

Worcestershire

ISSUE 459 APRIL 2025

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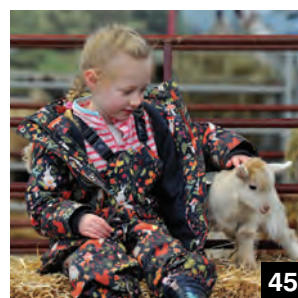
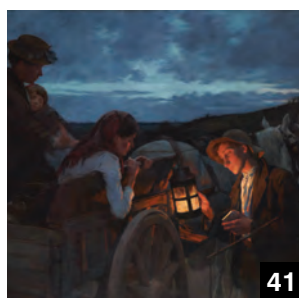
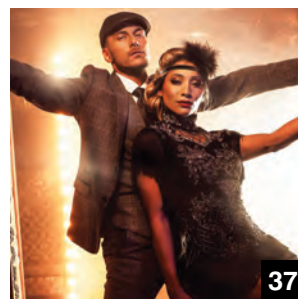
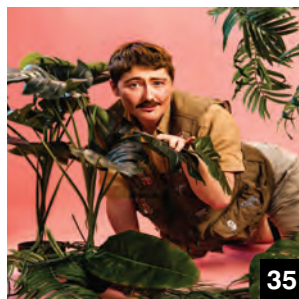
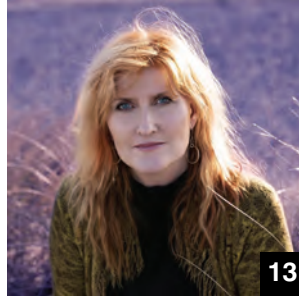
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### What's On

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## 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](http://thebelfry.com)

## Special guests revealed for Three Counties Show

The award-winning Royal Three Counties Show will return to Malvern this summer. Featuring a host of special guests and leading voices from the worlds of food and farming, the event takes place at the Three Counties Showground from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 June. Contributors to this year's get-together include Clarkson's Farm's Kaleb Cooper and familiar television faces Matt Tebbutt, Kate Humble and Adam Henson. Tickets for the show can be purchased via the website at [royalthreecounties.co.uk](http://royalthreecounties.co.uk)



## 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](http://cheltenhamfestivals.org)



## Railway 200 train to make a Kidderminster stop-off

Severn Valley Railway (SVR) will be the first stop-off for a unique train which is taking a 12-month tour of Britain to celebrate 200 years of the modern railway. The Railway 200 train - named Inspiration and made up of four specially decorated carriages, each with its own theme and focus - will call at 60 destinations as part of its journey to promote the past, present and future of the railway. Arriving at SVR's Kidderminster station on Thursday 26 June, the train will be available for visitors to enjoy from the following day (Friday the 27th) to Sunday 6 July. The exhibition train will then stop off at Birmingham Moor Street from Tuesday 8 to Thursday 10 July. For more information about Railway 200, including an interactive map showing over 250 planned anniversary activities and events, visit the website at [railway200.co.uk](http://railway200.co.uk)

## Texas and Pet Shop Boys to play Warwick Castle

Scottish rock band Texas and 1980s electronic pop icons Pet Shop Boys (pictured) will perform at this year's Warwick Castle Live event at the end of the summer. Texas will headline on Friday 29 August, with Pet Shop Boys taking to the stage the following night (Saturday the 30th). Tickets for the event are available at [warwickcastlelive.co.uk](http://warwickcastlelive.co.uk)



## Festival On The Close returns at Rugby School

Festival On The Close returns to the heart of Rugby from Saturday 21 to Thursday 26 June. Taking place on the picturesque Close in the grounds of Rugby School, this year's event includes, among other attractions, a comedy club featuring headliner Maisie Adam (pictured), a Jo Whiley DJ set and a performance by the BBC Big Band. To find out more about the festival, visit the website at [ticketsource.co.uk](http://ticketsource.co.uk)



## New community choir to celebrate The Kinks

New Warwickshire community choir Vox Populi are this month lending their voices to a celebration of 60 years of legendary rock band The Kinks (Holy Trinity Leamington, Saturday 5 April). Performing new arrangements of songs from two of the group's albums - 1968's *The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society* and 1969's *Arthur (The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire)*, the choir will be joined by two soloists, Cubbington C of E Primary School Choir and the Warwick-located Orchestra Of The Swan. Tickets are available via the latter's website at [orchestraoftheswan.org](http://orchestraoftheswan.org)

## 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 the website [elkiebrooks.com](http://elkiebrooks.com)



## Back to the 80s with Martin Kemp

Martin Kemp will be taking to the decks at The Assembly in Leamington Spa early next month.

The Spandau Ballet star visits the venue with his Back To The 80s DJ set on Saturday 3 May. To book your place, visit [thegigcartel.seetickets.com](http://thegigcartel.seetickets.com)

## Panto to return to Solihull's Core

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 the website at [thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk](http://thecoretheatresolihull.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](http://birminghamhippodrome.com) to purchase tickets for the show.

## Escape from The Commandery!

Escape-room fans are being urged to head to Worcester visitor attraction The Commandery this month and 'unearth the Royal Seal'. The popular venue's escape-room story is based around The Commandery's role as the Royalist headquarters in the English Civil War. Teams of two to six players must become museum curators and battle against the clock to find Charles II's lost treasure before infamous thief Arty Snitch can get his greedy hands on it... To find out more about the escape-room challenge, visit [commandery-quest.co.uk](http://commandery-quest.co.uk)

## Strictly stars hitting the road again

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](http://legendsofthedancefloor.com)



## Getting intimate with Rebecca Ferguson

Rebecca Ferguson will play Coventry's Warwick Arts Centre in the summer. Tickets for the critically acclaimed singer-songwriter's 15 Years: Stripped Back show (on Tuesday 10 June) are available by visiting [warwickartscentre.co.uk](http://warwickartscentre.co.uk)



## New state-of-the-art app at Blenheim Palace

Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire has launched a new state-of-the-art app. Named Archie, the interactive guide provides visitors with the opportunity to delve into over 300 years' worth of stories - many of which have never before been told... To experience Archie and tailor your own visit to Blenheim, go online and check out [culturati.blenheimpalace.com](http://culturati.blenheimpalace.com)

## Food festival announces celebrity chefs for 2025

Get ready to indulge your senses this summer when the Three Counties Food & Drink Festival returns for its third year. Taking place at Malvern's Three Counties Showground on Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 July, the show features a 'jam-packed' schedule of demonstrations by TV chefs Simon Rimmer, Cherish Finden, Francesco Mattana and Chris Bavin. Other festival attractions include wine-tasting sessions, live music, a kids' cookery school and the chance to sample and purchase food from 160 traders... To check out the full programme of events, visit the website at [threecountiesfoodfestival.com](http://threecountiesfoodfestival.com)



## Sports-themed festival heading to Warwickshire venue

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 the website at [festivalofsportuk.com](http://festivalofsportuk.com)

## Twelve plays in four days at Stratford's Bear Pit

The Stratford One Act Festival returns to the town's Bear Pit theatre this month. The event features 12 plays presented across four nights, all of which will be performed by theatre companies from Stratford-upon-Avon and the surrounding area. The festival runs from Wednesday 9 to Saturday 12 April. Tickets and information about each of the featured productions is available at [thebearpit.org.uk](http://thebearpit.org.uk)

## Anne Reid to star in new play at Malvern Theatres

Familiar television faces Anne Reid (Last Tango In Halifax, pictured) and Caroline Quentin (Men Behaving Badly) are heading for Malvern this summer to star in a brand-new play about the late Queen Elizabeth II. Taking the title *By Royal Appointment*, the production visits the town's Festival Theatre from Tuesday 1 to Saturday 5 July. For more information and tickets, visit [malvern-theatres.co.uk](http://malvern-theatres.co.uk)



## Worcester venues to host Elgar Festival 2025

The 2025 edition of the Elgar Festival takes place at various Worcestershire venues next month. Running from Saturday 24 May to Sunday 1 June, the event features, among other attractions, a Worcester Cathedral performance of the composer's second symphony, participatory event *Come And Play Elgar*, and family concert *Elgar For Everyone*. To check out the full programme and purchase tickets, visit [elgarfestival.org](http://elgarfestival.org)

## Return of the Roaring 20s at Coventry Cathedral

Admirers of the opulence and glamour of the 1920s can enjoy a taste of the decade at Coventry Cathedral this summer, courtesy of *The Great Gatsby Ball*. Organisers of the Saturday 14 June event are promising to bring the Roaring 20s to life, transporting attendees 'back to the Jazz Age for a night of elegance, style and sophistication'. Further information is available by visiting [coventrycathedral.org.uk](http://coventrycathedral.org.uk), where you can also buy tickets to the ball.

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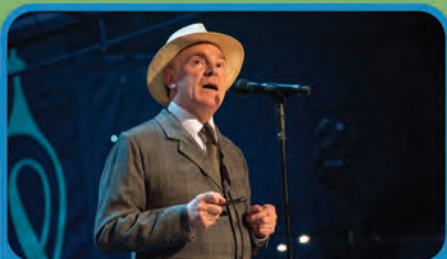


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**Gregory Porter**  
23 & 24 Apr | Symphony Hall



**Guenther 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](http://bmusic.co.uk)

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## Liza Goddard to star in The Croft at the Belgrade

Familiar television face Liza Goddard will star in Ali Miles' Highlands-set haunted-house story *The Croft* when it visits the Coventry Belgrade Theatre from Tuesday 20 to Saturday 24 May. Tickets for the show are available via the website at [belgrade.co.uk](http://belgrade.co.uk)



## The Festival Of Blossom continues at Hanbury Hall

Worcestershire's Hanbury Hall continues to host its three-month-long Festival Of Blossom throughout April. Inspired by the Japanese tradition of flower viewing (Hanami), the National Trust event invites people 'to take a moment and appreciate the beauty of blooming blossoms that can be seen across the country'. To find out how you can join in the blossom celebrations at Hanbury, visit the website [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)



## Makers Central coming 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](http://makerscentral.co.uk)



## Slava's Snowshow back in the Midlands this autumn

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](http://slavasnowshow.com)

## Hollywood icon brings new tour to the Midlands

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](http://bmusic.co.uk)

## Bricking it at the Herbert

A new exhibition showing at Coventry's Herbert Art Gallery & Museum across the summer (Saturday 31 May - Sunday 7 September) will provide families with the opportunity to step back in time to the prehistoric world. Taking the title *Brick Dinos*, the show's attractions include a range of Lego dinosaur sculptures - created in collaboration with

palaeontologists - behind-the-scenes videos, photo opportunities, and the chance to uncover fossils at an interactive 'dino dig'. Visitors can also get creative with hands-on Lego and Duplo play, design their own dinosaurs on a graffiti wall, and take home dinosaur-themed colouring sheets. To find out more, visit [theherbert.org](http://theherbert.org)

## Festival commemorates composers' anniversaries

Leamington Music Festival returns next month. Principally taking place in the town's Royal Pump Rooms from Friday 2 to Monday 5 May, the 2025 edition of the event commemorates the 150th anniversary of Maurice Ravel's birth and the 50th anniversary of the death of fellow composer Arthur Bliss. Musicians performing at this year's festival include Roderick Williams & Andrew West (pictured). To check out the complete programme of attractions, visit the website at [leamingtonmusic.org](http://leamingtonmusic.org)





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7 - 10 MAY



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A THRILLER  
BY ALI MILLES

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# 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**

# Herbert

Art Gallery & Museum

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Stratford  
Literary  
Festival

# Spring Festival

8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Alison Steadman  
Mishal Husain  
Dame Jacqueline Wilson  
Reeta Chakrabarti  
John Boyne  
Sally Phillips  
Dr Julie Smith  
Susie Dent  
Cecelia Ahern  
Juliet Stevenson  
Jeremy Vine  
Dharshini David  
Sir Graham Brady

Emma Barnett  
Tracy Borman  
Simon Jenkins  
Charlie Higson  
Chloe Dalton  
Carol Klein  
Diana Henry  
Robin Ince  
Julia Samuel  
Kit de Waal  
...and lots more



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# PUB TALK

**Set in a Dublin pub, *Two Pints* is a two-hander play by acclaimed author Roddy Doyle in which the main characters spout a lot of drivel but also get to the heart of the human condition. With a new version premiering at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre next month, its director, Sara Joyce, explains what audiences can expect...**

Originally written as a series of Facebook posts by award-winning writer Roddy Doyle (best known for penning *The Commitments* and *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*), *Two Pints* features two middle-aged men conducting largely banal but often hilarious chats over a few beers in a Dublin pub. The action - and it's a stretch of the imagination to call it that - takes place over a 15-month period during which one of the men witnesses the demise and then loss of a parent. The play beautifully illustrates how bar-room banter can often mask topics of greater heft... First produced by Dublin's Abbey Theatre in 2017 and initially performed in pubs before switching to the stage, a new production of *Two Pints* receives its UK premiere at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre next month, with upcoming Irish director Sara Joyce at the helm. We chatted to Sara to find out more...

**Even though the two men in the play probably wouldn't call themselves friends, they are clearly seeking - and finding - a connection, which isn't a stereotypical male thing to do.**

No. If we're generalising, we'd say women are more inclined to talk to each other and men aren't. However you want to cut it, there's probably some truth to that in terms of cultural conditioning. So how do we have spaces where people can talk to each other, regardless of who they are? I have such an aspiration to show meaningful connection, and that's what the play is doing best.

**Much of *Two Pints* was written over a decade ago, so some of the cultural references in the men's banter might be a bit dated. Has Roddy freshened up any of the dialogue?**

Absolutely. Specific references have changed to make it resonant for today, but it's retained its core. There's a mastery to his writing that is so hidden because there's a kind of ordinariness to the speech - an off-the-cuffness, as well as Roddy's rhythms and structure.

**The original production had a lengthy gestation period, developing as it toured pubs in Ireland before reaching the Dublin stage. Has that helped make it easier for you?**

Definitely. One of the reasons I'm so in gratitude to Caitriona [McLaughlin, who directed the original] and that first cast is that I have the privilege of working with something that's so dramaturgically sound. I shouldn't admit this, but there's very little that I can do except get in the way of it!

**Speaking of getting in - or out of - the way, how do you intend to stage it? The Belgrade's B2 is a fairly flexible space, but you obviously don't want two men sitting at a bar with their backs to the audience the whole time.**

The challenge was extraordinary for the designer, Claire Winfield. She's been at the Belgrade for 10 years and is an amazing talent. Because of the configuration of the theatre, it was almost mathematical to work out where the actors can be - it's kind of amazing what she has done. They're predominantly sat on stools for the entire show, which sounds like it could be boring, but honestly it's not!

**We've already acknowledged that it's a male-dominated play, and there's obviously a strong Irish bent. How do you pitch it to a wider audience that might not connect to those two elements?**

It goes back to when I first got the play and thought 'Why have they sent it to me?' My work has been incredibly female-centric - I typically only work with women - but the experience I had when reading it, and maybe this is why there's a cleverness in the approach to working with me and Caitriona, is that I was affected in spite of my [preconceptions]. The play has a kind of consciousness of that - it's aware of, and the men are aware of, being in this shifting time.

**It feels like we're eavesdropping on a conversation about nothing and everything all at once...**

It's hilarious, but then it kind of gets you. For something that is just two men talking, it creates pure feeling. At its heart it's a play about existence and life.

**With a message for all ages?**

Exactly. I think about my parents coming to see it and how they will feel seen, because they'd be a similar age to these men and [know] what it is to have lived through a life.



The man is grieving a father, but he's still a son and that's still his dad - none of that goes away. At the same time, for somebody like me, it's quite confronting to think 'What are you doing with your life?' And for younger audiences there's a gift of experience and wisdom in this conversation that they wouldn't necessarily get to hear [anywhere else].

**Texting and social media has definitely changed how younger people communicate, and even though the play started out on Facebook, it really highlights the importance and uniqueness of face-to-face conversation.**

I think there's something in us that needs connection. It's almost an animal need, so I trust that it'll come back. It also explains a love of theatre for me, where everyone is in a room together.

**So it's *Two Pints* that should go down nicely?**

I hope so! If nothing else it's a really beautiful play and a great story. I trust that people who come will just have a really lovely time with these two men.

.....  
**Two Pints shows at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, from Friday 2 to Saturday 24 May**

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Live music from across the region...

## Henge

Marrs Bar, Worcester, Fri 18 April

"Attention Earth! We bring you the gift of cosmic dross - a kind of music new to your world. There are no Earth words to describe these sounds, but you will learn how to love and dance again!"

So speaks the phenomenon that is Henge, a band of extraterrestrial joymongers who've been providing their ever-expanding fanbase with an out-of-this-world experience for the better part of a decade. The cosmic dross of which they speak is a music that aims to defy definition, lurking somewhere between rave and prog rock in a space 'that nobody knew existed'. As you might imagine with visitors from another planet, the boys sport a somewhat unusual on-stage appearance; expect reptilian masks and plasma-ball headwear (see the below image for a clearer picture!)...



## Roddy Woomble

The Tin at The Coal Vaults, Coventry, Wed 30 April

Known for his enigmatic lyrics and warm baritone voice, Roddy Woomble has spent the past two decades fronting much-loved Scottish alternative rock band Idlewild, with whom he's recorded nine studio albums. He's also managed to release seven solo records during that time, including *My Secret Is My Silence* (2006), *Listen To Keep* (2013), *The Deluder* (2017), and last autumn's *Sometime During The Night We Fell Off The Map*.



## Eddi Reader Band

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Sat 12 April;  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 25 April

With numerous BRIT Awards decorating her mantelpiece, Scottish singer-songwriter Eddi Reader is well remembered for her association with Fairground Attraction, with

whom she scored a UK number one, *Perfect*, in 1988.

Her solo-career highlights have included her 2003 album of material by Scotland's 'bard', Robert Burns. The subsequent international resurgence of interest in Burns' work saw Reader awarded an MBE in 2006 for her outstanding contribution to the arts.

## Samantics / Nick Parker

Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge, Sat 5 April

Who doesn't love a double header - and this one's offering some honest-to-goodness star quality from two guys who're definitely enjoying a bit of a bromance.

Rap-poet Samantics has been described as a one-man machine, and it's easy to see why, given his liking for bringing together all manner of sounds - think ukulele, piano, bass, beats, harmonies, blips and bleeps, all combined via loop station and sampler...

Just like Samantics, Glastonbury-based Nick Parker has a well-established solo career.

He's also shared a stage with plenty of the music industry's finest, including *The Wedding Present* and *Bright Eyes*.

## The Dualers

hmv Empire, Coventry, Sat 5 April

South East London nine-piece The Dualers bring their Jamaican-style rhythm & blues sound to Coventry, presenting a gig which they're promising will boast 'infectious beats, singalong anthems, and an incredible live atmosphere'. Support comes from The Lloyd McGrath Collective.

## Newton Faulkner

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 30 April

Newton Faulkner's penchant for tapping and hitting his guitar has certainly helped him stand out from the crowd - as has his undoubted talent as a musician. One of the most successful UK singer-songwriters of the 21st century, Newton cites Del Amitri, Tom Waits, Stevie Wonder, The Rolling Stones and James Brown among the many and varied performers to have influenced his music. He's visiting the Midlands this month with his *Feels Like Home Tour 3*.





# 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'être* - 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."

.....

**Bryan Adams plays Birmingham's bp pulse LIVE on Sunday 18 May**



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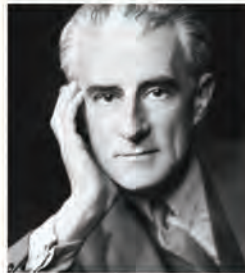


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**1/50**

**Arthur Bliss**  
(1891-1975)



**Friday 2 May at 10pm**

**Dominic Alldis Trio**  
*Classical meets Jazz*

**Saturday 3 May at 12 noon**

**Mark Bebbington piano**  
Bliss | Ravel | Poulenc

**Saturday 3 May at 7pm**

**Sinfonia of Birmingham**  
Michael Seal *conductor*  
Ravel | Mozart | Berlioz

**Sunday 4 May at 12 noon**

**Roderick Williams baritone**  
Andrew West *piano*  
*'A Touch of Exotic'*

**Sunday 4 May at 7pm**

**Carducci String Quartet**  
Emma Johnson *clarinet*  
Puccini | Bliss | Emma Johnson | Mozart

**Monday 6 May at 12.30pm**

**Deniz Sensoy violin**  
Alessio Enea *piano*  
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**Monday 6 May at 7pm**

**Sacconi String Quartet**  
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Classical music from across the region...



## Armonico Consort: Handel - Israel In Egypt

Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick, Sat 5 April; Malvern Theatres, Sun 13 April

Founded in 2001 by organist & conductor Christopher Monks, and using authentic period instruments, Warwick-based baroque consort Armonico turn their talents to the task of performing Handel's most spectacular choral showpiece: Israel In

Egypt. A biblically epic composition, the work includes graphic musical renderings of flies, frogs, hailstones, the river Nile turning to blood, and the parting of the Red Sea.

## Spires Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus

Burgess Hall, King Henry VIII School, Coventry, Sat 12 April

"We are acoustic adventurers," explain Spires Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus, a community of ambitious musicmakers from Coventry. "We seek out unheard gems and then programme them alongside classics we know and love, crafting concerts that are not only outstanding to listen to but that we love to perform, too."

The choir and pro/am orchestra's latest outing sees them presenting 'an emotional and thought-provoking performance of Bach's St John Passion, with its ever-important message of compassion, hope and ultimate salvation'.



## Sitkovetsky Trio

Malvern Theatres, Sun 27 April

Since being formed by students at the Yehudi Menuhin School in 2007, the Sitkovetsky Piano Trio have accumulated an impressive haul of coveted silverware. Comprising violinist Alexander Sitkovetsky, pianist Wu Qian and cellist Isang Enders, the uber-talented ensemble visit Malvern to present a concert featuring works by Beethoven (Trio in D Op70 No1 Ghost), Ravel (Trio in A minor), and a new piece by Lena Sierova (Piano Trio).

## Wood: St Mark Passion

Coventry Cathedral, Fri 18 April

Hailed a little-known musical gem, Charles Wood's St Mark Passion is here presented by Coventry Cathedral Chorus, directed by Luke Fitzgerald with a contribution from tenor Joseph Banerjee. The work includes the chorus singing much of the Passion narrative alongside the Evangelist and solo characters. The one-hour concert will conclude with a performance of Gerald Finzi's Welcome, Sweet And Sacred Feast.

## Worcestershire Early Music: Amyas

Angel Centre, Worcester, Sun 6 April

Describing themselves as a period instrument group specialising in exuberant performances of historical repertoire, Amyas present a wide range of music, from well-loved classics of the 18th century - which they promise to imbue with their typical flair! - to electronic manipulation of medieval songs and dances (and everything in between).

Their Worcestershire Early Music concert, titled The Ghost In The Machine, aims to uncover 'the fascinating and little-known performance style found in mechanical musical instruments (barrel organs and organ clocks) produced in 18th-century England'.

## Ex Cathedra - Bach: 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]."



# ARMONICO CONSORT

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## Handel Israel in Egypt

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](http://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](http://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](http://www.armonico.org.uk)



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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

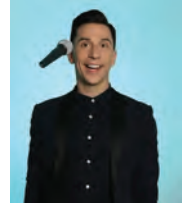
It's fair to say that Andrew Lawrence's profile has been considerably raised by his involvement in various social-media controversies over the years.

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’.

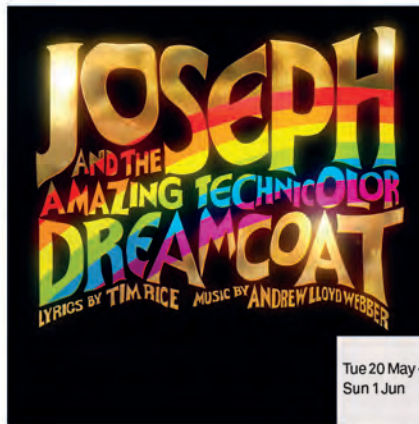


The story starts in the past and follows the fortunes of the initially down-on-their-luck title characters, a comedy double-act stuck in a minstrel show. But as time moves forward, Tambo & Bones’ fortunes radically change - and so too does the world around them... The Thursday performance of the production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





CAP



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CAP



## 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'.

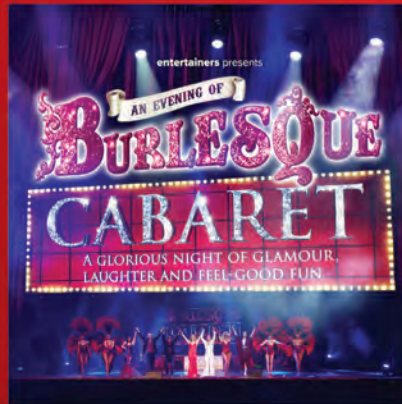


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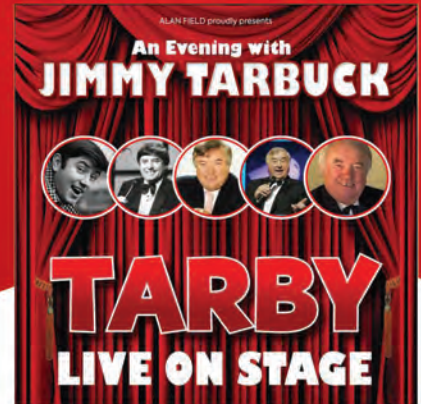
# What will you see next?



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LA TRAVIATA, LA BOHEME,  
MADAMA BUTTERFLY



FRI 9 MAY '25  
AN EVENING OF  
BURLESQUE CABARET



TUE 17 JUN '25  
AN EVENING WITH  
JIMMY TARBUCK

## CHICAGO



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CHICAGO



TUE 1 - SAT 5 JUL '25  
GHOST STORIES



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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.



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...

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.



**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

**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...



# FAMILY FUN SORTED

## 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.

Age 3+

## Minnie Stynker

Sun 27 Apr 1pm & 3pm

An unusual adventure unfolds when a boy's drawings giggle into life.

Age 3+

## Family Singing

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## Mini Creatives

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Age 0-4yrs

## COMING SOON

## 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

Join the tea-guzzling tiger in this delightful family Christmas show.

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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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 A Tribute to Taylor Swift**



**Bing's Birthday**



**The National Scout & Guide  
 Orchestra & Concert Band**



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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## 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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© Johan Persson.

Director Carlos Acosta

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Arts Council  
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 & Gorke: Speakeasy

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 6 April

Karen Hauer and Gorke 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.



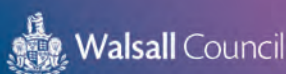
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## Drop CERT 15 (100 mins)

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 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.

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***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,  
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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 Bowerman 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.



# What's On

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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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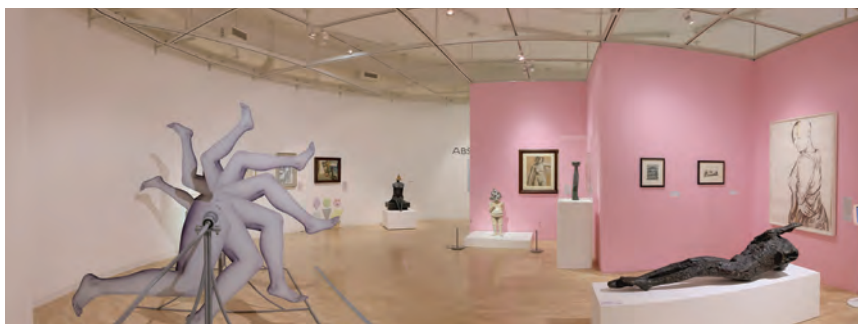
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Image: Mahtab Hussain, *Al Masjid Al Saifia*, Birmingham (2024), courtesy Mahtab Hussain.



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 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**



Birmingham  
Museums

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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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Events previews from around the region



**Cirquise** Albrighton Garden Centre, Sat 12 - Sun 27 April

Featuring 'laughter-filled clowns, death-defying acrobats, breathtaking jugglers and awesome contortionists', Cirquise 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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# the list

Your week-  
by-week  
listings guide  
April 2025



Edward II at The Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon - until Sat 5 April

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

## What's On

Tues 1 - Sun 6 April



Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers -  
The Roses, Tewkesbury  
**Thurs 3 April**

Mon 7 - Sun 13 April



Thomas Truax - The Tin At The  
Coal Vaults, Coventry  
**Thurs 10 April**

Mon 14 - Sun 20 April



Joan As Police Woman -  
Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry  
**Thurs 17 April**

Mon 21 - Wed 30 April



Handbagged at The Belgrade  
Theatre, Coventry  
**Tues 29 April - Sat 3 May**

## 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 April

**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

### Coventry Music Museum

**OUR TOWN** A tribute to This Town through the eyes of a supporting artist, including memorabilia and costumes. The museum also features a tributes to The Specials' Terry Hall and Roddy 'Radiation' Byers.

### Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry

**COLLECTING COVENTRY** Exhibition reflecting the museum's collection practice, via a catalogue of objects accumulated since the founding of the Herbert in 1949 and Coventry Transport Museum in 1980, until Sun 27 Apr

**COVENTRY RUGBY CLUB** A new display celebrating 150 years of Coventry Rugby Club, until Tues 30 Sept

**WARWICKSHIRE'S JURASSIC SEA** Discover the amazing creatures that lived in Coventry & Warwickshire during the time of the dinosaurs, until Sat 21 Feb 2026

**DIPPY IN COVENTRY: THE NATION'S FAVOURITE DINOSAUR** Dippy the diplodocus is in Coventry on a three-year loan from the Natural History Museums.

### Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

**UNRAVELLING HISTORY: UNPICKING THE COLLECTIONS AND REWORKING TEXTILE TRADITIONS** Showcase of

work by five internationally renowned textile artists from the Midlands. Their work is presented alongside items from the collection, which speak to each artist's approach to their craft. Co-created by Leamington-based artist Annabel Rainbow, until Thurs 1 May

### Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

**NUNEATON FESTIVAL OF ARTS: ART SECTION** Annual favourite featuring paintings and drawings by local amateur artists. The exhibition includes a children's art section, filling the white gallery with colour and creativity, until Sat 26 Apr

### Rugby Art Gallery

**SOLO EXHIBITION: PETE THORNLEY** An exhibition of works in the Floor One Gallery, Tues 1 - Sat 12 Apr

**RUGBY ARTISTS' GROUP** An exhibition of works in the Floor One Gallery, Tues 15 Apr - Sat 3 May

**COLLECTING RUGBY: 25 YEARS ANNIVERSARY** A display looking at a quarter century of object collection in Rugby, and the history of the museum, Wed 9 Apr - Thurs 4 Oct

### Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**H. H. LINES: ARCHITECTURE, ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART** Exhibition exploring the three loves of renowned local artist, Henry Harris Lines, until Sun 1 June

### Elsewhere:

**EARTH BALLOON** Back by popular demand, the Atrium will host a huge balloon of the globe in the run-up to Earth Day, until Fri 11 Apr, The Hive, Worcester

**TEARS OF GOLD** Series of paintings that show hope in the face of persecution, created by a group of Christian women from northern Nigeria, until Sun 13 Apr, Coventry Cathedral

**...THE LIBRARY IS ALL OF THESE** Group exhibition by Motunrayo Akinola, Japhet Dinganga, and Jessie Tam, considering public spaces such as libraries as surfaces for collective memory, re-imagining and rehearsing, until Sat 5 July, Central Library, Coventry

**DIALOGUE: CONVERSATIONS WITH BOOKS** Artists explore their relationship with books through thought-provoking work in a variety of media, Wed 2 - Sat 19 Apr, The Courtyard Gallery, Solihull

**THREADS: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF STITCH** Showcasing the creative talents of local textile group Threads, Thurs 17 Apr - Wed 28 May, Number 8, Pershore



The Dualers - hmv Empire, Coventry

## Gigs

**PAUL RYAN + PAUL SNOOK + ZEN FINN + SUPERNOVA** Tues 1 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NEMZZZ** Tues 1 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DAVID GRAY** Tues 1 Apr, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**ORACLE SISTERS** Tues 1 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth, Birmingham

**THE CIDERHOUSE REBELLION** Tues 1 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**THE SWINGING 60S** Tues 1 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**FARA** Tues 1 Apr, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**DITZ** Wed 2 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**WHY?** Wed 2 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SOFY** Wed 2 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**LOUIS DUNFORD** Wed 2 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham



**NATALIE TENENBAUM** Wed 2 Apr, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**OLLY ALEXANDER** Wed 2 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

**STICK IN THE WHEEL** Wed 2 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**BENJI KIRKPATRICK** Wed 2 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS** Wed 2 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**LORDI** Wed 2 Apr, The Wulfrun at The Halls Wolverhampton

**ROB.GREEN** Thurs 3 Apr, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**LAMBRINI GIRLS** Thurs 3 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**CHOKESLAM + CAPITAL PUNISHMENT UK + FINAL WORDS + CALLOUT + SCREWDRIVER LABOTOMY** Thurs 3 Apr, The Flapper, B'ham

**AIKO** Thurs 3 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**SARAH JANE SCOUTEN** Thurs 3 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**CALYPSO MOON** Thurs 3 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE METEORS + THE FRENZIES** Thurs 3 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**MIGHTY MIGHTY + THE PROCTORS** Fri 4 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**CARL SINCLAIR** Fri 4 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**THE LILACS + THE ROSADOCs + CRUZ** Fri 4 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

**JAMIE GREY** Fri 4 Apr, O2 Academy, B'ham

**DUNEBUG + STRIDE + CIARAN BARBER** Fri 4 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**SAVE FACE** Fri 4 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**BOOM BOOM WOMB** Fri 4 Apr, The Victoria, Birmingham

**MIKE AND THE MECHANICS** Fri 4 Apr, Symphony Hall, B'ham

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

**THE DERELLA'S & THE DREGS** Fri 4 Apr, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

**VEHICLE** Fri 4 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**NXTGEN#5** Fri 4 Apr, The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**ABBA GOLD** Fri 4 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE MUSIC OF JOHN DENVER** Fri 4 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**DEAN WAREHAM** Fri 4 Apr, The Assembly, Leamington Spa



**KATIE.VOCALS** Fri 4 Apr, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**JOE GHATT + BAR PANDORA + LOUIS B SCHEUER** Fri 4 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**SANCTUM SANCTORIUM** Fri 4 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**RATTLER** Fri 4 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**MAINLY MADNESS** Fri 4 Apr, Marris Bar, Worcester

**HAPPY MONDAZE** Fri 4 Apr, Drummonds, Worcester

**TASHA LEAPER AS MADONNA** Fri 4 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**THE MUSIC OF THE TEMPTATIONS** Fri 4 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**MÖTLEY CRÜDE** Fri 4 Apr, 45Live, Kidderminster

**BAYBOARDS** Sat 5 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**LEVI WASHINGTON** Sat 5 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**SANTÙ** Sat 5 Apr, The Night Owl, Birmingham

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

**BROOKE COMBE** Sat 5 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

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

**SKUNK ANANSIE** Sat 5 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

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

**GABRIELLE** Sat 5 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**BRAD HENSHAW** Sat 5 Apr, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

**GWYN ASHTON** Sat 5 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, B'ham

**JASMINE SANDLAS** Sat 5 Apr, Forum, Birmingham

**SHAMBOLICS** Sat 5 Apr,

The Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**SURELY DAN - STEELY DAN TRIBUTE** Sat 5 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE DUALERS + LLOYD MCGRATH COLLECTIVE** Sat 5 Apr, hmv Empire, Coventry

**RAMMLIED** Sat 5 Apr, Arches Venue, Coventry

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

**ALL4INDIE VS BRITPOP UNITED** Sat 5 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE HOME GROWN** Sat 5 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**SPLINTERING HEART - MARILLION TRIBUTE** Sat 5 Apr, Marris Bar, Worcester

**THE GARY MOORE BLUES EXPERIENCE** Sat 5 Apr, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**WAYNE DILKS AS GEORGE MICHAEL** Sat 5 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

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

**SWEETPOOL + BARBICAN ESTATE + THE BRACKISH + KENDO NAGASAKI + RAY VORG** Sun 6 Apr, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

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

**THE GEORGE HARRISON PROJECT** Sun 6 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THREADED** Sun 6 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**"BENDRIX: SLIGHT RETURN" WITH BENJI KIRKPATRICK** Sun 6 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

## Classical Music

### CBSO: SIBELIUS & DVOŘÁK

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

### EMMA JOHNSON & FRIENDS

Featuring Emma Johnson (clarinet - pictured), Simon Callaghan (piano), Fenella Humphreys (violin) & Thomas Carroll (cello). Programme includes works by Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms & Messiaen, Thurs 3 Apr, Malvern Theatres



**HARRY SULLIVAN ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 4 Apr, St Mary's Church, Warwick

### MUSIC FROM THE AMERICAS

Featuring WSF Foundation Symphony Orchestra & Junior Foundation Symphony Orchestra, Fri 4 Apr, Warwick Hall

### CLASSICAL TURKISH MUSIC

**CONCERT** Featuring Yildirim Bekçi (conductor). A classical Turkish music concert featuring Birmingham Turkish Music Choir, and accompanied by an ensemble of traditional Turkish instruments, 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

### MIDLAND SINFONIA: THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE ?

Programme includes works by Shostakovich, Tavener, Elgar & more..., Sat 5 Apr, Feckenham Village Hall, Redditch

**ARMONICO CONSORT: HANDEL'S ISRAEL IN EGYPT** Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Sat 5 Apr, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**WORCESTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR: J S BACH'S ST JOHN PASSION** Sat 5 Apr, Worcester Cathedral

### ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN & VOX POPULI SALUTE THE KINKS

Featuring Cubbington C of E Primary School Choir, Rick Leigh & Faith Waddell (soloists). Programme comprises new arrangements by Harvey Brough of *Arthur* (the Decline and Fall of the British Empire) and The Village Green Preservation Society, Sat 5 Apr, Holy Trinity, Leamington Spa

### 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)

Also featuring Pedro Emmanuel Pereira (piano). Programme includes works by Widor, Debussy, Horowitz & more..., Sun 6 Apr, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

### MIDLAND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: SPRINGTIME WITH SCHUBERT

Sun 6 Apr, St Mary's Church, Moseley, Birmingham

## 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

**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

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

**SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD, MICHAEL FABBRI, NICK PAGE & STEPHEN GRANT** Thurs 3 Apr, Marris Bar, Worcester

**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

**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

**FARM BOY** A Lichfield Garrick touring production, based on Michael Morpurgo's sequel to *War Horse*, Mon 31 Mar - Tues 1 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester



**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

**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, Birmingham

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

**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

**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



Olly Alexander - Birmingham Town Hall

**From the Sublime to the Ridiculous**

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Join us for an evening of English songs, madrigals and music.

Programme:  
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Music to hear  
 George Shearing

Nonsense - The poems of Mervyn Peake  
 Richard Rodney Bennett

Birthday madrigals  
 John Rutter

Conductor: **Adrian Lucas**  
 Venue: **Elgar Concert Hall**  
**Saturday 7th June 2025**

Elgar Concert Hall,  
 Bramall Music Building,  
 University of Birmingham, B15 2TT

**7.00pm**

Ticket Prices:  
 Adults: **£25.00\***  
 Full-time students: **£10.00\***  
 Under 16s: **FREE**  
 (\*plus booking fee)

Buy tickets online from:  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/city-of-birmingham-choir](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/city-of-birmingham-choir)

Also available on the door

For more information on the choir and our concerts, visit  
[www.citychoir.org.uk](http://www.citychoir.org.uk)

The City of Birmingham Choir is a registered charity. Number: 1049684

Extract from 'Aunts and Uncles' Nonsense Poems by Mervyn Peake

"When Aunt Flo became a crow she had a bed put in a tree; And there she lay and read all day of ornithology"

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Three Counties registered charity no. 311848



*Playfight - The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry*

star, Wed 2 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**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

**SPRING AWAKENING** Amateur version of Frank Wedekind's award-winning musical about the chaos, confusion and agony of adolescence, Wed 2 - Sat 12 Apr, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

**CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY** Amateur version presented by Five Star Theatre, Thurs 3 - Sat 5 Apr, The Benn Hall, Rugby

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

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE** Amateur version of a joyful story of love, hope and community, Fri 4 - Sat 12 Apr, Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

**FAR FROM A MADDING CROWD** Thomas Hardy's tale of love, class and gender roles, set against the rural landscape of Victorian England, Sat 5 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**ODE TO JOYCE** Cheryl Knight's one-woman show celebrates Joyce Grenfell, one of the greatest female entertainers of the 20th century, through a selection of songs and monologues, Sat 5 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**EDUCATING RITA** Amateur version of Willy Russell's iconic play, Sat 5 - Sat 12 Apr, Rugby Theatre

## Kid's 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

**THE FROG & THE PRINCESS** Box Tale Soup fuse puppetry and original musical to present a new version of the Grimms' magical tale, Sun 6 Apr, Macready Theatre, Rugby

## 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, B'ham

**THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG** Let's All Dance Ballet Company present a heart-warming tale of friendship. Perfect for younger audiences, Sun 6 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**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

**SOLVE-ALONG-A MURDER-SHE-WROTE** Interactive screening of the classic

Murder She Wrote episode A Fashionable Way To Die. The audience must race to solve the crime via the Fameometer and the Suspiciometer, Thurs 3 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**DREAMCOAT STARS** Keith Jack and other stars of Joseph sing 'the biggest musical hits of a generation', Thurs 3 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS** Full theatrical experience featuring 'dynamic choreography and heart-pounding rhythms', Thurs 3 Apr, The Roses, Tewkesbury

**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

**BOX OF FROGS** An evening of 'high-octane improvised comedy nonsense', based entirely on audience suggestions, Fri 4 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**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, Atrix, Bromsgrove

**THE ROLLER BOYS** Fusion of music, skating and extreme stunts, Sat 5 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Talks & Spoken Word

**FAITH IN CRIME FICTION** Author Georgina Clarke talks about her novels and why religious people might make good sleuths, Wed 2 Apr, Worcester Cathedral

**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

**KATE MOSSE: UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF THE LABYRINTH** One-woman show in which the bestselling author shares her inspiration for conjuring up a timeless modern classic, at the same time using music, imagery and film to bring her characters to life, Sat 5 Apr, The Roses, Tewkesbury

## 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

**ART IN THE PARK** Join local artist Christine for a morning of sketching and painting, Wed 2 Apr, Croome Park, Worcester

**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

**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

**CRITTER CARNIVAL** Featuring pony grooming, guinea pig handling and reptile encounters, Sat 5 - Sun 6 Apr, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**EASTER EGG HUNT** Make your way along the trail and enjoy family-friendly activities inspired by nature and creativity, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, Upton House & Gardens, Warwickshire

**EASTER AT WARWICK CASTLE** Featuring 15-plus live shows and attractions for all the family to enjoy, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, Warwick Castle

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

**EASTER ADVENTURE QUEST** Crack the clues hidden around the grounds and enjoy a delicious chocolate reward, Sat 5 - Sun 27 Apr, Witley Court and Gardens, Worcestershire

**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

**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

24 MAY - 1 JUNE 2025

# ELGAR FESTIVAL 2025



KENNETH WOODS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER PATRON

## HIGHLIGHTS

### FRIDAY 30 MAY ELGAR'S STRINGS IN MALVERN




to include William Walton's  
'Sonata for Strings' and  
Elgar's 'Sospiri'

### SATURDAY 31 MAY ELGAR FESTIVAL GALA CONCERT

to include John Ireland's  
'These Things Shall Be', Ian  
Venables' 'Out of the Shadows'  
and Elgar's *Symphony No. 2*

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AND ACTIVITIES FOR ELGAR  
FANS OF ALL AGES



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See website for full line-up

**SHREWSBURY FOLK FESTIVAL**  
22-23-24-25 AUG 2025

- Levellers
- Oysterband
- Skerryvore
- Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy
- Holy Moly & The Crackers
- El Pony Pisador
- Dougie MacLean
- Judie Tzuke
- Mad Dog Mcree
- Blazin' Fiddles
- Jim Moray
- Moonlight Benjamin
- 98Bach
- Kezia Gill
- The Henry Girls
- Melrose Quartet
- The Bar-Steward Sons of Val Doonican
- This Flight Tonight - The Songs of Joni Mitchell
- The Fontanas
- The Laurettes
- Morganway
- Rainbow Girls
- Kim Carnie
- Project Smok
- Hannah Rarity
- The Ayoub Sisters
- Touki
- Sam Kelly & Jamie Francis
- Cajun Roosters
- Naomi Bedford & The Ramshackle Band
- Naragonia Quartet
- Dan Owen
- Heron Valley
- Malin Lewis
- Firelight Trio
- Sarah Jane Scouten & more!
- Ceilidhs
- Morris & dance teams
- Workshops
- Singarounds & sessions
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- Camping & glamping

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### Gigs

**THE TROOPS OF DOOM** Mon 7 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**NELL MESCAL** Mon 7 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**M HUNCHO** Mon 7 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**PRIMAL SCREAM** Mon 7 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PALE BLUE EYES** Tues 8 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LITTLE BARRIE + MALCOLM CATTO** Tues 8 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ALESSI ROSE + CHLOE SLATER** Tues 8 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

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

**PIGS X7** Tues 8 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**HALLAN** Tues 8 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**NIEPOLD CUTTING** Tues 8 Apr, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**ALEX SPENCER** Wed 9 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**HONEYGLAZE** Wed 9 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SPYRES** Wed 9 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**MARK AMBOR** Wed 9 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**VINCENT LIMA + ELINA** Wed 9 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**HOTWAX** Wed 9 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**LEBROCK + LEX LUGER** Wed 9 Apr, The Flapper, B'ham

**THE SWAPS + GREG COULSON + FOREGATE BROTHERS** Wed 9 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**THE DAVIDSON TRIO** Wed 9 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**SOUNDSCAPES** Wed 9 Apr, Civic, Stourport

**JEWELIA** Thurs 10 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SALSEROS UK** Thurs 10 Apr, The Jam House, Birmingham

**CAITY BASER** Thurs 10 Apr, Mama Roux's, Birmingham

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

**THE HAAR** Thurs 10 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**HUW WILLIAMS** Thurs 10 Apr, Bromsgrove Folk Club

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

**THE STORY OF GUITAR HEROES** Thurs 10 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**THOMAS TRUAX** Thurs 10 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**THE BOOM YEH** Thurs 10 Apr, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**FEAST OF FIDDLES** Thurs 10 Apr, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**SEA POWER** Fri 11 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DIDDY SWEG** Fri 11 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LANDSLIDE - FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE** Fri 11 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**999** Fri 11 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

**CHARLOTTE YOUNG** Fri 11 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**SPEAK! + DOROTHY ELLA** Fri 11 Apr, The Night Owl, B'ham

**KEYWEST** Fri 11 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**WOODEN DOG** Fri 11 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**CATCH YOUR BREATH + UNTIL I WAKE + OF VIRTUE** Fri 11 Apr, The Asylum, B'ham



Thomas Truax - *The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry*

**LAST RESORT** Fri 11 Apr, The Flapper, Birmingham

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

**MICHAEL BALL & ALFIE BOE** Fri 11 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, B'ham

**DESPERADO** Fri 11 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**THE OVERTONES** Fri 11 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**A COUNTRY NIGHT IN NASHVILLE** Fri 11 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**MARC CHECKLEY** Fri 11 Apr, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**SHANGHAI HOSTAGE + CONCRETE FUN HOUSE + THE NEW**

**OBSESSION + THE CAROLINE BOMB** Fri 11 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**HEAVEN CAN WAIT - MEAT LOAF TRIBUTE** Fri 11 Apr, hmv Empire, Coventry

**MORETALLICA** Fri 11 Apr, Arches Venue, Coventry

**A BAND CALLED MALICE + JONNY SEVEN** Fri 11 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE AUSTRIAN STONES** Fri 11 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**STIPE - REM TRIBUTE** Fri 11 Apr, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**THE ZUTONS + THE COVASETTES** Fri 11 Apr, Wulfrun at The

Halls Wolverhampton

**WALTER SMITTY & THE UNVIABLES** Sat 12 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**HEAVY LUNGS** Sat 12 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SKASTUDS** Sat 12 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

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

**DAYDREAMERS** Sat 12 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

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

**ENJOY THE SILENCE** Sat 12 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**HERIOT + GROVE STREET + FALSE REALITY** Sat 12 Apr, The Asylum, B'ham

**METAL TO THE MASSES HEAT 5** Sat 12 Apr, The Flapper, B'ham

**SUGABABES** Sat 12 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**THE MIKE DAVIDS BAND** Sat 12 Apr, Tower Of Song, Birmingham

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

**G2 DEFINITIVE GENESIS** Sat 12 Apr, Artrix, Bromsgrove

**FROM THE JAM** Sat 12 Apr, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**BIG WOLF BAND** Sat 12 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**UZAK - TURKISH ROCK CONCERT** Sat 12 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**21ST CENTURY ABBA** Sat 12 Apr, The Henrician, Evesham

**MÖTLEY CRÜDE** Sat 12 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**SPLINTER** Sat 12 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE EMINEM SHOW** Sat 12 Apr, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**EDDI READER BAND** Sat 12 Apr, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**THE ALL OR NOTHING EXPERIENCE** Sat 12 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**DAMMITCHLOE!!** Sat 12 Apr, 45Live, Kidderminster

**JON POLLARD SINGS ROY HARPER** Sat 12 Apr, West Malvern Social Club

**ANATOLE MUSTER** Sun 13 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DUKE SPECIAL** Sun 13 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE FALLEN STATE** Sun 13 Apr, Castle & Falcon, Birmingham

**ASH SHEEHAN** Sun 13 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**EMILIO SANTORO AS ELVIS** Sun 13 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MYSTERIOUS BLUES** Sun 13 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

### Classical Music

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

**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

**TIM STEWART ORGAN RECITAL** Fri 11 Apr, St Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham

**WARWICKSHIRE MUSIC SPRING CELEBRATION** Concert held in aid of the Warwickshire Music Educational Trust, Fri 11 Apr, Warwick Hall

**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

**WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY: COME & SING BERNSTEIN'S CHICHESTER PSALMS** Featuring Samuel Hudson (conductor) & Nicholas Frestone (accompanist). Programme also includes Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music, Sat 12 Apr, St Andrew's Methodist Church, Worcester

**SPIRES MUSIC SPRING CONCERT: BACH'S ST JOHN PASSION** Featuring Jack Lovell Huckle (music director), Alistair Kennedy (leader), Brittany King (Soprano), Gaynor Keble (mezzo soprano), Dan Marles (tenor), Peter Lidbetter (bass) & Armand Rabot (bass baritone), Sat 12 Apr, Burgess Hall, Coventry

**THE CREATION BY JOSEF HAYDN** Featuring Sophie Edwards (soprano), James Atherton (tenor), Paul Mccroft (bass) & Piers Maxim (organ), Sat 12 Apr, Great Malvern Priory

**ARMONICO CONSORT: HANDEL'S ISRAEL IN EGYPT** Featuring Christopher Monks (director), Sun 13 Apr, Malvern Theatres

### 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 MCLOUGHLIN** Thurs 10 Apr, Hockley Social Club, Birmingham

**PROJECT MAYHEM COMEDY** Thurs 10 Apr, The Arches, Coventry

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

**RAW COMEDY** Fri 11 Apr, Ecgwins Club, Evesham

**GARY DELANEY, FIONA ALLEN & JAY NEALE** Fri 11 Apr, Benn Hall, Rugby

**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 MCLOUGHLIN, ALI WOODS, PAUL PIRIE & DAVE TWENTYMAN** Sat 12 Apr, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

## Theatre

**EDUCATING RITA** The Nonentities Society present an amateur version of Willy Russell's iconic play, Mon 7 - Sat 12 Apr, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**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

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

**THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** Colin Baker (Doctor Who) & Terry Molloy (Mike Tucker in The Archers) join forces to play the world's most famous detectives - Sherlock Holmes & Doctor Watson, Tues 8 Apr, The Regal, Tenbury Wells

**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

**THE LITTLE MERMAID** Amateur version of the Disney classic, presented by Studley Operatic Society, Tues 8 - Fri 11 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**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

**THE MANY LIVES OF PET 1** Stan's Cafe present a complicated comedy that dives deep into the world of plastic, Fri 11 Apr, Coventry Boys & Girls Club

**CABIN FEVER** Written and performed by Aurelia Harris-Johnstone and Beth Miles, this original comedy draws inspiration from real people and explores just how much can happen during one flight! Fri 11 - Sat 12 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**MUCH ADDO 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 BADDIES** Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler's smash-hit story is brought to the stage, Wed 9 - Sun 13 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry



**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

**THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS BALL** 'Fast-paced, high-energy, toe-tapping adventure' featuring song, dance and

plenty of audience participation, Sun 13 Apr, The Civic, Stourport

## 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

**TOMMYINNIT: SURVIVAL** Join the British YouTuber and Twitch Streamer for an evening of entertainment, Tues 8 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE PHANTOMS STARRING LEE MEAD** Celebrating a selection of much loved musicals, including Les Miserables, Miss Saigon, West Side Story, Jesus Christ Superstar and many more..., Wed 9 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**BANGERS: A LYRICAL LOVELETTER TO UK GARAGE** Part theatre, part gig experience, this celebration of UK garage music features original tracks inspired by R&B and Garage, presented alongside lyrical storytelling, Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Apr, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

**THAT'LL BE THE DAY** Nostalgic show celebrating the most iconic moments from rock & roll and pop culture, from the 1950s through to the 80s, Wed 9 - Thurs 10 Apr, The Roses, Tewkesbury

**TOGETHER AT HOME TOUR WITH MICHAEL BALL & ALFIE BOE** Fri 11 Apr, bp pulse LIVE, Birmingham

**TIM RICE: MY LIFE IN MUSICALS** Join the internationally renowned lyricist as he reflects on his illustrious career at the heart of musical theatre, Sun 13 Apr, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Talks & Spoken Word

**PAM AYRES: DOGGEDLY ONWARDS** Join the poet and comedian as she talks about her latest book, in which she traces the course of her life, Wed 9 Apr, Malvern Theatres

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

**HISTORY OF FORENSICS TALK** Talk exploring the evolution of forensic techniques, Thurs 10 April, West

Midlands Police Museum, B'ham  
**ARTIST BOOK LAUNCH AND TALK: YOU AND I** BY BEN SADLER Join the local artist 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

**AN EVENING WITH KALEB COOPER** 'An intimate evening filled with honest conversations, hilarious anecdotes, and plenty of surprises', Sat 12 Apr, Malvern Theatres

## Events

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

**AUDIENCE AS AUTHORS WITH JAMES YARKER** James will help the group devise a short piece of theatre that emphasises ensemble working and bringing in the audience as creative collaborators, Tues 8 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**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, B'ham

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

**COVENTRY PHOENIX FILM FESTIVAL** Featuring screenings of curated films, documentaries and animations, Fri 11 - Sat 12 Apr, FarGo Village, Coventry

**90S SILENT DISCO** Featuring 90s tunes in the illuminated surroundings of the cathedral, Sat 12 Apr, Coventry Cathedral

**NATIONAL GARDEN RAILWAY SHOW 2025** Featuring 18 layouts, 60-plus trade stands and more, Sat 12 Apr, NAEC 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

**EASTER ADVENTURE** Make your way along the trail and enjoy family-friendly activities, Sat 12 - Sat 19 Apr, Greyfriars House and Garden, Worcester

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



# Monday 7 - Sunday 13 April

Sat 12 - Thurs 24 Apr, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

**SPRING FAMILY TRAIL** Journey back in time at the Bishop's Palace and Worcestershire County Museum, completing your spring trail sheet as you go, Sat 12 - Sat 26 Apr, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

**FIND THE EASTER BUNNIES FAMILY TRAIL** The Commandery's Easter bunnies have escaped - can you find them all? Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, The Commandery, Worcester

**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 ADVENTURES** Make your way along the trail and find nature-inspired activities for the whole family, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Croome Park, Worcester

**EASTER EGG HUNT** Make your way along the trail and find activities for the whole family, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Hanbury Hall, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire

**SPRING SPECTACULAR** Enjoy animal

handling sessions and baby animal talks, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Hatton Adventure World, Warwick

**EASTER EGG HUNT** Make your way along the trail and find 10 fun activities for the whole family to enjoy, Sat 12 - Sun 27 Apr, Charlecote Park, Warwick

**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 Apr, West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley

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

**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 B'ham



*Easter Adventures - Croome Park, Worcester*

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

**UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS TOUR** Chance to experience life at Weston Park, both as it once was and as it is today, Sun 13 Apr, Weston Park, Shropshire

**ANTIQUES & COLLECTORS FAIR** Chat with the dealers and look out for

hidden gems, Sun 13 Apr, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

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

**EASTER TREASURE HUNT** Help the Easter bunnies crack the codes to find the treasure, Sun 13 - Sun 27 Apr, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire



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Sat 26 Apr



**Lemn Sissay: Let The Light Pour In LIVE**

Sat 26 Apr



**Dance for Wellbeing**

Sun 27 Apr



**Tango Taster Session**

Sun 27 Apr

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### Gigs

**FELIX RABIN** Mon 14 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**DAVEY MACMANUS** Tues 15 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**DIGBETH JAZZ** Tues 15 Apr, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**POZER** Tues 15 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

**IMELDA MAY** Tues 15 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

**CHRIS HELME** Wed 16 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

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

**ANGELS OF THE NORTH** Wed 16 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

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

**JERRY LEGER** Wed 16 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**FEAST OF FIDDLES** Wed 16 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**GABRIEL MORENO AND THE QUIVERING POETS** Wed 16 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**RATS** Thurs 17 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**WEETWOOD MAC** Thurs 17 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**STORRY** Thurs 17 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**HALFLIVES** Thurs 17 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham



Sutherland - Temperance, Leamington Spa

**RONKER** Thurs 17 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**ULTHA + ANTEINFERNO** Thurs 17 Apr, The Flapper, Birmingham

**THE MURDER CAPITAL** Thurs 17 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth, Birmingham

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

**THE THOMAS HEPPELL BAND** Thurs 17 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

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

**HAMELL ON TRIAL + RUTH THEODORE + DETROIT HAMELL** Thurs 17 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

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

**THUUM + HELLDOWN + HEAVY PEACE + GRIZZLEROOT** Thurs 17 Apr, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**FLEETWOOD SHACK** Thurs 17 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**ANDY BENNETT** Fri 18 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

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

**KING NO ONE** Fri 18 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

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



Joan As Police Woman - Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**CENTRAL CEE** Fri 18 Apr, Utilita Arena Birmingham

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

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

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

**FEAST OF FIDDLES** Fri 18 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**BIG COUNTRY + THE VAPORS** Fri 18 Apr, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**SUTHERING** Fri 18 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**JAKE BYRNE** Fri 18 Apr, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**THE RIFTS + BLEACH FIELDS + PERMANENT DAYLIGHT** Fri 18 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**US4 // U2** Fri 18 Apr, hmv Empire, Coventry

**ROCKING HORSE** Fri 18 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY** Fri 18 Apr, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**HENGE + SEAS OF MIRTH + THE SEVERN COLLECTIVE** Fri 18 Apr, Marrs Bar,

Worcester

**GENESIS CONNECTED** Fri 18 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**ONSIDE** Sat 19 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**FAYE SMITH** Sat 19 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**LOS FASTIDIOS** Sat 19 Apr, The Night Owl, Birmingham

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

**BLACK SPIDERS** Sat 19 Apr, The Asylum, Birmingham

**SEAN PAUL + ASHANTI** Sat 19 Apr, Utilita Arena Birmingham

**BIG JIM & THE ALABAMA BOOGIE BOYS** Sat 19 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, B'ham

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

**MARY COUGHLAN** Sat 19 Apr, The Assembly, Leamington Spa

**EMBRYONIC AUTOPSY** Sat 19 Apr, Arches Venue, Coventry

**REZISTANCE** Sat 19 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE KILLERZ + DANNY GRUFF** Sat 19 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THE EVERLY BROTHERS BY CANDLELIGHT** Sat 19 Apr, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**TEDDY SWIMZ TRIBUTE** Sat 19 Apr, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**THE BIG FOUR TRIBUTE BAND - METALLICA + SLAYER + MEGADETH + ANTHRAX** Sat 19 Apr, Marrs Bar, Worcester

**THE MATHEMATICS SHOW - ED SHEERAN TRIBUTE** Sat 19 Apr, 45Live, Kidderminster

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

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

**ALT BLK ERA** Sun 20 Apr, The Flapper, Birmingham

**CRAIG REVEL HORWOOD** Sun 20 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

**HAWKWIND** Sun 20 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**GHOST** Sun 20 Apr, Utilita Arena Birmingham

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

**THE CHEEZE** Sun 20 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

### 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

**PERGOLESI'S STABAT MATER** Featuring the Girl Choristers of The Collegiate Church of St Mary & Beauchamp Quartet, Wed 16 Apr, St Mary's Church, Warwick

**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

**COME AND SING: FAURÉ REQUIEM** Featuring All Saints Choral Scholars. Programme also includes works by Lili Boulanger, Nadia Boulanger & Julia Perry, Fri 18 Apr, All Saints, Leamington Spa

**WOOD: ST MARK PASSION** Featuring Luke Fitzgerald (director), Joseph Banerjee (tenor), David Rice (organ) & Coventry Cathedral Chorus. Programme also includes Finzi's Welcome Sweet and Sacred Feast, Fri 18 Apr, Coventry Cathedral

### 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

**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, 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

**HAL CRUTTENDEN & COMICS TBC** Sat 19 Apr, Bridge House Theatre, Warwick

**LAWRENCE CHANEY** Sun 20 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

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Craig Revel Horwood - Birmingham Town Hall

## Theatre

**DO NOT PLAY THIS PIANO** Will Pickvance's hit Edinburgh Fringe show, featuring 'engaging storytelling, lovely piano playing and some delightful little video animations', Mon 14 Apr, Macready Theatre, Rugby

**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

**ENCHANTED APRIL** Amateur version of Matthew Barber's life-affirming tale, Mon 14 - Sat 19 Apr, Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth

**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

**LITTLE WOMEN** Belinda Lang, Honeysuckle Weeks, Jack Ashton and Grace Molony star in Anne-Marie Casey's new version of Louisa May Alcott's classic tale, Tues 15 - Sat 19 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** Colin Baker (Doctor Who) & Terry Molloy (Mike Tucker in the Archers) join forces to play the world's most famous detectives - Sherlock Holmes & Doctor Watson, Thurs 17 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**RABBITS OUT OF THE HAT** Magic Circle magicians Norvil & Josephine present a whimsical play about being yourself, no matter what, Thurs 17 Apr, Macready Theatre, Rugby

**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

**THREE MEN IN A BOAT** Giles Shenton stars in a one-man show based on Jerome K Jerome's famous novel, Fri 18 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**SWEENEY TODD** An audience with the infamous Demon Barber of Fleet Street, Fri 18 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

## Kids Theatre

**MARK THOMPSON'S SPECTACULAR SCIENCE SHOW** Award-winning kids show exploring the strange and magical properties of exploding elephant's toothpaste, vortex-generating dustbins and howling jelly babies, Mon 14 Apr, Regal, Tenbury Wells



**THE AMAZING BUBBLE MAN** Louis Pearl - one of the world's leading bubbleologists - hosts an entertaining show for younger audiences, Tues 15 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**EXCITING SCIENCE** Educational show packed with fun & fact-filled experiments, including how to recreate a volcanic eruption and turn a vacuum cleaner into a missile launcher, Wed 16 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**THE LITTLEST YAK** A musical version of Lu Fraser & Kate Hindley's award-winning children's book, which celebrates 'being perfect... just the way you are...', Wed 16 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**PINOCCHIO** Easter panto presented by Anton Benson Productions, Wed 16 - Thurs 17 Apr, The Roses, Tewkesbury

**THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS BALL** 'Fast-

paced, high-energy, toe-tapping adventure' featuring song, dance and plenty of audience participation, Fri 18 Apr, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**ANGELA SPROCKET'S POCKETS** Folksy Theatre blend live music, puppetry and plenty of audience participation in a stage adaptation of Quentin Blake's children's book, Sat 19 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

## 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

**PARADISE FOUND** The UK's 'ultimate Meat Loaf theatre rock show' complete with high-impact visuals, Fri 18 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**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

**EASTER ADVENTURES** Featuring activities for the whole family, Mon 14 - Mon 21 Apr, Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire

**'A DAY WITH...MUCH ADD ABOUT NOTHING'** Spend the day with the knowledgeable team from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Tues 15 Apr, Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon

**EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS** A fun-filled day of activities, Tues 15 Apr, The Hive, Worcester

**EASTER CRAFTS** Get the kids feeling arty with Easter-themed crafts, Tues 15 - Thurs 17 Apr, Hartlebury Caste, Worcestershire

**NURTURE IN NATURE** Make something special, using recycled materials and things found in Anne Hathaway's garden, Wed 16 Apr, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Stratford-upon-Avon

**NICK SHARRATT'S PICTURE BOOK DRAWALONG** Family-friendly drawalong for all ages, Wed 16 Apr, Number 8, Pershore, Worcestershire

**EASTER ADVENTURES** Make your way along the trail and enjoy family-friendly activities, Wed 16 - Mon 21 Apr, Coughton Court, Alcester, Warwickshire

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

**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

**ALICE AT SPETCHLEY WONDERLAND** Join Alice, The White Rabbit, the Hatter and the Queen of Hearts for an Easter adventure, Fri 18 - Mon 21 Apr, Spetchley Park Estate, Worcester

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

**FINNEAS + HOHNEN**  
**FORD** Mon 21 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE U2 EXPERIENCE** Mon 21 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**ÍMAR** Mon 21 Apr, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC** Mon 21 - Tues 22 Apr, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**JACKSON DEAN** Tues 22 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

**SBT** Tues 22 Apr, Kitchen Garden, B'ham

**BAMBARA** Wed 23 Apr, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**SKETE** Wed 23 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**MATILDA MANN** Wed 23 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**MARTIN STEPHENSON** Wed 23 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE WILL WILDE BAND** Wed 23 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**GREGORY PORTER** Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**THE CINELLI BROTHERS** Thurs 24 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE GOUDIES + KYLIE PRICE** Thurs 24 Apr, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**FALSE HEADS** Thurs 24 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**ELLIOT MINOR** Thurs 24 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THROWN + CRYSTAL LAKE + UNITY TX + GRAPHIC NATURE** Thurs 24 Apr, The Asylum, Birmingham

**ASTRID WILLIAMSON** Thurs 24 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE POCKET CHORAL SOCIETY** Thurs 24 Apr, Bromsgrove Folk Club

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

**JON DORAN & THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY** Thurs 24 Apr, The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Nr Evesham

**CHRIS BOWDEN 'THE HYPNOS FILES' FT. NEIL BULLOCK & LOUISE WARREN** Thurs 24 Apr, Marris Bar, Worcester

**MARVIN GAYE SONGBOOK** Thurs 24 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**SHAPE OF YOU - THE MUSIC OF ED SHEERAN** Thurs 24 Apr, Malvern Theatres

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

**GOOD SAD HAPPY BAD** Fri 25 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**JACKSON HOMER** Fri 25 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**SEAN REEVES** Fri 25 Apr, Actress & Bishop, Birmingham

**GREENTEA PENG** Fri 25 Apr, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THE FLAMING LIPS** Fri 25 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PEARL SCAM + ANGRY HAIR** Fri 25 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**CHARLOTTE PLANK** Fri 25 Apr, Dead Wax, Digbeth, Birmingham

**BEYOND THE PINES** Fri 25 Apr, The Victoria, Birmingham

**SATINDER SARTAAJ** Fri 25 Apr, Utilita Arena B'ham

**SKEGSS** Fri 25 Apr, XOYO, Digbeth, B'ham

**THE GEORGE MICHAEL SINGERS** Fri 25 Apr, The Alexandra, Birmingham

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

Rainbow, Digbeth, Birmingham

**THE KILKENNYS** Fri 25 Apr, The Core Theatre, Solihull

**HELLO AGAIN... NEIL DIAMOND TRIBUTE** Fri 25 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**JO CARLEY AND THE OLD DRY SKULLS** Fri 25 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**YRNE** Fri 25 Apr, The Royal Pug, Leamington Spa

**SOOP + HONK + BEAUTIES + ELLE ET MOI** Fri 25 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**ONE NIGHT IN NASHVILLE** Fri 25 Apr, hmv Empire, Coventry

**EDDI READER** Fri 25 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**LUTHER LIVE** Fri 25 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE BLACK CHARADE + FELL OUT BOY** Fri 25 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**WATERMELON CHRONICLES** Fri 25 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**NOW I'M HERE - QUEEN TRIBUTE** Fri 25 Apr, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**A FOREIGNER'S JOURNEY** Fri 25 Apr, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**SABBOTAGE - BLACK SABBATH TRIBUTE** Fri 25 Apr, Marris Bar, Worcester

**CLOUDBUSTING - THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH** Fri 25 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**KOZMIC PEARL - JANIS JOPLIN TRIBUTE** Fri 25 Apr, 45Live, Kidderminster

**HANNAH JAMES & TOBY KUHN** Fri 25 Apr, Malvern Cube

**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

**RON'S NEIGHBOURS** Sat 26 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE COURETTES** Sat 26 Apr, The Night Owl,



The Kilkennys - The Core Theatre, Solihull

Birmingham

**JAWS** Sat 26 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**NATI.** Sat 26 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DEFINITELY MIGHTBE + CHANGING MAN** Sat 26 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**DEATH CRUSHER ALL-DAYER** Sat 26 Apr, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**JUST FRIENDS + CHAIN** Sat 26 Apr, The Flapper, Birmingham

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

**MAJOR TOMS - DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE** Sat 26 Apr, Joe Joe Jims, Birmingham

**THE SHAKIN STEVENS STORY** Sat 26 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**SOUND OF THE LIONESS - AMY WINEHOUSE TRIBUTE** Sat 26 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**LUCY SPRAGGAN** Sat 26 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**ZZ TOPPD** Sat 26 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**PUSHRODS UK** Sat 26 Apr, Queens Hall, Nuneaton

**THANK ABBA FOR THE MUSIC** Sat 26 Apr, The Benn Hall, Rugby

**HEJIRA - CELEBRATING JONI MITCHELL** Sat 26 Apr, Regal, Tenbury Wells

**FAUX FIGHTERS** Sat 26 Apr, Marris Bar, Worcester

**RHINESTONE COWBOY - THE GLEN CAMPBELL STORY** Sat 26 Apr, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**HEAVEN CAN WAIT - MEAT LOAF TRIBUTE** Sat 26 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**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, Birmingham

**ED TUDOR-POLE** Sun 27 Apr, The Dark Horse, Moseley

**GRASSROOTS FESTIVAL** Sun 27 Apr, The Night Owl, Birmingham

**GOLDIE** Sun 27 Apr, Castle & Falcon, B'ham

**BLIND GIRLS** Sun 27 Apr, The Flapper, B'ham

**JUST MY IMAGINATION: THE MUSIC OF THE TEMPTATIONS** Sun 27 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

**ELIZA CARTHY** Sun 27 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**TAYLORMANIA** Sun 27 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

**MERCY, MERCY, MERCY** Sun 27 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**DUCK THIEVES + NATURE MAKERS** Sun 27 Apr, The Tin At The Coal

Vaults, Coventry

**THE DRIFTERS** Sun 27 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**THE DREAMERS** Sun 27 Apr, The Priory Theatre, Kenilworth

**ANASTACIA** Mon 28 Apr, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BRAVE RIVAL** Mon 28 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**RAZORLIGHT** Tues 29 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**VIAGRA BOYS** Tues 29 Apr, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**ORCHARDS** Tues 29 Apr, The Flapper, B'ham

**TARA MACLEAN** Tues 29 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**THE CLIMAX BLUES BAND** Wed 30 Apr, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**OSLO TWINS** Wed 30 Apr, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE WELLERMEN** Wed 30 Apr, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**NEVER EASY + LASTELLE** Wed 30 Apr, The Asylum, Birmingham

**ANDREW COMBS** Wed 30 Apr, Kitchen Garden, Birmingham

**GERRY JABLONSKI AND THE ELECTRIC BAND** Wed 30 Apr, Temperance, Leamington Spa

**RODDY WOOMBLE** Wed 30 Apr, The Tin At The Coal Vaults, Coventry

**NEWTON FAULKNER** Wed 30 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry



Gregory Porter - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

## Classical Music

**PETER DYKE ORGAN CONCERT** Mon 21 Apr, Hereford Cathedral

### CORELIA PROJECT: LUNCHTIME CONCERT

Featuring Magdalena Krstevska & Sophie Glenni (clarinets). Programme includes works by Hildegard von Bingen, Ruth Gipps, Libby Larsen & more..., Thurs 24 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**SITKOVETSKY TRIO** Featuring Alexander Sitkovetsky (violin), Wu Qian (piano) & Isang Enders (cello). Programme includes works by Lena Sierova, Beethoven & Ravel, Sun 27 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**JAMES MCVINNIE ORGAN RECITAL** Programme includes works by Stanford, Muhly, Whitlock & more..., Mon 28 Apr, Birmingham Town Hall

## 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

**MARCUS BRIGSTOCK** Thurs 24 Apr, The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury

**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

**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, Birmingham

**HARRY HILL** Sat 26 Apr, Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

**NOTHING BUT LAUGHTER, OLD-SKOOL MEETS NEW-SKOOL** Sun 27 Apr, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**HARRY HILL** Sun 27 Apr, The Alexandra, 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

**CIDER WITH ROSIE** Amateur version of Laurie Lee's humorous memoir of childhood and reawakening, Tues 22 Apr, The Bear Pitt Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE JUST PRICE OF FLOWERS** James Yarker's play about the financial collapse of 2008, Tues 22 - Sat 26 Apr, The Loft Theatre, Leamington Spa

**& 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

**DEAD ON CUE** Amateur version of Mark Carey's ghostly thriller, Wed 23 - Fri 25 Apr, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**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 & Elly Brewer's reimagining of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, Thurs 24 Apr - Sat 3 May, Lichfield Garrick

**FARM BOY** A Lichfield Garrick touring production based on Michael Morpurgo's sequel to War Horse, Fri 25 - Sun 27 Apr, The Albany Theatre, Coventry

**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

**CHOPPED LIVER & UNIONS** The true story of the political activist and radical who helped lead the East End 'Singing Strikers of 1928', Sat 26 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**C'EST LA VIE - SARAH BERNHARDT AND ME** Hilary Tones' one-woman show, celebrating the life of the pioneering 17th-century French actress, Sat 26 Apr, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**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, B'ham

**CRUEL INTENTIONS** Brand-new musical based on the iconic film, packed with 1990s pop classics, and inspired by Les Liaisons Dangereuses, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, Malvern Theatres

**HANDBAGGED** Moira Buffini's fly-on-the-wall comedy takes a look at what might have happened when Queen Elizabeth II and Margaret Thatcher



Handbagged - The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

came face-to-face in the privacy of the palace, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

**DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS** Worcester Operatic Society present an amateur stage adaptation of the popular film starring Michael Caine and Steve Martin, Tues 29 Apr - Sat 3 May, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**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

**A TOMB WITH A VIEW** The Phoenix Players present an amateur version of Norman Robbins' comedy thriller, Wed 30 Apr - Sat 3 May, The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**PIRATES LOVE UNDERPANTS** Swashbuckling story of pirates searching for the fabled Pants of Gold for the captain's treasure chest. Music and puppetry combine in this stage adaptation of the popular picture book by Claire Freedman, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa



**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

**RUDE SCIENCE LIVE** A high-tech, highly-explosive show packed with outrageous science stunts. Expect enormous bottoms, fart machines, snot cocktails, vast whoopee cushions and pee-powered fireworks, Fri 25 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**THE PRINCESS PROMS** Show for little princes and princesses, featuring songs from favourite musicals including Frozen, Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Moana, Thumbelina and more..., Fri 25 Apr, Worcester Cathedral

**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, B'ham

## Kids Theatre

**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



**THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN** Puppet-filled musical stage adaptation of Julia Donaldson's heart-warming story about friendship and helping those in need, Wed 23 - Thurs 24 Apr, Swan Theatre, Worcester

**BING'S BIRTHDAY** Brand-new stage show for younger audiences, packed with fun, laughter and surprises, Wed

**PINNOCHIO - EASTER PANTO** Sat 26 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**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', Sat 26 - Sun 27 Apr, Malvern Theatres

**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 STYNKER** 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

**NIKITA KUZMIN - MIDNIGHT DANCER** The Strictly star's first-ever solo show sees him joined by a cast of talented dancers and vocalists in what promises to be 'an unforgettable night of entertainment', Sat 26 Apr, Malvern Theatres



## Light Entertainment

**QUEER PLANET PRESENTED BY B-CURIOUS 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, B'ham

**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

**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

**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

**A NIGHT WITH JANIS JOPLIN THE MUSICAL** A musical journey celebrating both Janis and the musical icons who inspired her, Sat 26 Apr, Number 8, Pershore

**THAT'LL BE THE DAY** Nostalgic show celebrating the most iconic moments from rock & roll and pop culture, from the 1950s through to the 80s, Sat 26 Apr, Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa

## Talks & Spoken Word

**PAUL MERSON & DEAN SAUNDERS IN CONVERSATION** Join the Aston Villa legends as they take supporters behind the scenes at Villa Park..., Wed 23 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**HARI BUDHA MAGAR - NO LEGS, NO LIMIT** The first double above-knee amputee to summit Mount Everest shares his extraordinary story, Wed 23 Apr, Huntingdon Hall, Worcester

**SHAUN RYDER - HAPPY MONDAYS, AND FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS, AND SUNDAYS** Join the Black Grape and Happy Mondays frontman for 'a carnival of excess, wild tales and improbable truths', Thurs 24 Apr, Palace Theatre, Redditch

**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



International Living History Festival - Avoncroft, Bromsgrove

**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



## 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

**GET ARTY!** Workshop with artist Inner Knowings for children aged from five to 11, Tues 22 Apr, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

**SPRING CRAFTS** Be inspired by the beauty of the season with crafts themed around spring, Tues 22 - Thurs 24 Apr, Hartlebury Castle, Worcestershire

**NURTURE IN NATURE** Get stuck into making something special, using recycled materials and things found in Anne Hathaway's garden, Wed 23

Apr, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Stratford-upon-Avon

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY MR SHAKESPEARE** Family drop-in event celebrating Shakespeare's birthday, Wed 23 Apr, Tudor House Museum, Worcester

**LET'S PLAY! EASTER HOLIDAYS** Featuring indoor games and crafts suitable for families of all ages and sizes, Thurs 24 Apr, Coventry Cathedral

**EASTER ACCESS DAY** Featuring a whole host of accessible activities, Thurs 24 Apr, British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire

**SPRING FEST 2025** Celebrating community, sustainability and food, Sat 26 Apr, Coventry Cathedral

**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

**SPECIALIST PLANT FAIR AND ARTISAN MARKET** Featuring 20-plus specialist nurseries offering 'a multitude of rare and unusual plants for sale', Sun 27 Apr, Spetchley Park Estate, Worcester

**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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THE ULTIMATE FEEL GOOD PARTY  
ALL DAY 4-9PM  
THE **90's**  
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BRING IN THE HIGHEST DANCE HITS BY THE 90's

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**  
Meet & greet with **WILLIE AND THE BEAST**  
SUN 6 APRIL

THE WORLD'S NO.1 GUNS N' ROSES LIVE TRIBUTE  
★★★★★  
FRI 11 APRIL  
**GUNS2ROSES**

**School of Rock**  
THE UK'S NO.1 SCHOOL OF ROCK-LIVE TRIBUTE BAND  
★★★★★  
SUN 13 APRIL

THE **GERRY CINNAMAN EXPERIENCE**  
Built the Barry  
FRI 18 APRIL

THE MUSIC OF **Prince**  
FRI 25 APRIL  
**PURPLE CELEBRATION**

THE **BLACK CHARADE** & **FELL OUT BOY**  
SAT 26 APRIL

**SHAWN RYDER**  
SUN 27 APRIL

**SUBVERT LOOP** fest  
**BILLINJA**  
**MARQUEE TROUS**  
**BENNUL**  
ESCAPE / JAY DUBZ  
FRI 2 MAY

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF **CHRIS STAPLETON**  
SUN 4 MAY  
STARRING: CHRIS STAPLETON UK & HIS LIVE BAND

**Spiritual Psychic Night**  
An audience with **Marilyn & Tia**  
WED 7 MAY

**BOYZLIFE**  
THE HITS OF BOYZONE & WESTLIFE  
THURS 8 MAY

THE WORLD'S BEST **P!NK**  
TRIBUTE SHOW  
**Vicky Jackson**  
& HER FULL LIVE BAND!  
FRI 9 MAY

A CELEBRATION OF **BOB MARLEY**  
**ONE LOVE**  
FEATURING **THE MARLEY EXPERIENCE**  
BOB MARLEY'S NO.1 TRIBUTE BAND  
SAT 10 MAY

THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO **QUEEN**  
**QUEEN NOW**  
FRI 16 MAY  
"Sounds just like Freddie" Alan Lamberton  
"Love the band... atmosphere was explosive!" Jim Jenkins

**BRUNCH CLUB** SAT 17 MAY  
**90s BABY**  
BRUNCH

40 YEARS OF **ERASURE**  
SAT 17 MAY  
ERASURE TRIBUTE  
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST **HOWIE LEEDER** (EUREKA TRIBUTE)

AN INTIMATE EVENING WITH... **Paul Young**  
SUN 18 MAY

**TAYLOR SWIFT & OLIVIA RODRIGO**  
TRIBUTE  
FRI 23 MAY

**MORGAN WALLEN**  
TRIBUTE UK  
SUN 25 MAY

**BEASTIE BOYS** & **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**  
TRIBUTE: BEAST BOYS / Tribute: THE MACHINE BRIGADE  
**RHYME AND REASON 2023**  
FRI 30 MAY  
THE TOUR THAT NEVER HAPPENED!

IN THE CELLARS  
**Disco Blue**  
70s Disco 80s Pop  
Day Disco  
SAT 31 MAY

**SPECIAL KINDA MADNESS**  
PRESENTING A LIVE TRIBUTE TO THE SPECIALS AND MADNESS  
SAT 31 MAY  
2 BANDS  
2 TONE  
1 FANTASTIC NIGHT

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