes during the show, including to The Vivienne and Paul O'Grady, both of whom were artists that Craig knew

and admired. And, of course, there'll be plenty of Strictly.

"It's been Fab-U-Lous to have been there since the start. None of us could ever have believed it would become the phenomenon that it did. It's been a huge part of my life and the reason that people know me. So yes, of course I'll be talking about Strictly. I don't think people would forgive me if I didn't."

At a time in life when many are slowing down, or reaching a happy and stable plateau, Craig continues to chase his dreams. "Recording taught me so many things. It taught me how to be quiet; it taught me how to add more emotion into the sound of my voice as well. It's not that I wanted to sound like Barbra Streisand or Shirley Bassey, you know, but I had to discover who I was. Who is Craig Revel Horwood, and what is his sound and what is his voice?"

"I think a lot of artists come across that. Human League has a certain sound. Rod Stewart had the raspy sound. But I thought, what is Craig Revel Horwood's sound? Singing is about having an amazing vocal quality, rather than a pitch-perfect voice. I mean, Dame Judi Dench once came on stage and sang Send In The Clowns. No, she's not a singer. She's never been able to sing. But because of her commitment to the character, to the emotion, it came across brilliantly. That was one of the best renditions of Send In The Clowns I've ever heard."

And now it's time to hit the road. Craig is more than happy to temporarily ditch the comfort of his judge's chair on Strictly, or the comfort of a West End theatre, to head into the regions.

"The reason I love touring is that it takes me to the people, and I get to see the country. It's about that as much as meeting people and learning because, you know, in certain areas, you'll get different audiences.

"I'm going to 53 theatres around the country in three months, so it's pretty full-on. There are some places I've been before that I can't wait to return to, and those places I've never been. It's going to be great, and I'm really looking forward to it."

.....

Craig Revel Horwood: Revelations visits Lichfield Garrick Theatre on Friday 18 April; William Aston Hall, Wrexham, Sat 19 April; Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday 20 April & Dudley Town Hall on Fri 9 May



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ENGLAND

Events previews from around the region



Spring Steam Gala Severn Valley Railway, Fri 18 - Mon 21 April

Severn Valley Railway's four-day festival of steam makes a welcome return this month. The 2025 edition of the show will feature appearances by LMS Jubilee No 45596 Bahamas and GWR No 6880 Betton Grange.

The gala will see three main trains running between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade, accompanied by a mixture of local and goods trains and the DMU operating between Kidderminster and Highley.



St George's Day Celebrations Tamworth Castle, Sat 19 April

Tamworth's popular St George's Day celebrations are back for 2025 and feature medieval-themed fun for the whole family. The line-up of entertainment includes jousting, archery, falconry displays, a living-history camp, fairground rides and children's activities.

Epico the dragon and the Grand Medieval Joust are both back by popular demand, too. Other attractions include workshops, displays, hamsterzorb, food vendors, and a medieval encampment featuring equipment and living-history demonstrations.

CountryTastic

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Thurs 17 April

Getting your hands dirty promises to be plenty of fun at CountryTastic, where exploring the journey of growth is this year's theme.

From digging deep into the soil, to planting seeds and watching them flourish, Dig - Plant - Grow celebrates the wonders of farming, gardening and the natural world.

The 2025 event is packed with interactive activities and hands-on workshops, from recycled arts & crafts, cooking and planting seeds, right through to sporting fun.

The show will also feature inspiring demonstrations and special performances, including appearances by JB Gill and Peter Rabbit.



Earth Day

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Tues 22 April

Thinktank's Earth Day celebrations include hosting Autin Dance Theatre Company's performance of Out Of The Deep Blue.

An outdoor spectacle featuring Eko, a 13-foot-tall SeaGiant Puppet, the show uses dance, movement and puppeteering to tell a moving story about Earth's climate emergency.

To further celebrate the special day, the museum team will be running numerous extra activities. These include under-the-sea object handling, an ichthyosaur make-and-take session, climate tours of the museum, and origami plant pots and Lego creature workshops.



West Midlands Police MUSEUM
 Saturday 12th April - Sunday 27th April

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West Midlands Police MUSEUM WWW.MUSEUM.WEST-MIDLANDS.POLICE.UK

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Events previews from around the region



Cirquoise Albrighton Garden Centre, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April

Featuring 'laughter-filled clowns, death-defying acrobats, breathtaking jugglers and awesome contortionists', Cirquoise is promising 'a dazzling combination of high-energy, jaw-dropping talent, an electric atmosphere and an unforgettable

experience'. Before showtime, audience members can take advantage of photo opportunities - and satisfy any hunger pangs by partaking in a selection of tasty treats, including candy floss, popcorn and doughnuts!



Pilot Training Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April

RAF Museum Midlands is hosting an array of aviation-themed activities for the whole family to enjoy across the Easter holiday. The interactive Pilot Training show, presented by Up An' At 'Em History (Monday 14 - Friday 18 April), offers participants aged six and older the chance to step into the shoes of a World War Two pilot and learn all about the levels of preparation, determination and courage that were required during the Battle of Britain. Meanwhile, the Aviation Cadets Show

(Tuesday 22 - Friday 25 April) - a hands-on, family-friendly activity - will test participants' take-off, physical and code-breaking skills. Other activities available across the holidays include paper plane engineering (Saturday 12 - Sunday 27 April), an Easter basket make & take (Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 and Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 April), and a museum-wide Easter egg trail (Saturday 12 - Sunday 27 April).

Easter Eggstravaganza

Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire, Fri 18 - Mon 21 April

Hartlebury Castle's ever-popular Easter egg hunts are back! Search the grounds high and low for eggs, and be rewarded with a chocolate prize. The Easter Bunny will also be on hand to help you put your best foot forward and pose for a special photo or two...! Easter-themed activities and stories, a spring family trail, and the chance to learn fun facts about Easter while exploring the grounds, further add to the event's appeal.



International Living History Festival

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sat 26 & Sun 27 April

Avoncroft Museum comes to life across the final weekend of the month as 40-plus living-history reenactment groups set up their camps in and around the venue's historic buildings. Visitors can check out lots of hands-on activities, explore the historically themed market and enjoy browsing numerous trade stands.




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Events previews from around the region



Easter Holiday Fun Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April

Black Country Living Museum is hosting an array of family crafts and activities this Easter, including flower pressing, spring cleaning, gardening, and spring flower

paper crafts. A spring pram event, traditional street games, a spring discovery trail and a choir practice singalong also feature.



Find The Flock: Shaun The Sheep Trail

Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire, Sat 5 April - Sun 18 May

Trentham Gardens is this month launching an art installation featuring 12 supersized Shaun the Sheep sculptures. Presented in collaboration with public-art experts Wild In Art and Academy Award-

winning animation company Aardman - the creators of Shaun the Sheep - the family-friendly Find The Flock trail is included with standard garden admission. Trentham members can enjoy the installation for free.

Easter Motor Show & Autojumble

Weston Park, Shropshire, Sun 20 & Mon 21 April

A content-packed day of motoring heritage awaits visitors to Weston Park's family-friendly Easter Motor Show & Autojumble. The popular two-day event features more than 1,000 display cars and motorcycles - including a wide selection of club vehicles - and up to 100 autojumble and retail stands.



Easter Family Adventures

Sudeley Castle, Cheltenham, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April

Step back in time to Medieval England at Sudeley Castle with a family game of 'Tudor Guess Who'.

As visitors explore the castle gardens and secret pathways, they will be invited to search for Henry VIII's six wives - and to discover giant Tudor eggs hidden around the castle grounds!

Easter weekend itself will see Elizabeth I paying a visit to the castle. Egg decorating and Tudor dancing and games also feature.



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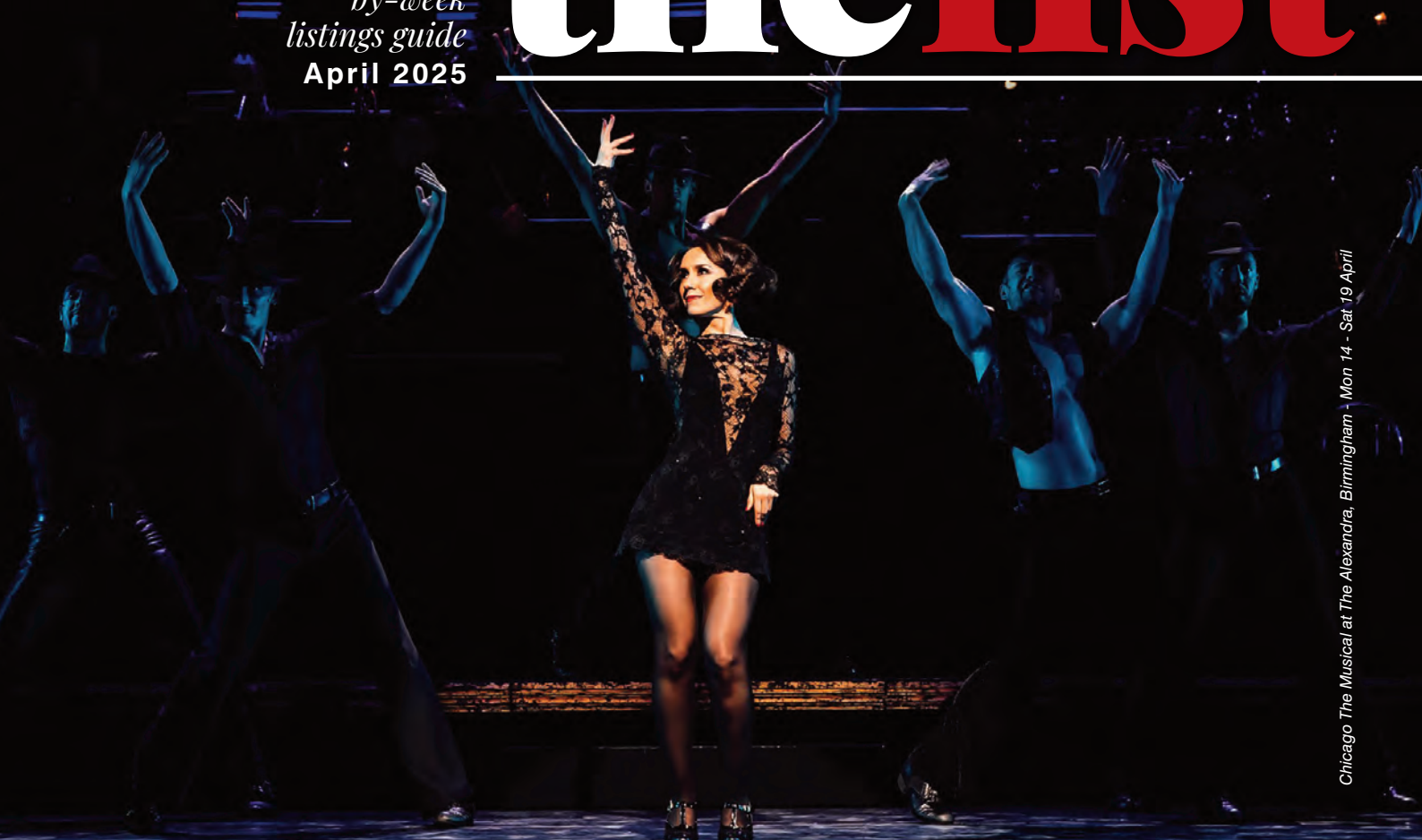


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the list

Your week-
by-week
listings guide
April 2025



Chicago: The Musical at The Alexandra, Birmingham - Mon 14 - Sat 19 April

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

What's On

Tues 1 - Sun 6 April



Brooke Combe - O2 Institute, Digbeth

Sat 5 April

Mon 7 - Sun 13 April



Patrick Spicer - The Glee Club, Birmingham

Fri 11 April

Mon 14 - Sun 20 April



An Evening with Kit De Waal - Hockley Social Club

Mon 14 April

Mon 21 - Wed 30 April



Kate Butch: Wuthering Shites - Old Joint Stock Theatre

Wed 23 April

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

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

MODERN MUSE BY ARPITA SHAH A series of photographic portraits celebrating the identities and experiences of young South Asian women from Birmingham and the West Midlands.

CURTIS HOLDER: DRAWING CARLOS ACOSTA Curtis Holder, winner of Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year in 2020, was commissioned to draw Carlos Acosta, director of Birmingham Royal Ballet. This display brings together portraits Curtis made during the competition and his working sketches.

Compton Verney, Warwickshire

BREATHING WITH THE FOREST An immersive video installation that illuminates the ecosystem surrounding a capinuri tree (*Maquira coriacea*) in the Colombian Amazon, recreating a real plot of Amazonian forest in astounding detail, until Sun 6 April

Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

HTEIN LIN: ESCAPE A major solo exhibition by the multidisciplinary artist from Myanmar, evoking his lifelong commitment to documenting human experience in difficult times, until Sun 1 June

FRONT AND CENTRE A photography project that celebrates the individual personalities of people with a profound and multiple learning disability (PMLD). Led by Changing Our Lives, a rights-based organisation that works in co-production with disabled people, Thurs 17 - Mon 21 Apr

Midlands Arts Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

MADE AT MAC: WORKING WITH METAL A stained glass and jewellery exhibition, showcasing the talents of students and tutors who work with metal on MAC's 12-week creative courses, until Sun 18 May

SU RICHARDSON: IN STITCHES The largest retrospective of Richardson's work to date, and the first solo exhibition in her home town. Works include recent soft sculptures that explore themes of motherhood, the maternal body, breastfeeding, loss and illness, until Sun 1 June

MARCIA MICHAEL: THE FAMILY ALBUM Powerful and moving solo exhibition. A multidisciplinary artist of Caribbean descent, Marcia

reimagines the family album to explore the beauty and depth of Black family connections in British history, until Sun 1 June

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM EASEL CLUB SHOWCASE Formed in 1879, the Easel Club currently has 18 members. Their work is created using a range of techniques, including painting, drawing, collage, printmaking and sculpture, until Sat 5 April

ALAN REULLIER: THE ART OF A SECOND LIFE The latest project from the award-winning French artist, designer & sculptor. Reullier is known for producing sustainable art created from discarded industrial and natural materials, until Sat 5 April

Also:

SUMINDER VIRK: CURRENT PRACTICE Foyer exhibition, predominantly in Indian ink and oil paint, which has been inspired by the brutalist architecture of Suminder's home town of Chandigarh, until Wed 16 Apr, The Birmingham & Midland Institute

MOTHERSHIP Exhibition highlighting work undertaken by the mothers and children who have taken part in the Mothership Residency, a co-working creative space with integrated radical childcare options, until Sat 19 April, Stryx, Jewellery Quarter

PERFECTION IS A LIE (AN ODE TO YOUR POTENTIAL) Interested in the politics of borrowing from different disciplines and cultural movements - like DIY or punk - Alice Theobald considers what it means to be an amateur, and how success is measured in contemporary society, until Sat 5 July, Eastside Projects, Birmingham

OBSERVE PROTOCOL A work in development by Vivid Lab resident Oscar Cass-Darweish, representing the invisible interactions that take place between our digital devices in real time, until Thurs 31 Jul, Vivid Projects, Birmingham

TAT VISION: GLUED TO THE BOX Tat Vision's debut exhibition crams pop-culture icons from the telly into boxes - both a playful nod to childhood TV obsession and the hands-on process of papier-mâché, Fri 4 - Sat 12 Apr, Centrala, Birmingham

STOCK POT STORIES: SOUP PT VII Final group exhibition by the artists taking part in the Stock Pot Stories residency, Fri 4 Apr - Sat 31 May, Stryx Gallery, Minerva Works, Birmingham



Lambrini Girls - Castle & Falcon

Gigs

PAUL RYAN + PAUL SNOOK + ZEN FINN + SUPERNOVA Tues 1 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 1 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth

NEMZZZ Tues 1 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

DAVID GRAY Tues 1 Apr, Symphony Hall

ORACLE SISTERS Tues 1 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth

DITZ Wed 2 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

WHY? Wed 2 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE SPIRIT OF JEFF BECK Wed 2 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

SOFY Wed 2 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LOUIS DUNFORD Wed 2 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth



CANNED PINEAPPLE Wed 2 Apr, The Victoria, John Bright Street

THE MOUNTAIN HARES + MATT SAYERS Wed 2 Apr, Red Lion Folk Club, Vicarage Road

NATALIE TENENBAUM Wed 2 Apr, Jennifer Blackwell Performance

Space, Symphony Hall

OLLY ALEXANDER Wed 2 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

MARINA SATTI Wed 2 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth

LORDI Wed 2 Apr, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton



ROB.GREEN Thurs 3 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SOUND OF THE LIONESS CELEBRATES AMY WINEHOUSE Thurs 3 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

LAMBRINI GIRLS Thurs 3 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

CHOKESLAM + CAPITAL PUNISHMENT UK + FINAL WORDS + CALLOUT + SCREWDRIVER

LABOTOMY Thurs 3 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

SARAH JANE SCOUTEN Thurs 3 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath



RBC JAZZ GALA Thurs 3

Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

AIKO Thurs 3 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth

THE REMI HARRIS HOT CLUB TRIO Thurs 3 Apr, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

MIGHTY MIGHTY + THE PROCTORS Fri 4 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

CARL SINCLAIR Fri 4 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

THE LILACS + THE ROSADOCS + CRUZ Fri 4 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

JAMIE GREY Fri 4 Apr, O2 Academy

DUNEBUG + STRIDE + CIARAN BARBER Fri 4 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

SAVE FACE Fri 4 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

BOOM BOOM WOMB Fri 4 Apr, The Victoria, John Bright Street

MIKE AND THE MECHANICS Fri 4 Apr, Symphony Hall

LEGACY OF THE KHANS Fri 4 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

DAVE BUSTOS QUINTET + JULIEN DURAND'S DREAMSCAPES Fri 4 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Edgbaston

THE DERELLA'S + THE DREGS Fri 4 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Rd

VEHICLE Fri 4 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

NXTGEN#5 Fri 4 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth

ABBA GOLD Fri 4 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

JAH WOBBLE AND THE INVADERS OF THE HEART Fri 4 Apr, Lichfield Guildhall

CHRISTINE BOVILL Fri 4 Apr, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

UNDERCOVER HEROES Fri 4 Apr, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

NANNA RADLEYS Fri 4 - Sat 5 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

BAYBOARDS Sat 5 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LEVI WASHINGTON Sat 5 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

SANTŪ Sat 5 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth

OVERPASS + BALANCING ACT + EIGHTY EIGHT MILES Sat 5 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

BROOKE COMBE Sat 5 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth



PETE WYLIE: THE MIGHTY WAH Sat 5 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SKUNK ANANSIE Sat 5 Apr, O2 Academy

REVIVA THA RAGE Sat 5 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

GOAT MAJOR + BLACK GROOVE + DAMN CRATERS + RED EYED CULT Sat 5 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

BRAD HENSHAW Sat 5 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

GWYN ASHTON Sat 5 Apr,

Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

JASMINE SANDLAS Sat 5 Apr, Forum, Dale End

SHAMBOLICS Sat 5 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth

COUNTRY HITS LIVE Sat 5 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NORTHERN LIVE Sat 5 Apr, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

GEORGE! THE CONCERT - GEORGE HARRISON TRIBUTE Sat 5 Apr, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE PLAYLIST Sat 5 Apr, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

RUTI Sun 6 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

PARADISE SINS + TENDER VENDETTA + BANG BANG FIRECRACKER + DEATH WARMED UP Sun 6 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

THE MELVIN HANCOX BAND Sun 6 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT + SAM PALLADIO Sun 6 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

SWEETPOOL + BARBICAN ESTATE + THE BRACKISH + KENDO NAGASAKI + RAY VORG Sun 6 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

THE MOODY BLUES' JOHN LODGE Sun 6 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

THE GARRY ALLCOCK JAZZ TRIO FT LOUIS CONNOR & TOM MORGAN Sun 6 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

THE FABULOUS MURRAY BROTHERS + BLUMONDE Sun 6 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

THE GEORGE HARRISON PROJECT Sun 6 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Classical Music

SHUANGSHUANG XUAN (SOPRANO) IN CONCERT Also featuring Jonathan French (piano) & Zhihao Yang (double bass). Programme includes works by Verdi, Fauré, Rachmaninoff & more..., Tues 1 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO: SIBELIUS & DVOŘÁK Featuring Dinis Sousa (conductor), Alina Ibragimova (violin) & the CBSO Youth Chorus. Programme also features Arvo Pärt's Our Garden, Thurs 3 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

POULENC: LA VOIX HUMAINE Featuring David Quigley (piano) & Mary McCabe (soprano). Preceded by additional performances of Poulenc by RBC students, Thurs 3 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RBC FINAL PROJECTS ORCHESTRA CONCERT Featuring Daniele Rosina (conductor), Felicity Lennard (recorder), Jih-Yi Chang (horn) & Mario Bobotsov (piano). Programme includes works by R Harvey, F Strauss & Rachmaninoff, Fri 4 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RBC CHAMBER CHOIR Featuring Julian Wilkins (director). Programme includes works by Duruflé, Fauré, Messiaen & more..., Fri 4 Apr, St Alban the Martyr, Birmingham

BARBER LUNCHTIME CONCERT Featuring Njioma Chinyere Grevious (violin) & Joseph Havlat (piano). Programme includes works by E Perivolaris, Mozart, R Schumann & more..., Fri 4 Apr, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

UNIVERSITY CAMERATA Featuring Leia Gibson & Oliver Walker (conductors). Programme includes works by Messiaen, Palestrina, Britten & more..., Fri 4 Apr, Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

CLASSICAL TURKISH MUSIC CONCERT Featuring Yildirim Bekçi (conductor), Sat 5 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

CBSO: NORTHERN LIGHTS Featuring Robert Ames (conductor) & Ex Cathedra. Programme includes works by Jóhannsson, Guðnadóttir, Arnalds & more..., Sat 5 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: BACH MASS IN B MINOR Featuring Roderick Williams OBE (baritone), Sofia Ticciati (soprano), Simon Ponsford (countertenor), Ruairi Bowen (tenor), Paul Spicer (conductor) & The Musical and Amicable Society, Sat 5 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral

THE NEEDWOOD SINGERS PREPARE FOR EASTER Featuring Margaret Langford (conductor). Programme includes works by Handel & J S Bach, Sat 5 Apr, St Michael on Greenhill Church, Lichfield

HALESOWEN ORCHESTRA FAMILY CONCERT: WITCHES & WIZARDS Featuring Lee Armstrong (conductor) & Claire Thompson (leader). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky, Holst, Humperdinck & more..., Sat 5 Apr, Cradley Heath Salvation Army Church

BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA CONCERTO PRIZE Featuring soloists from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire & Michael Lloyd (conductor). Programme includes works by Ibert & Prokofiev, Sun 6 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

ECHO RISING STARS: CARLOS FERREIRA (CLARINET) Featuring Pedro Emmanuel Pereira (piano). Programme includes works by Widor, Debussy, Horowitz & more..., Sun 6 Apr, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, B'ham

MIDLAND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: SPRINGTIME WITH SCHUBERT Sun 6 Apr, St Mary's Church, Moseley

Comedy

SISTERS IN THE CITY LIVE Wed 2 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

NINIA BENJAMIN, ANDREW BIRD, PETER BRUSH & FREDDY QUINNE Wed 2 Apr, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

JASON MANFORD Wed 2 Apr, Dudley Town Hall

JONNY COLE Wed 2 Apr, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

JONNY COLE Thurs 3 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JASON PATTERSON & KATE LUCAS Thurs 3 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PROJECT MAYHEM COMEDY Thurs 3 Apr, Scruffy Murphy's, B'ham

DAVE LONGLEY, EDI JOHNSTON, JIM BROWN & DAN SMITH Thurs 3 Apr, Stourbridge Town Hall

SHABAZ ALI Thurs 3 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham



MICHAEL SHAFAR, ROBIN MORGAN, JASON PATTERSON, KATE LUCAS & JAMES TRICKEY Fri 4 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

JOE KENT-WALTERS IS FRANKIE MONROE Fri 4 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LUCY PORTER Fri 4 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

JOHN ROBERTSON, JESSIE NIXON, JOSEPH EMSLIE & KAREN BAYLEY Sat 5 Apr, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

MICHAEL SHAFAR, ROBIN MORGAN, JASON PATTERSON & KATE LUCAS Sat 5 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

BIG DEAL COMEDY Sat 5 Apr, Old Joint Stock, Birmingham

JOSH PUGH: WORK IN PROGRESS Sun 6 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

EDWARD II Double Olivier Award winner and RSC Co-Artistic Director Daniel Evans takes the lead in Christopher Marlowe's famous play, until Sat 5 Apr, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon



THE WELKIN BOA Year 13 Acting Pathway present Lucy Kirkwood's historical drama about a woman sentenced to hang for murder, Mon 31 Mar - Tues 1 Apr, The Old Rep, B'ham

ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES THE MUSICAL Paul Whitehouse returns as Grandad in a touring production of the West End hit, featuring 'cherished material from Britain's best-loved TV series', Mon 31 Mar - Sat 12 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated



Skunk Anansie - O2 Academy



The Silence Of Snow: The Life Of Patrick Hamilton - Old Joint Stock Theatre

comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Tues 1 Apr, Quinborne Community Centre, Quinton

GHOST THE MUSICAL Rebekah Lowings stars as Molly Jenson and Jacqui Dubois as Oda Mae Brown in the stage adaptation of one of cinema's biggest all-time hits, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Apr, The Alexandra, B'ham

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE 1936 Tracey-Ann Oberman stars as Shylock in a much-heralded production that transports Shakespeare's classic to 1930s Britain, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Apr, The Rep, Birmingham

DEAR EVAN HANSEN Multi-award-winning musical concerning a high-school senior suffering social anxiety, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



EVITA Lichfield Musical Youth Theatre present an amateur version of the Tim Rice/Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

LADY JANE GREY Immersive production of the award-winning play, Tues 1 - Sat 5 Apr, Oldbury Rep

THE SILENCE OF SNOW: THE LIFE OF PATRICK HAMILTON Solo show about one of the great English writers of the inter-war years, Wed 2 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Wed 2 Apr, Stirchley Baths

PIG HEART BOY Stage adaptation of Malorie Blackman's novel, telling the

story of 13-year-old Cameron, who just wants to be normal...., Wed 2 - Sat 5 Apr, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

PLAYFIGHT Edinburgh Festival smash-hit which shines a light on adolescent desire in a landscape of rising sexual violence, Wed 2 - Sat 5 Apr, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry



THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Thurs 3 Apr, Northfield Baptist Church

INK BOA Year 13 Acting Pathway present James Graham's historical play, in which the origins of the British media are laid bare, Thurs 3 - Fri 4 Apr, The Old Rep, Birmingham

PETER PAN A MUSICAL ADVENTURE Amateur version presented by SMASH Musical Theatre Group, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 Apr, The Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Fri 4 Apr, St Andrews Church, Handsworth

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Sat 5 Apr, Kings Heath Community Centre

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Sat 5 Apr, The Erdington Social Club

MURDER ON THE NILE The Crescent Theatre Company present an

amateur version of the Agatha Christie classic, Sat 5 - Sat 12 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

SHARK IN THE PARK A fin-tastic family musical in which all three of Nick Sharratt's Shark In The Park children's books are performed live on stage, Sat 29 Mar - Sun 6 Apr, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

STORIES IN THE DUST Live music and puppetry combine in a funny, heartfelt and hopeful eco-fable that promises to take young audiences on a journey to another world, Sun 6 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Dance

KAREN HAUER & GORKA MARQUEZ - SPEAKEASY Join the Strictly duo on a journey that incorporates the New York speakeasy, Havana dance floors, the Chicago blues scene, burlesque cabaret clubs and the glittering mirror balls of Studio 54, Sun 6 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ANTON DU BEKE - AT THE MUSICALS Featuring a live band, guest singer and dancers, Sun 6 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Light Entertainment

COMEDY HYPNOSIS & MIND READING SHOW Join Daniel Sinclair for an evening of 'suspense, comedy, music and jaw-dropping moments', Thurs 3 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

AN EVENING WITH PHIL ROSENTHAL OF 'SOMEBODY FEED PHIL' An evening with the award-winning creator, executive producer & bestselling author, Fri 4 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall



ANDY & THE ODD SOCKS Family show featuring a madcap mix of songs, slapstick comedy and silliness, Sat 5 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES Presented by Hays Performing Arts, Sat 5 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Talks & Spoken Word

MARCIA MICHAEL: ARTIST TALK Professor Pat Noxolo and curator & lecturer Dr Sylvia Theuri join Marcia Michael to discuss how the artist's work challenges representations of the Black body and reimagines family histories, Sat 5 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham



THE REAL MANHUNTER Former Met Police senior investigating officer Colin Sutton shares stories of how he caught some of the UK's most evil murderers, Sat 5 Apr, Dudley Town Hall

Events

BRICK BUILDERS Drop into the Brick Builders space for play and creativity with Lego bricks, until Sun 27 Apr, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

THE FESTIVAL OF BLOSSOM Featuring a range of activities, including blossom bathing, crafts, face painting, talks, storytelling and yoga, until Fri 23 May, Hanbury Hall, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire



BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: CELLARS, STORES, AND STATE ROOMS Join the house and collections team on a behind-the-scenes tour of the mansion, Wed 2 Apr, Shugborough Estate, Staffordshire

QUIZ NIGHT Test your knowledge across a variety of fun categories, Wed 2 Apr, Lapworth Museum of Geology - Earth Sciences Building, University of Birmingham

HOT WHEELS MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE: GLOW-N-FIRE Show bringing fans' favourite Hot Wheels Monster Trucks to life, Fri 4 - Sun 6 Apr, Utilita Arena Birmingham

AFTERNOON WITH THE ARTIST: ARPITA SHAH Join exhibiting artist Arpita Shah to discuss the making of her

acclaimed series Modern Muse, Sat 5 Apr, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

RED BY NIGHT Enjoy an evening of live entertainment, industrial demonstrations, steam action and living history, Sat 5 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley



BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS ARTISAN MARKET A selection of handmade treasures from talented artisans across the country, Sat 5 Apr, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR Discover the world behind the curtain and learn about the story of the Hippodrome, Sat 5 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND Get a closer look behind the scenes at areas not usually open to visitors, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Apr, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley,

Nr Kidderminster

EASTER ON THE FARM Celebrate the arrival of over 600 lambs (and goat kids!) and participate in egg-citing new activities, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

EASTER ADVENTURE QUEST Crack the clues hidden around the grounds and enjoy a delicious chocolate reward, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire

EASTER EGG-CITEMENT Cracking activities for the whole family, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

MR. CADBURY PARROT'S EASTER EGG-STRAVAGANZA STAGE SHOW Mr Cadbury's Parrot becomes the star of his very own show: The Missing Mini-Eggs!, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, Cadbury World, Bournville



Easter Adventure Quest - Kenilworth Castle

SHAUN THE SHEEP FIND THE FLOCK TRAIL Follow the trail to discover 12 supersized and colourful Shaun the Sheep sculptures, painted by local and regional artists, Sat 5 Apr - Sun 18 May, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

BUILD THE THRILL Grab your Pit Pass and choose an F1 team to join, Sat 5 Apr - Sun 29 Jun, LEGOLAND

Discovery Centre Birmingham

GUIDED COTSWOLD DOG WALK Enjoy a one-hour guided walk with your furry friend in the Cotswold countryside, Sun 6 Apr, Cotswold Farm Park, Cheltenham

WEDDING FAYRE Join Ever After Events for a day filled with wedding inspiration and ideas, Sun 6 Apr, Himley Hall, Dudley

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football, judo, skateboarding, lacrosse, rowing,
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Gigs

THE TROOPS OF DOOM Mon 7 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

NELL MESCAL Mon 7 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

M HUNCHO Mon 7 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

PRIMAL SCREAM Mon 7 Apr, O2 Academy



REG MEUROSS Mon 7 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

PALE BLUE EYES Tues 8 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

LITTLE BARRIE + MALCOM CATTO Tues 8 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 8 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth

ALESSI ROSE + CHLOE SLATER Tues 8 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS + AMIGO THE DEVIL Tues 8 Apr, O2 Academy

PIGS X7 Tues 8 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

HALLAN Tues 8 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

LAVINIA BLACKWALL & ALEX REX Tues 8 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

ALEX SPENCER Wed 9 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

HONEYGLAZE Wed 9 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SPYRES Wed 9 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

MARK AMBOR Wed 9 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

VINCENT LIMA + ELINA Wed 9 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

HOTWAX Wed 9 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

LEBROCK + LEX LUGER Wed 9 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

EMILY MAGUIRE + JODY PREWETT Wed 9 Apr, Red Lion Folk Club, Vicarage Road

BIRMINGHAM GAME MUSIC ENSEMBLE Wed 9 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

RACHEL LAVEN Wed 9 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

MORGANWAY Thurs 10 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JEWELIA Thurs 10 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SALSEROS UK Thurs 10 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Qtr

CAITY BASER Thurs 10 Apr, Mama Roux's, Digbeth

UNDER THE RAINBOW MUSIC FESTIVAL 2025 Thurs 10 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth

THE HAAR Thurs 10 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

HUW WILLIAMS Thurs 10 Apr, Bromsgrove Folk Club

WILD BOYS BACK TO THE 80S Thurs 10 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

SEA POWER Fri 11 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DIDDY SWEG Fri 11 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

TRU GROOVE Fri 11 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

SOUND OF THE SIRENS + AMIE K + CIGARETTES & CIDER Fri 11 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

LANDSLIDE - FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE Fri 11 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

999 Fri 11 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

CHARLOTTE YOUNG Fri 11 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

999 Fri 11 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

SPEAK! + DOROTHY ELLA Fri 11 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth



The Fallen State - Castle & Falcon

KEYWEST Fri 11 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

WOODEN DOG Fri 11 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

CATCH YOUR BREATH + UNTIL I WAKE + OF VIRTUE Fri 11 Apr, The Asylum, Hampton Street

LAST RESORT Fri 11 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

BLACK COUNTRY, NEW ROAD Fri 11 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

MICHAEL BALL & ALFIE BOE Fri 11 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

KIT DOWNES, CAMILA NEBBIA, ANDREW LISLE + ZBIGNIEW CHOJNACKI SOLO ACCORDION Fri 11 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Edgbaston

MACÍAS SALSEROS UK Fri 11 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Rd

THE DOLLAR SHORT Fri 11 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

DESPERADO Fri 11 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE ZUTONS + THE COVASETTES Fri 11 Apr, Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

NEW SOUNDS Fri 11 Apr, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

WALTER SMITTY & THE UNVIABLES Sat 12 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

HEAVY LUNGS Sat 12 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

SKASTUDS Sat 12 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

ALFRESCO LOVE SOUNDS + FUEL INJECTION + LOVE NOR MONEY + COLLIDER SKIES + UNCHARTED TERRITORY Sat 12 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

J.I THE PRINCE OF N.Y + 163MARGS + LAICOSITNA Sat 12 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

DAYDREAMERS Sat 12 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE MERCIANS + PARADISE CIRCUS + TEN HANDS HIGH Sat 12 Apr, O2 Academy

ENJOY THE SILENCE Sat 12 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

HERIOT + GROVE STREET + FALSE REALITY Sat 12 Apr, The Asylum, Hampton Street

METAL TO THE MASSES HEAT 5 Sat 12 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

VAISAKHI CELEBRATION Sat 12 Apr, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall

SUGABABES Sat 12 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

THE MIKE DAVIDS BAND Sat 12 Apr,

Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

UNDERCURRENT + TREBUCHET TEAM + NECKLACE + COLUMBIA Sat 12 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth

G2 DEFINITIVE GENESIS Sat 12 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

DIANA & LIONEL: ENDLESS LOVE THE SHOW Sat 12 Apr, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

SYNTH Sat 12 Apr, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

ANATOLE MUSTER Sun 13 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DUKE SPECIAL Sun 13 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE FALLEN STATE Sun 13 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

REGGAE FEST Sun 13 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

ASH SHEEHAN Sun 13 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

EMILIO SANTORO AS ELVIS Sun 13 Apr, The Glee Club, The Arcadian



RICH PARSONS Sun 13 Apr, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

Classical Music

THOMAS TROTTER ORGAN CONCERT FEAT. CATRIN FINCH (HARP) Programme includes works by Handel, Grandjany, Wammes & more..., Mon 7 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

DANIEL MOULT ORGAN RECITAL Tues 8 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

EPSILON BRASS Programme includes works by Copland, Ewazen, Bernstein & McKee, Wed 9 Apr, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS MAHLER 9 Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor). Programme also includes Takemitsu's Requiem, Thurs 10 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RBC LUNCHTIME CONCERT SERIES: BRASS QUINTET Thurs 10 Apr, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

TIM STEWART ORGAN RECITAL Fri 11 Apr, St Philip's Cathedral, B'ham

CHRIS AND THE FOOFOO BIRD Featuring Chris Orton & Felicity Lennard (recorders). Programme also includes works by Riko Suzuki, Fri 11 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: ELGAR'S THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS Featuring David Wynne (conductor), Louise Crane (soprano), Tom Raskin (tenor) & Gwion Thomas (baritone), Sat 12 Apr, All Saints Church, Leamington Spa

PHOENIX SINGERS: A CHORAL SERENADE FOR HOLY WEEK Featuring James Llewelyn Jones (musical director), Sat 12 Apr, St Francis of Assisi Church, Bournville

BCMG: FREE OPEN REHEARSAL WITH KAZUKI YAMADA Programme includes works by Fujikura, Chin & Mochizuki, Sat 12 Apr, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

BCMG: AWAKENING Featuring Kazuki Yamada & Nicolò Foron (conductors). Programme includes works by Fujikura, Chin & Mochizuki, Sun 13 Apr, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

THE GESUALDO SIX: LUX AETERNA Programme features music from the Renaissance to the present day, Sun 13 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral



Comedy

KURTIS CONNER Tues 8 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

SAMMY OBEID Wed 9 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DEIRDRE O'KANE Thurs 10 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, BILLY KIRKWOOD & KATE BARRON Thurs 10 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PATRICK SPICER Thurs 10 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham



JARRED CHRISTMAS, WILL HANNIGAN, FAIZAN SHAH & DANNY MCGLOUGHLIN Thurs 10 Apr, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

SHAPARAK KHORSANDI Fri 11 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

BILLY KIRKWOOD, KATE BARRON, JACOB HAWLEY & COMIC TBC Fri 11 - Sat 12 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL SMITH Fri 11 - Sat 12 Apr, Utilita Arena Birmingham

DANNY MCGLOUGHLIN, ALI WOODS, PAUL PIRIE & DAVE TWENTYMAN Sat 12 Apr, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

JONNY COLE Sat 12 - Sun 13 Apr, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

GEOFF NORCOTT Sun 13 Apr, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

Theatre

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Mon 7 Apr, The Springfield Project, Moseley

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Featuring

tales of lives, loves and losses in a funny and heartfelt look at the 'joys' of menopause. Carli Norris, Maureen Nolan, Rebecca Wheatley and Daniele Coombe star, Tues 8 Apr, The Alexandra, Birmingham

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Tues 8 Apr, Birmingham Settlement Sports & Community Centre, Kingstanding

EVERYWHERE: TRIPLE BILL Featuring short plays written by Yusra Warsama, Magero and Anyebe Godwin, Tues 8 Apr, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ANIMAL FARM Birmingham Ormiston Academy present an amateur version of George Orwell's satirical novel, Tues 8 - Wed 9 Apr, The Old Rep, Birmingham

PIG HEART BOY Stage adaptation of Malorie Blackman's novel, telling the story of 13-year-old Cameron, who just wants to be normal..., Tues 8 - Sat 12 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ANYTHING GOES Lichfield Operatic Society present an amateur version of Cole Porter's shipboard romp, Tues 8 - Sat 12 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Wed 9 Apr, Hockley Social Club

TAMBO & BONES Dave Harris' play follows Tambo & Bones on their glittering journey from minstrel-show comedy double-act to hip-hop superstars and beyond, Wed 9 - Sat 12 Apr, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

ORDINARY DAYS - A MUSICAL The story of four young New Yorkers whose lives intersect as they search for fulfillment, happiness, love... and cabs, Wed 9 - Sun 20 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

BOUNCERS Jo King Comedy Productions present John Godber's iconic play, telling the tale of one night in a Yorkshire disco in the 1980s, Thurs 10 Apr, 5:15 Club, Unit 7, Lifford Lane, Birmingham



Horrible Histories - The Alexandra, Birmingham

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT BRENDA One-woman show based on a true story and highlighting the struggles of many women in today's society, Thurs 10 Apr, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

BLYTHE SPIRIT Stourbridge Theatre Company present an amateur version of Noel Coward's famous farce, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Apr, Stourbridge Town Hall

TALES FROM OVID Stage 2 present a retelling of stories from one of the greatest books in the history of literature: Ovid's Metamorphoses - a Roman epic poem made up of over 250 tales, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS Roxanna Silbert's 2019 production, based on Khaled Hosseini's spiritual sequel to The Kite Runner, Fri 11 Apr - Sat 3 May, The Rep, Birmingham

THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1 Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Sat 12 Apr, Balsall Heath Second Saturday, Balsall Heath

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Michael Longhurst relocates Shakespeare's original rom-com to the world of football, where scandal-filled rivalries could undermine the final result, Sat 12 Apr - Sat 24 May, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Kids Theatre

THE HEARTLESS PRINCESS The Highbury Players present an amateur version of Franklyn Black's fairytale fantasy. Suitable for audiences aged five-plus, Tues 8 - Thurs 17 Apr, Highbury Theatre Centre, Sutton Coldfield

HORRIBLE HISTORIES: TERRIBLE TUDORS & AWFUL EGYPTIANS Family show in which historical figures and events come to life on stage using actors and 3D Bogglevision, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Apr, The Alexandra, Birmingham

JULIA DONALDSON'S THE DETECTIVE DOG Puppetry, song and scent technology come together in this stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson's award-winning book, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN Puppet-filled musical stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson's heart-warming story about friendship and helping those in need, Sat 12 - Sun 13 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

DINOSAURS LIVE London's Natural History Museum is out on tour, promising 'a roaring experience like no other!' Sun 13 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Dance

SONGS OF THE BULBUL New dance by Aakash Odedra, inspired by an ancient Sufi myth about a bulbul bird which is captured and held in captivity, Tues 8 - Thurs 10 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

ELEVATE! Showcase of works by Excels Dance Academy, Sun 13 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Light Entertainment

BOX OF FROGS An evening of 'high-octane improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 9 Apr, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

SU RICHARDSON: ARTIST TALK Writer & curator Linsey Young and art historian Alexandra Kokolij join Su Richardson to reflect on the In Stitches exhibition, Thurs 10 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

ARTIST BOOK LAUNCH AND TALK: YOU AND I BY BEN SADLER Join the local art community as he discusses his new publication of paintings of fictional gallery-goers, Sat 12 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

IN CONVERSATION WITH SAMUEL BURR Celebrating the paperback release of the author's debut novel, The Fellowship Of Puzzlemakers, Sat 12 Apr, The Core Theatre, Solihull

Events

MUSEUM TOUR Tour the museum and go behind the scenes, Mon 7 Apr, Lapworth Museum of Geology - Earth Sciences Building, University of Birmingham

HISTORY OF FORENSICS TALK Talk exploring the evolution of forensic techniques, Thurs 10 Apr, West Midlands Police Museum, Birmingham

JQ BEER FESTIVAL Discover Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter and celebrate all that's wonderful about beer, Thurs 10 - Sat 12 Apr, across venues in Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

MUSEUM ON THE MOVE Special members-only event, including the chance to ride in collection cars, Fri 11 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

DOWNFALL ABBEY An immersive

Monday 7 - Sunday 13 April

murder-mystery, Fri 11 Apr, Tamworth Castle

ALL ABOARD THE SOUL TRAIN! Live the magic of Soul Train with this interactive dance party, Sat 12 Apr, The Birmingham Black Box Theatre and Events Venue

THE HUB WINE FESTIVAL Enjoy a relaxed tasting experience, Sat 12 Apr, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

NATIONAL GARDEN RAILWAY SHOW 2025 Featuring 18 layouts, 60-plus trade stands and more, Sat 12 Apr, NAEK Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth

STEP INTO STORIES Immersive experience with a bestselling author on the Steam Train Story Carriage, Sat 12 Apr, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

THE BIG BRICK BUILD Get creative with master builders and bring history to life with Lego bricks, Sat 12 - Mon 21 Apr, Kenilworth Caste, Warwickshire

EASTER EGG HUNT Make your way along the trail and enjoy family-friendly activities, Sat 12 - Mon 21 Apr, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

EASTER AT AVONCROFT Featuring a historical trail relating to the traditions and customs associated with Easter,

Sat 12 - Thurs 24 Apr, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

TIME TRAVEL RESCUE Step aboard your very own floating time machine and travel back 420 million years, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April, Dudley Canal & Caverns Trust

EASTER HOLIDAY FUN Put a spring in your step and take part in family fun activities, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

SNAP-TASTIC BAGS OF FUN Pick up your activity bag to make a cracking crocodile and a paper-plate hippo, and create your own version of the museum's ichthyosaur fossil, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

EASTER FUN WITH SNOW WHITE Join Snow White and her woodland friends at the Kindness Cottage, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Touchwood, Solihull

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA Join the egg hunts, meet Bramble Bunny, and enjoy a range of themed family-friendly activities, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

EASTER FAMILY ADVENTURES Easter-themed activities for the school holidays, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr,



Dinosaurs Live - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe

DRAGON EGG HUNT Help Ruby the Dragon find all her eggs around the castle, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Tamworth Castle

PILOT TRAINING Featuring interactive shows, crafts and an Easter egg trail, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

ANIMAL CROSSING: NEW HORIZONS Collect character stamps, discover interesting facts about the inhabitants of Sealife and meet with Tom Nook &

Isabelle, Sat 12 Apr - Mon 5 May, National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham

AFTERNOON TEA WITH MICKEY, MINNIE, DONALD & DAISY Featuring 'your favourite characters, delicious treats and live entertainment', Sun 13 Apr, The Grand Hotel, Birmingham

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring more than 500 stalls packed with thousands of new and old collectables for sale, Sun 13 Apr, NEC, Birmingham

Cheltenham 30 April - 5 May Jazz Festival 2025

Macy Gray • Tom Walker • Lulu • Roger Daltrey
Beverley Knight • David Gray • Buena Vista All Stars
Katie Melua • Amadou & Mariam • Lisa Stansfield
Soul Jazz Summit with the BBC Concert Orchestra
Corinne Bailey Rae with Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra
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Claire Martin • Blind Boys of Alabama • Nubya Garcia
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Wednesday 21 May at 7pm

A special screening of the iconic 1923
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 ★★★★★ THE TELEGRAPH
 ★★★★★ THE TIMES



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ARMONICO CONSORT & BAROQUE ORCHESTRA
 DIRECTOR | CHRISTOPHER MONKS

For lovers of the lyrical and ornate choruses of Messiah and Dixit Dominus, this is definitely one not to miss, with soloists sung by the brilliant critically acclaimed 5* award singers of Armonico Consort.

5th April 2025 7.30pm,
 Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick

13th April 2025 3pm,
 Malvern Theatres, Worcestershire

Tickets: www.armonico.org.uk

Warwick performance is generously supported by Hilary Eldridge, a member of the Conductor's Circle.



Rachmaninov Vespers by Candlelight

ARMONICO CONSORT
 DIRECTOR | CHRISTOPHER MONKS

In the exquisite late evening candlelit setting, be transported by what is simply the most gorgeous choral music ever to have been written, and for a moment in time, simply nothing else in life will matter.

21st June 2025 8pm,
 Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick

8th July 2025 8pm,
 Malvern Theatres, Worcestershire

Tickets: www.armonico.org.uk

Warwick performance is generously supported by an original member of St Mary's Scholars and Armonico Consort, and a generous volunteer to the charity.



Beowulf

ARMONICO CONSORT
 AC ACADEMY
 DIRECTOR | CHRISTOPHER MONKS

Join Armonico Consort in the retelling of Beowulf, one of the world's greatest mythical tales, in an evening of musical entertainment. Discover a legendary time of heroes and warriors as Prince Beowulf battles demons and magical beasts. Featuring a gripping script written by William Towers, this touching epic saga has been set to music by Armonico Consort's composer-in residence, Toby Young (former BBC Proms Young Composer of the Year).

15th July 2025 7pm,
 Warwick Hall, King's High School

Tickets on sale soon
 Tickets: www.armonico.org.uk

Gigs

TREACHEROUS CRETINS FEATURING ROBERT 'BOBBY'

MARTIN Mon 14 Apr,
Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath

THOU + MOLOCH Mon
14 Apr, Castle &
Falcon, Balsall Heath

DAVEY MACMANUS
Tues 15 Apr, Hare &
Hounds, Kings Heath

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 15
Apr, The Night Owl,
Digbeth

POZER Tues 15 Apr,
O2 Institute, Digbeth

IMELDA MAY Tues 15
Apr, Birmingham
Town Hall

CHRIS HELME Wed 16
Apr, Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath

**THOMAS ATLAS BAND
& GUESTS** Wed 16
Apr, The Jam House,
Jewellery Quarter

**KELSY KARTER & THE
HEROINES** Wed 16
Apr, The Sunflower
Lounge, Smallbrook
Queensway

ANGELS OF THE NORTH
Wed 16 Apr, O2
Institute, Digbeth

**PISKEY LED +
CHRISTOPHER
ROBERTS** Wed 16 Apr,
Red Lion Folk Club,
Vicarage Road

**THE MUSICAL BOX
PERFORMS GENESIS
LIVE 1973** Wed 16
Apr, Birmingham
Town Hall

JERRY LEGER Wed 16
Apr, Kitchen Garden,
Kings Heath

**LICHFIELD LINDY WITH
NEW VINTAGE** Wed 16
Apr, Cathedral Hotel,
Lichfield

RATS Thurs 17 Apr,
Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath

WEETWOOD MAC
Thurs 17 Apr, Hare &
Hounds, Kings Heath

OMAR Thurs 17 Apr,
The Jam House,
Jewellery Quarter

STORRY Thurs 17 Apr,
The Sunflower
Lounge, Smallbrook
Queensway

HALFLIVES Thurs 17
Apr, O2 Academy

RONKER Thurs 17 Apr,
Dead Wax, Digbeth

**ULTHA +
ANTEINFERNO** Thurs
17 Apr, The Flapper,
Cambian Wharf

THE MURDER CAPITAL
Thurs 17 Apr, XOYO,
Digbeth

**OUR MAN IN THE FIELD
+ MATT OWENS** Thurs
17 Apr, Kitchen
Garden, Kings Heath

**ACROSS THE
UNIVERSE - A
CELEBRATION OF THE
BEATLES** Thurs 17
Apr, Belgrade
Theatre, Coventry

**JOAN AS POLICE
WOMAN** Thurs 17 Apr,
Warwick Arts Centre,
Coventry

AMPLIFIER Fri 18 Apr,
The Sunflower



Imelda May - Birmingham Town Hall

Lounge, Smallbrook
Queensway

ANDY BENNETT Fri 18
Apr, Actress &
Bishop, Ludgate Hill

**VIO-LENCE +
EXHORDER + KUAZAR**
Fri 18 Apr, Castle &
Falcon, Balsall Heath

KING NO ONE Fri 18
Apr, Dead Wax,
Digbeth

FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY
Fri 18 Apr, The
Asylum, Hampton St

**ASHLEY HUTCHINGS
80TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION** Fri 18
Apr, Birmingham
Town Hall

CENTRAL CEE Fri 18
Apr, Utilita Arena
Birmingham

EMO FESTIVAL Fri 18
Apr, XOYO, Digbeth

**VEE JAY KING AND HIS
DUKES** Fri 18 Apr,
Tower Of Song,

Pershore Road

THE 3 SIXTIES Fri 18
Apr, Joe Joe Jims,
Cofton Hackett

**TRICKY BUSINESS +
THE FESTOONS +
CONOR WINTERS** Fri
18 Apr, The Rainbow,
Digbeth

**BILLY JOEL TRIBUTE
UK** Fri 18 Apr, Artrix,
Bromsgrove

LUNA WAVES Fri 18
Apr, The Feathers
Inn, Lichfield

SUBTERRANEANS Fri
18 - Sat 19 Apr, The
Jam House,
Jewellery Quarter

ONSDAY Sat 19 Apr,
Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath

FAYE SMITH Sat 19
Apr, Actress &
Bishop, Ludgate Hill

LOS FASTIDIOS Sat 19
Apr, The Night Owl,
Digbeth

**CHUCKIE & TAZER'S
RNB & SLOW JAMS
EXPERIENCE** Sat 19
Apr, O2 Institute,
Digbeth

BLACK SPIDERS Sat
19 Apr, The Asylum,
Hampton Street

**COBRA THE IMPALER +
HIPPOTRAKTOR** Sat 19
Apr, The Flapper,
Cambrian Wharf

SEAN PAUL + ASHANTI
Sat 19 Apr, Utilita
Arena Birmingham

**CARLOS SANTANA
TRIBUTE SHOW** Sat 19
Apr, The Crescent
Theatre, Birmingham

**BIG JIM & THE
ALABAMA BOOGIE
BOYS** Sat 19 Apr, Joe
Joe Jims, Cofton
Hackett

**COUNTRY
SUPERSTARS** Sat 19
Apr, Artrix,
Bromsgrove

THE LITTLE MIX SHOW
Sat 19 Apr, Sutton
Coldfield Town Hall

KILLERSTREAM Sat 19
Apr, The
Rhodehouse, Sutton
Coldfield

**A TRIBUTE TO
WHITNEY HOUSTON**
Sat 19 Apr, Dudley
Town Hall

**NUBIYAN TWIST +
WEBMOMS** Sun 20
Apr, Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath

**TROJAN RECORDS
CELEBRATION** Sun 20
Apr, The Jam House,
Jewellery Quarter

**VADER + RISE OF
KRONOS + SKAPHOS**
Sun 20 Apr, The
Asylum, Hampton St

ALT BLK ERA Sun 20
Apr, The Flapper,
Cambrian Wharf

HAWKWIND Sun 20
Apr, Symphony Hall

GHOST Sun 20 Apr,
Utilita Arena
Birmingham

**CERI JUSTICE & THE
JURY** Sun 20 Apr,
Tower Of Song,
Pershore Road

**STAN TERRY - A
TRIBUTE TO ROD
STEWART** Sun 20 Apr,
Joe Joe Jims, Cofton
Hackett

**THE GUNS AND ROSES
EXPERIENCE** Sun 20
Apr, Artrix,
Bromsgrove

PURE MCCARTNEY Sun
20 Apr, Sutton
Coldfield Town Hall

Classical Music

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA: TO
THE BEAT** Programme includes
works by Stravinsky, Higdon &
Bernstein, Mon 14 Apr, Birmingham
Town Hall

**CBSO: KAZUKI CONDUCTS RAVEL &
POULENC** Featuring Kazuki Yamada
(conductor), Fazil Say (piano),
Eleanor Lyons (soprano) & CBSO
Chorus, Wed 16 Apr, Symphony
Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: CHAUSSON'S
CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN, PIANO &
STRINGS** Featuring Eugene
Tzikindelean, Lowri Porter & Amy
Jones (violins), David BaMaung
(viola), Arthur Boutillier (cello) &
María Linares Molero (piano), Thurs
17 Apr, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**EX CATHEDRA: GOOD FRIDAY BACH'S ST
MATTHEW PASSION** Featuring Jeffrey
Skidmore (conductor) & Ex
Cathedra Baroque Orchestra &
Academy of Vocal Music, Fri 18 Apr,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

LAUREN PATTISON Tues 15 Apr, The
Glee Club, Birmingham

SEAN MCLOUGHLIN Tues 15 Apr, The
Glee Club, Birmingham

ANDREW BIRD Wed 16 Apr, The Glee
Club, Birmingham

**COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY
ROBINSON, AMY MATTHEWS & COMIC
TBC** Thurs 17 Apr, The Glee Club,
Birmingham

MICK MILLER Thurs 17 Apr, Dudley
Town Hall

**ALEX KEALY, ROB ROUSE, AMY
MATTHEWS & DANNY CLIVES** Fri 18
Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

TOM LAWRIKSON Fri 18 Apr, The Glee
Club, Birmingham

**LINDSEY SANTORO (PICTURED),
HANNAH PLATT, LEROY BRITO & JON
PEARSON** Sat 19 Apr, Rosies
Nightclub, Birmingham



**ALEX KEALY, ROB ROUSE, AMY
MATTHEWS & MUHSHIN YESILADA** Sat
19 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

LAWRENCE CHANEY Sun 20 Apr, The
Glee Club, Birmingham



Joan As Police Woman - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

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International Living History Festival

Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 April 2025

*Miniature Train Rides
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*Market Stalls *Hands on Activities
*Living History Displays *Food & Drink



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Craig Revel Horwood - Lichfield Garrick & Birmingham Town Hall

Theatre

CHICAGO Strictly's Janette Manrara makes her musical theatre debut as Roxie Hart in a story of murder, greed, corruption and exploitation. Also starring Brenda Edwards as Mama Morton and Djalenga Scott as Velma Kelly, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Apr, The Alexandra, Birmingham

KINKY BOOTS Award-winning musical inspired by the true story of a failing Northamptonshire shoe factory. Strictly's Johannes Radebe stars, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome



DRACULA Blackeyed Theatre present Bram Stoker's Gothic thriller, Wed 16 - Thurs 17 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

TITUS ANDRONICUS Simon Russell Beale takes the lead in Max Webster's reimagining of Shakespeare's bloodiest play, Thurs 17 Apr - Sat 7 Jun, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST All-singing, all-dancing family show based on the much-loved fairytale, Fri 18 - Sun 27 Apr, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

THE FROG PRINCE Spring panto packed with songs, slapstick, silliness, audience participation and fairytale magic, Mon 14 Apr, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THERE'S A MONSTER IN YOUR SHOW High-energy family adventure in which favourite characters from Tom

Fletcher's books come to life on stage, Mon 14 - Tues 15 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR SHOW Celebration of four Eric Carle stories: Brown Bear, Brown Bear; 10 Little Rubber Ducks; The Very Busy Spider; and (of course) The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Mon 14 - Tues 15 Apr, The Rep, Birmingham

THE LITTIEST YAK A musical version of Lu Fraser & Kate Hindley's award-winning children's book, which celebrates 'being perfect... just the way you are...', Tues 15 Apr, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

Light Entertainment

DERREN BROWN: ONLY HUMAN Brand-new show from the award-winning master of mind control and psychological illusion, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

JEFF WAYNE'S THE WAR OF THE WORLDS - ALIVE ON STAGE! Starring The Wanted's Max George, EastEnders' Maisie Smith and Busted's Charlie Simpson. The production also features Liam Neeson in 3D holography as The Journalist, Fri 18 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

CRAIG REVEL HORWOOD An evening of 'big songs, tall tales and glamour', Fri 18 Apr, Lichfield Garrick

CRAIG REVEL HORWOOD An evening of 'big songs, tall tales and glamour', Sun 20 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH KIT DE WAAL One-off evening of conversation with host & interviewer Lyle Bignon - in

partnership with The Heath Bookshop, Mon 14 Apr, Atrium, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

SIMON YATES OF TOUCHING THE VOID - MY MOUNTAIN LIFE Join the mountaineer as he shares the drama, excitement and beauty of modern, lightweight alpinism, Thurs 17 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

Events

AN EVENING WITH PETER STEVENS Take a deep-dive into the world of award-winning car designer Peter Stevens, Mon 14 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

LEGO CREATURE WORKSHOP Create your own wild creature using Lego kits, Mon 14 - Fri 18 Apr, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

WILD WONDERS SHOW Find out about amazing creatures and discover their remarkable adaptations, Mon 14 - Fri 18 Apr, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

BOOK OF BOOKS - COLOURING Join in colouring poster-size excerpts from the most beautiful pages of the sacred books featured in the cathedral's current Book Of Books exhibition, Mon 14 - Fri 25 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral

STORYTELLING SESSIONS Listen to Bible stories being retold by Lichfield storyteller Christine Genders, Tues 15 - Wed 16 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral

COUNTRYTASTIC Hands-on event celebrating farming and the countryside, Thurs 17 Apr, Three Counties Showground, Malvern

EASTER EGG HUNT Explore the

galleries, search high and low for hidden eggs, and discover the wonders of glassmaking, Thurs 17 - Sat 19 Apr, Stourbridge Glass Museum

ALICE'S EASTERLAND ADVENTURE Step into a wonderland of nature, Thurs 17 - Sun 20 April, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

TUNNEL TOUR Explore the fascinating tunnels beneath the museum and delve into the rich history of the Stuart crystal factory that once stood on the site, Fri 18 Apr, Stourbridge Glass Museum

TRADITIONAL EASTER EGG HUNT Search for the eggs around the museum, Fri 18 - Mon 21 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA Scour the grounds high and low for eggs and be rewarded with a chocolate prize, Fri 18 - Mon 21 Apr, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

SPRING STEAM GALA Featuring both guest and home locomotives operating a busy timetable between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade, Fri 18 - Mon 21 Apr, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

EASTER EGG SUN CATCHER CRAFT Children can decorate their very own egg-shaped sun catcher to take home and display, Sat 19 Apr, Stourbridge Glass Museum

BEN WHITTAKER VS LIAM CAMERON One of boxing's most hotly anticipated rematches, Sun 20 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

EASTER MOTOR SHOW Content-packed day of motoring heritage, suitable for all the family, Sun 20 - Mon 21 Apr, Weston Park, Shropshire



An Evening With Kit De Waal - Hockley Social Club

Gigs

FINNEAS + HOHNEN FORD Mon 21 Apr, O2 Academy

PLAYSTATION: THE CONCERT Mon 21 Apr, Utilita Arena B'ham

THE U2 EXPERIENCE Mon 21 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Mon 21 - Tues 22 Apr, Symphony Hall

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 22 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth

JACKSON DEAN Tues 22 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth



SINGLE MOTHERS + OTHER HALF Tues 22 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

SBT Tues 22 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

BAMBARA Wed 23 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SKEETE Wed 23 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

MATILDA MANN Wed 23 Apr, O2 Academy

NEIL COWLEY TRIO Wed 23 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

MARTIN STEPHENSON Wed 23 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

GREGORY PORTER Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Symphony Hall

THE CINELLI BROTHERS Thurs 24 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

THE GOUDIES + KYLIE PRICE Thurs 24 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

DEL CAMINO Thurs 24 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

FALSE HEADS Thurs 24 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

ELLIOT MINOR Thurs 24 Apr, O2 Institute,

Digbeth

NEWSHAPES Thurs 24 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

THROWN + CRYSTAL LAKE + UNITY TX + GRAPHIC NATURE Thurs 24 Apr, The Asylum, Hampton Street

PAUL DUNMALL DOUBLE QUARTET Thurs 24 Apr, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

THROWN + EXCESSIVE GUILT Thurs 24 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth

ASTRID WILLIAMSON Thurs 24 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

THE POCKET CHORAL SOCIETY Thurs 24 Apr, Bromsgrove Folk Club

THE MAGIC OF MOTOWN Thurs 24 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

ROGER DALTRY Thurs 24 Apr, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

GOOD SAD HAPPY BAD Fri 25 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

JACKSON HOMER Fri 25 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

SEAN REEVES Fri 25 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Ludgate Hill

DEFINITELY OASIS Fri 25 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

GREENTEA PENG Fri 25 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

THE FLAMING LIPS Fri 25 Apr, O2 Academy

PEARL SCAM + ANGRY HAIR Fri 25 Apr, O2 Academy

MOMENTS OF PLEASURE Fri 25 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

CHARLOTTE PLANK Fri 25 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth

BEYOND THE PINES Fri 25 Apr, The Victoria, John Bright Street

SATINDER SARTAAJ Fri 25 Apr, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SKEGSS Fri 25 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth

THE GEORGE MICHAEL SINGERS Fri 25 Apr, The Alexandra

VEHICLE Fri 25 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

KIMMY & THE WAHOO'S + DAVE ONIONS Fri 25 Apr, Joe Joe Jims,

Cofton Hackett

RKM + THE WRECKONINGS + STRESS + KING OCEAN CLUB Fri 25 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth

THE KILKENNYS Fri 25 Apr, The Core Theatre, Solihull

PROMISES AND LIES - THE UB40 YEARS Fri 25 Apr, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

ULTIMATE BOY BANDS Fri 25 Apr, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

EDDI READER Fri 25 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

LUTHER LIVE Fri 25 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

GORDON HENDRICKS AS ELVIS Fri 25 Apr, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

MANIC STREET PREACHERS Fri 25 Apr, The Civic at The Halls Wolverhampton

ELLE-J WALTERS BAND Fri 25 - Sat 26 Apr, The Jam House, Jewellery Quarter

RON'S NEIGHBOURS Sat 26 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

MATILDA PRATT Sat 26 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway



THE COURETTES Sat 26 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth

JAWS Sat 26 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

NATI Sat 26 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

DEFINITELY MIGHTBE + CHANGING MAN Sat 26 Apr, O2 Academy

DEATH CRUSHER ALL-DAYER Sat 26 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

CHELJI + PDTHESAINT + PERCYBONES + MORE Sat 26 Apr, The Asylum, Hampton Street

JUST FRIENDS + CHAIN



Greentea Peng - O2 Institute, Digbeth

Sat 26 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

LIONEL: THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE Sat 26 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

BLANK GENERATION Sat 26 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

MAJOR TOMS - DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE Sat 26 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Cofton Hackett

THE GREATEST STAR - BARBARA STREISAND Sat 26 Apr, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

BRITPOP UNITED + ALL 4 INDIE Sat 26 Apr, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

LUCY SPRAGGAN Sat 26 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE CLONE ROSES + OAS-IS + THE SMITHS LTD Sat 26 Apr, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

MAN IN THE MIRROR - MICHAEL JACKSON TRIBUTE Sat 26 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BENEFITS Sun 27 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

ED TUDOR-POLE Sun 27 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

GRASSROOTS FESTIVAL Sun 27 Apr, The Night

Owl, Digbeth

GOLDIE Sun 27 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Balsall Heath

BLIND GIRLS Sun 27 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

JUST MY IMAGINATION: THE MUSIC OF THE TEMPTATIONS Sun 27 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

TOM MARTIN'S CROSSROADS BLUES Sun 27 Apr, Tower Of Song, Pershore Road

THE DRIFTERS Sun 27 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

RICH PARSONS Sun 27 Apr, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

ANASTACIA Mon 28 Apr, Symphony Hall

THE SCRIBES Tues 29 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

EVERYTHING YES Tues 29 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

DIGBETH JAZZ Tues 29 Apr, The Night Owl, Digbeth

RAZORLIGHT Tues 29 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

VIAGRA BOYS Tues 29 Apr, O2 Academy

THE DOLLYROTS & DONT PANIC Tues 29 Apr, The Asylum, Hampton St

ORCHARDS Tues 29 Apr, The Flapper, Cambrian Wharf

TARA MACLEAN Tues 29 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath



THE CLIMAX BLUES BAND Wed 30 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath

OSLO TWINS Wed 30 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Smallbrook Queensway

THE NO COVERS CLUB Wed 30 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

THE WELLERMEN Wed 30 Apr, O2 Institute, Digbeth

NEVER EASY + LASTELLE Wed 30 Apr, The Asylum, Hampton St

CIGARETTES & CIDER Wed 30 Apr, The Victoria, John Bright St

JUNIPER FOLK + TOM LEADER Wed 30 Apr, Red Lion Folk Club, Vicarage Road

ANDREW COMBS Wed 30 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Kings Heath

NEWTON FAULKNER Wed 30 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Classical Music

CORELIA PROJECT: LUNCHTIME CONCERT
Featuring Magdalena Krstevska & Sophie Glenny (clarinets).

Programme includes works by Hildegard von Bingen, Ruth Gipps, Libby Larsen & more..., Thurs 24 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

JAMES MCVINNIE ORGAN CONCERT
Programme includes works by Stanford, Muhly, Whitlock & more..., Mon 28 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

ORGAN RECITAL WITH CATHY LAMB Tues 29 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral

Comedy

WELCOME TO HELL LIVE: WITH DANIEL FOX & DANE BUCKLEY Wed 23 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SEANN WALSH, MIKE RICE, JENNY ART & FREDDY QUINNE Wed 23 Apr, Herbert's Yard, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, CARL HUTCHINSON & JACKIE FABULOUS Thurs 24 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

KIELL SMITH-BYNOE & FRIENDS: KOOL STORY BRO Fri 25 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

PETE OTWAY, RAY BRADSHAW, CARL HUTCHINSON, JACKIE FABULOUS & KATE BUTCH Fri 25 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

LOUISE YOUNG Fri 25 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GOBBY FLICKS COMEDY Fri 25 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

RUSSELL HICKS Fri 25 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

ROB ROUSE, KRIS DAVIES, AARON SIMMONDS & TOM TOAL Sat 26 Apr, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

CARL HUTCHINSON & AL STEVENSON Sat 26 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

PETE OTWAY, RAY BRADSHAW, CARL HUTCHINSON & JACKIE FABULOUS Sat 26 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

ANGELOS EPITHIMIOU & WAYNE BEESE Sat 26 Apr, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

FUN! WITH BARBARA NICE Sat 26 Apr, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

HARRY HILL Sat 26 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

NOTHING BUT LAUGHTER, OLD-SKOOL MEETS NEW-SKOOL Sun 27 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROUGH WORKS: NEW MATERIAL NIGHT Sun 27 Apr, The Glee Club, B'ham

HARRY HILL Sun 27 Apr, The Alexandra, Birmingham

HARE OF THE DOG COMEDY Sun 27 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

RUSSELL KANE Sun 27 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ABI CLARKE Tues 29 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SIMON MUNNERY Wed 30 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

RICHARD HERRING Wed 30 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

Theatre

& JULIET Jay McGuinness and Ranj Singh star in the award-winning musical, which flips the script on the greatest love story ever told, Tues 22 Apr - Sat 3 May, Birmingham Hippodrome

SLEEPING BEAUTY - P*SSSED UP PANTO
Adults-only panto packed with innuendo, comedy routines, parodies and naughty fun, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

TALKING ABOUT THE FIRE China Plate Theatre present a show about a new nuclear weapons treaty, Wed 23 Apr, Thimblemill Library, Smethwick

SLEEPING BEAUTY: HAPPILY EVER AFTER
Family-friendly Easter panto, bringing a modern twist to a classic tale, Thurs 24 - Sun 27 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

THE POCKET DREAM Sam Rabone and Ben Thornton lead the cast in Sandi Toksvig & Ely Brewer's reimagining of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, Thurs 24 Apr - Sat 3 May, Lichfield Garrick

THE NAUGHTY CARRIAGE ON THE ORPHAN TRAIN British Youth Music Theatre present a new musical about making your own version of family, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Apr, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

PINNOCHIO - EASTER PANTO Sat 26 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

THE HAUNTING OF BLAINE MANOR An 'edge-of-the-seat thriller' set in a manor with a twisted history of madness, witchcraft, tragedy and death..., Sat 26 Apr, Stourbridge Town Hall

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT BRENDA One-woman show based on a true story and highlighting the struggles of many women in today's society, Tues 29 Apr, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

HANDBAGGED Moira Buffini's fly-on-the-wall comedy takes a look at what might have happened when Queen Elizabeth II and Margaret Thatcher came face-to-face in the privacy of the palace, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry



The Girl On The Train - The Alexandra

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN Louisa Lytton stars as Rachel Watson in the stage version of Paula Hawkins' bestselling novel of the same name, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, The Alexandra, Birmingham

BOX OF FROGS An evening of 'high-octane improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Wed 30 Apr, 1000 Trades, Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

BUFF Solo-performed play reflecting on body-image pressures, social-media jealousy and one gay man's journey to self-acceptance..., Wed 30 Apr - Fri 2 May, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

HABEAS CORPUS The Lichfield Players present an amateur version of Alan Bennett's 'farcical merry-go-round of mistaken identities and amorous encounters', Wed 30 Apr - Sat 3 May, Lichfield Garrick

Kids Theatre

PRINCESS LIVE! Hour-long princess pop party featuring favourite fairytale royalty in an all-singing, all-dancing concert show, Mon 21 Apr, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

THE WORST PRINCESS Anna Kemp's bestselling picture book is brought to life on stage, featuring 'laugh-out-loud comedy, cool puppets, singalong pop anthems and a dazzling, larger-than-life dragon', Tues 22 Apr, The Rep, Birmingham

DINOSAUR WORLD LIVE A roarsome interactive show promising 'a mind-expanding Jurassic adventure live on stage', Tues 22 - Thurs 24 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

BING'S BIRTHDAY Brand-new stage show for younger audiences, packed

with fun, laughter and surprises, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

ROOM ON THE BROOM Tall Stories' fun-filled stage version of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's much-loved children's book, Wed 23 - Sat 26 Apr, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

A BIG EGG The People's Theatre Company fuse live action, animation and puppetry in a family musical that's 'guaranteed to delight egg lovers, chocolate lovers and chocolate egg lovers alike', Sat 26 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

THE STORY FORGE: MAKE YOUR OWN MYTH Rubbish Shakespeare Company and Silly History Boys present an hour-long high-octane adventure featuring clowning, storytelling, live music and more... Suitable for children and childish adults, Sun 27 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

MINNY STYCKER Soap Soup Theatre present a story about the magic of creativity, in which 'a bedroom becomes a forest, a school turns into a solar system and the drawings in your bag have a life of their own', Sun 27 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Dance

GIOVANNI: THE LAST DANCE The Italian maestro returns to the stage, accompanied by an ensemble of world-class dancers, Fri 25 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

TORVILL & DEAN: OUR LAST DANCE Join the ice skating legends as they embark on their last-ever tour together, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

QUEER PLANET PRESENTED BY BICURIOS GEORGE Join the award-winning drag king and loveable nature boy for a raucous celebration of queerness and the animal kingdom, Tues 22 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

KATE BUTCH: WUTHERING SHITES Jukebox musical based on the songs of Kate Bush, Wed 23 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham



PULL MY GOLDFINGER A fresh take on a modern classic for fans of the

James Bond franchise, Thurs 24 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

BINGO & THE CITY WITH SAMANTHA GROANS Tracey Collins returns with a brand-new musical comedy bingo extravaganza, Fri 25 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

GUENTHER STEINER LIVE: UNFILTERED Buckle up for an all-access evening with former Haas F1 team principal Guenther Steiner, star of Netflix's smash-hit docuseries Drive To Survive, Fri 25 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

WICKED SING-ALONG Cinematic experience during which audience members can sing along to the film's classic score, Fri 25 Apr, Dudley Town Hall

BOTTOMS UP: BURLESQUE & CABARET 'The creme de la creme of the cabaret world take to the stage to surprise and delight with sultry striptease, witty wisecracks and saucy songs', Sat 26 Apr, The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

THE MUSIC OF BOND James Bond movie themes, performed by a symphony orchestra and vocalists, Sat 26 Apr, Lichfield Cathedral



International Living History Festival - Avoncroft, Bromsgrove

THE DIVAS OF LAS VEGAS Energetic performance showcasing the talents of Tina Turner, Celine Dion, Katy Perry and more..., Sat 26 Apr, The Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull

Talks & Spoken Word

LEMN SISSAY: LET THE LIGHT POUR IN LIVE Poetry-reading evening with one of Britain's most celebrated contemporary voices, Sat 26 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham



PRISM PANEL DISCUSSION Roundtable panel discussion on the theme of 'belonging' in contemporary photography, Sat 26 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

GYLES BRANDRETH: CAN'T STOP TALKING Join the novelist, actor, ex-MP and podcaster for a rollercoaster evening of tales and revelations, Sun 27 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

THE MORAL OF AN INSPECTOR CALLS Medieval morality meets English literature in a discussion-based masterclass, Wed 30 Apr, University of Birmingham

Events

LEGO CREATURE WORKSHOP Create your own wild creature using Lego kits, Mon 21 - Fri 25 Apr, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

WILD WONDERS SHOW Find out about amazing creatures and discover their

remarkable adaptations, Mon 21 - Fri 25 Apr, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

EARTH DAY 2025 Celebrate Earth Day by getting 'hands-on with marine wonders', Tues 22 Apr, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

EASTER ACCESS DAY Featuring a whole host of accessible activities, Thurs 24 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

MOANA SCREENING & CHILDREN'S DISCO Special showing of Moana on Birmingham's biggest screen, accompanied by a children's disco, Sat 26 Apr, Millennium Point, Birmingham

THE MATRIX A special showing of The Matrix on Birmingham's biggest screen, Sat 26 Apr, Millennium Point, Birmingham

INTERNATIONAL LIVING HISTORY FESTIVAL Featuring hands-on activities, a historically themed market and re-enactors, Sat 26 - Sun 27 Apr, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

MODEL WORLD LIVE Featuring 150-plus stands bringing together 'the very best in modelling', Sat 26 - Sun 27 Apr, NEC, Birmingham

MAKE A RUBBISH PROP Join The Story Forge's designer, Alice Rowbottom, in this hands-on cardboard creation workshop, Sun 27 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (mac), Birmingham



ULTIMATE BMW MEET The UK's largest BMW meet returns to the museum for a fourth year, Sun 27 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

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2 - 24 MAY

The House Party



7 - 10 MAY



CROFT

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Sofia Linares. © Perou.

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