

SATURDAY 25 DECEMBER 2010**SAT 19:00 Best of European Opera 2010 (b00wyq33)**

A programme of operatic highlights featuring some of the most exciting productions from around Europe in 2010.

It includes the Royal Opera's Simon Boccanegra starring Plácido Domingo in his first baritone role, Jose van Dam's farewell performance as Don Quixote from La Monnaie in Brussels, and star soprano Diana Damrau singing Mozart in Barcelona.

There is also a glimpse of the new opera house in Oslo and two radically different productions - Birmingham Opera's Othello, staged by Graham Vick in a disused factory in Birmingham, and a spectacular version of Moses and Aaron from Germany.

Verdi's Rigoletto provides the climax with an extract from the live film version broadcast in September from Mantua, with Domingo in the title role.

SAT 20:00 Only Connect (b00wgp9)

Series 4

Epicureans vs Wrights

Quiz show presented by Victoria Coren in which knowledge will only take you so far, as patience and lateral thinking are also vital.

In the first semi-final, three lovers of luxurious wines and exotic dishes set aside their shared passion to address the challenge of the combined wits of the Wright family.

They compete to draw together the connections between things which at first glance seem utterly random, such as completing the sequence: 1950: Soap; 1952: Tea; 1953: Cream, eggs, sweets, sugar; ????

SAT 20:30 Only Connect (b00wlrz)

Series 4

Alesmen vs Radio Addicts

Quiz show presented by Victoria Coren in which knowledge will only take you so far, as patience and lateral thinking are also vital.

In the second semi-final, three lovers of authentic beer lock horns with the cunning of a team bound by their love of the airwaves.

They compete to draw together the connections between things which at first glance seem utterly random, from Norman Conquest begins to Stella Artois brewery founded to Great Fire of London to ????

SAT 21:00 And Then There Were None (b0078t56)

Agatha Christie's chiller about ten apparently unconnected people who receive cryptic invitations to an isolated mansion, where they are murdered one by one. They begin a race against time to discover the identity of the murderer and the reasons why they were invited.

SAT 22:35 The Road to Coronation Street (b00ttj2r)

6.53pm, December 9th 1960. Granada Studios, Manchester. With minutes to go until the live transmission of episode one, creator Tony Warren is being sick in the toilets, actress Pat Phoenix is missing and so is the cat from the opening shot.

This is the epic story of one man's struggle to make a programme that no-one wanted. Granada's formidable bosses Sidney Bernstein and his brother Cecil are not enthusiastic, but together with producer Harry Elton and director Derek Bennett, Tony takes up the battle. He wants cobbles, a pub, seven houses and a shop, but above all he wants Northern actors. Led by casting director Margaret Morris and her young assistant Josie Scott, the hunt begins for the legendary cast - Doris Speed, Pat Phoenix, Violet Carson and William Roache. With a last-minute change of title, Coronation Street is born.

SAT 23:50 The Saint Strikes Back (b0078zt6)

Vintage mystery adventure. When a murder takes place in a nightclub on New Year's Eve, debonair sleuth the Saint goes into action to clear a young girl's name.

SAT 00:55 Soul Noel: Gospel and Soul Stars Sing Christmas (b00wvcs3)

A Christmas concert with a difference, as carols, Christmas anthems and the odd pop classic are performed with a gospel and soul twist.

Warm yourself on a winter's night with gospel, soul, reggae, ska

and soca versions of classics such as Silent Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Jingle Bells, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen and many more.

Filmed at the Porchester Hall in west London, it features UK soul diva Beverley Knight, the multi-talented jazz blues soul singer Carleen Anderson, Lagos-born jazz soul singer Ola Onabule and Birmingham-born Bryn Christopher in a unique celebration of Christmas.

Special guests include the legendary original Southern Blues-singing Golden Gate Quartet, a truly radical jubilee quartet, bringing the swing and groove of jazz into gospel music. Formed in the 1930s, the group still feature two original members. MD Ken Burton leads a stellar choir featuring a range of other top vocalists, all backed by a sizzling soul band.

SAT 01:55 A Christmas History of Sacred Music (b00wvdcj)

Simon Russell Beale takes a journey through Italy, Britain, Germany and Austria as he explores how the sound of Christmas has evolved in response to changing ideas about the Nativity. His story takes us through two millennia of music, from a fragment of papyrus preserving the earliest known piece of Christian music to the stories behind Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Silent Night and In the Bleak Midwinter, and the work of popular Christmas composer, John Rutter. Music is performed by Harry Christophers and his choir, The Sixteen.

SAT 02:55 Sacred Music at Christmas (b00x21sc)

A Choral Christmas

Simon Russell Beale introduces a programme of choral music for Christmas from across the centuries, featuring full performances of some of the works featured in the accompanying documentary. Harry Christophers and his choir, The Sixteen, perform music including JS Bach's harmonisation of the medieval carol In dulci jubilo, A Spotless Rose by Herbert Howells and the Christmas text O magnum mysterium, set as a motet by Tomas Luis de Victoria.

SAT 03:25 Best of European Opera 2010 (b00wyq33)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER 2010**SUN 19:00 Birmingham Royal Ballet's Cinderella (b00wyltr)**

The world premiere of Birmingham Royal Ballet's production of Prokofiev's Cinderella, created by the company's director and choreographer David Bintley and designer John Macfarlane. With stunning costumes and dazzling sets, Cinderella is a sumptuous and sparkling family entertainment for Christmas.

SUN 21:00 Wallander (b00wvbsw)

One Step Behind

Detective story based on a novel by Henning Mankell. Ystad police are baffled when they find the bodies of three friends buried in the woods. Soon afterwards, their own Detective Svedberg is also found dead. First clues point to Svedberg having taken his own life, but soon enough Detective Kurt Wallander discovers a link between his former colleague, the three murder victims and a mysterious fourth person.

SUN 22:40 Farewell My Lovely (b008mh2l)

Film noir classic adapted from Raymond Chandler's novel of the same name.

Private eye Philip Marlowe is hired by ex-con Moose Malloy to find his girlfriend, embroiling the hard-boiled gumshoe in a plot which involves blackmail, murder, drugs and double cross.

SUN 00:10 The Great British Outdoors (b00t4kh5)

Mud, midges, barbed wire - just why do us Brits love the great outdoors?

In this nostalgic look at life for campers, twitchers, rambblers and metal detectors, Mark Benton examines the history of the British fresh air freak.

SUN 01:10 Wild Swimming (b00t9r28)

Alice Roberts embarks on a quest to discover what lies behind the passion for wild swimming, now becoming popular in Britain. She follows in the wake of Waterlog, the classic swimming text by journalist and author Roger Deakin.

Her journey takes in cavernous plunge pools, languid rivers and unfathomable underground lakes, as well as a skinny dip in a

moorland pool. Along the way Alice becomes aware that she is not alone on her watery journey.

SUN 02:10 Britain Goes Camping (b00t5hd)

Featuring the evocative memories and unseen archive of generations of enthusiasts, a documentary which tells the intriguing story of how sleeping under canvas evolved from a leisure activity for a handful of adventurous Edwardian gents to the quintessentially British family pastime that it is today.

SUN 03:10 Cardigans at Christmas (b0077dwr)

A feast of old chestnuts from the glory days of Christmases past with this look at the rise and demise of the Christmas light-entertainment spectacular. From Christmas Night with the Stars to Val Doonican and Christmas Snowtime special, the programme revisits a world of snow made from soapflakes, chorus lines sweating in winter woolies and recycled sleighs.

MONDAY 27 DECEMBER 2010**MON 19:00 Wonders of the Solar System (b00rf172)**

Original Series

Empire of the Sun

Professor Brian Cox visits some of the most stunning locations on earth to describe how the laws of nature have carved natural wonders across the solar system.

In this first episode Brian explores the powerhouse of them all, the sun. In India he witnesses a total solar eclipse - when the link to the light and heat that sustains us is cut off for a few precious minutes.

But heat and light are not the only power of the sun over the solar system. In Norway, Brian watches the battle between the sun's wind and earth, as the night sky glows with the northern lights.

Beyond earth, the solar wind continues, creating dazzling aurora on other planets. Brian makes contact with Voyager, a probe that has been travelling since its launch 30 years ago. Now 14 billion kilometres away, Voyager has just detected the solar wind is beginning to peter out. But even here we haven't reached the end of the sun's rule.

Brian explains how its greatest power, gravity, reaches out for hundreds of billions of kilometres, where the lightest gravitational touch encircles our solar system in a mysterious cloud of comets.

MON 20:00 Skippy: Australia's First Superstar (b00qv19g)

Documentary telling the story of Australia's most cherished TV star, Skippy the bush kangaroo, the crime-busting marsupial who conquered the world in the late 60s and early 70s.

The 91 episodes of Skippy were sold in 128 countries and watched by hundreds of millions. It put Australia on the map and - for those of a certain generation - the heroic marsupial is synonymous with their childhood, often in more profound ways than they realise.

Includes interviews with every surviving member of the cast and some of the key crew - not least those responsible for getting the best performances out of the temperamental star.

MON 21:00 Only Connect (b00x1sks)

Series 4

Epicureans vs Radio Addicts

Quiz show presented by Victoria Coren in which knowledge will only take you so far, as patience and lateral thinking are also vital.

In the series finale, cunning and tactics combine with logic, recall and tangential inspiration as three committed gourmands set aside their love of fine foods to concentrate on the job in hand - battle for victory over the radio addicts, a team with the diverse combined knowledge of a doctor, a teacher and an accountant.

They compete to draw together the connections between things which, at first glance, seem utterly random.

MON 21:30 Timeshift (b00wwlll)

Series 10

Italian Noir: The Story of Italian Crime Fiction

Timeshift profiles a new wave of Italian crime fiction that has emerged to challenge the conventions of the detective novel.

There are no happy endings in these noir tales, only revelations about Italy's dark heart - a world of corruption, unsolved murders and the mafia.

The programme features exclusive interviews with the leading writers from this new wave of noir, including Andrea Camilleri (creator of the Inspector Montalbano Mysteries) and Giancarlo De Cataldo (Romanzo Criminale), who explains how his work as a real-life investigating judge inspired his work. From the other side of the law, Massimo Carlotto talks about how his novels were shaped by his wrongful conviction for murder and years spent on the run from the police.

The film also looks at the roots of this new wave. Carlo Emilio Gadda (That Awful Mess) used the detective novel to expose the corruption that existed during Mussolini's fascist regime and then, after the Second World War, Leonardo Sciascia's crime novels (The Day of The Owl) tackled the rise of the Sicilian mafia. These writers established the rules of a new kind of noir that drew on real events and offered no neat endings.

Also featuring Italian writers Carlo Lucarelli and Barbara Baraldi, the film uses rarely seen archive from Italian television.

MON 22:30 Inspector Montalbano (b00g6hqh)
Montalbano's Croquettes

As the small town of Vigata prepares for its New Year celebrations, local police inspector Salvo Montalbano is reluctantly making arrangements to travel to Paris with his girlfriend. What he would much rather do, however, is accept a dinner invitation by his cleaner Adelina, who has promised to cook rice croquettes.

A wealthy husband and wife are found dead in what appears to be a car accident, but which quickly turns into a murder investigation. As the circumstances surrounding the death of the couple grow more and more mysterious, clues point to the involvement of Adelina's son Pasquale.

In Italian with English subtitles.

MON 00:05 Carluccio and the Leopard (b00g31qr)
Antonio Carluccio travels to Sicily to discover more about one of the most successful novels ever written in the Italian language, The Leopard, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa. Whilst tracing the locations that inspired the book, Antonio cooks the food that is such an integral part of the lives of its characters.

Giuseppe Tomasi, Prince of Lampedusa, who died in 1957, had seen his family fortune disappear during his lifetime. The Palermo palace he lived in as a child had been destroyed by American bombing in the Second World War and the family's country villa was reduced to rubble by an earthquake. Lampedusa was acutely nostalgic for the aristocratic world of his childhood and at the end of his life he wrote a novel, based on the life of his great grandfather, that recreated this lost paradise.

Basing himself in the kitchen of a 16th century villa, Antonio recreates the meals of the 1860s that Lampedusa describes with such artistry. He explores the history of Italian unification that forms the background of the novel and ventures into the vibrant city of Palermo to find the street food that is still an important part of the Sicilian way of life. Antonio discovers the way that food is central to Sicilian culture, with Greek, Arab, Norman and Spanish invaders all having contributed to the island's unique cuisine.

He also meets Lampedusa's adopted son and learns how this eccentric and impoverished nobleman died before his only novel was published, causing a sensation in Italy and sparking a national debate on the eve of the centenary of the unification it described.

MON 01:05 Shanties and Sea Songs with Gareth Malone (b00s97cd)

The story of Britain's maritime past has a hidden history of shanties and sea songs, and choirmaster Gareth Malone has been travelling Britain's coast to explore this unique heritage. From dedicated traditionalists to groundbreaking recording artists, Gareth meets a variety of sea-singers from across the country.

His journey begins in Portsmouth where he meets a devoted shanty singer, before continuing on to Tyneside and the Yorkshire coast, where the Filey Fisherman's Choir, with an average age of 70, are determined to keep the tradition alive.

Gareth gets a fascinating insight into the songs of the Herring Girls when he visits Gardenstown in Scotland. In Whitby, he meets Kimber's Men, a local group who have dedicated themselves to writing and singing songs celebrating heroes of the sea, such as a rescue of 1881 when the sea was so rough the people of Whitby had to carry their 2-tonne lifeboat some six

miles overland on a wooden trailer and in heavy snow to the bay where a ship had hit the rocks. Despite the exhaustion, they still managed to rescue the shipwrecked crew and passengers.

Gareth's journey ends in Port Isaac in Cornwall, where a group of local fishermen sing shanties and sea songs alongside their day job. Calling themselves the Fishermen's Friends, they have been so successful that they have landed a lucrative record deal.

MON 02:05 Skippy: Australia's First Superstar (b00qv19g)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

MON 03:05 Timeshift (b00wvlll)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:30 today]

MON 04:05 Julia Bradbury's German Wanderlust (b00wvd7z)
Saxon Switzerland

Julia Bradbury takes her boots and backpack to the Continent to explore the landscape of Germany and the cultural movement that made it famous - Romanticism.

The Germans enjoy a relationship with walking that has lasted over 200 years. The exploration of their landscape has inspired music, literature and art, and Romanticism has even helped shape the modern German nation, as Julia discovers. By walking in four very different parts of Germany, she explores river valleys, coastlines, mountains and gorges, following in the footsteps of Richard Wagner, Caspar David Friedrich, Johannes Brahms as well as British Romantics like William Turner and Lord Byron. This is Julia's chance to discover her own sense of wanderlust.

Julia's final adventure takes her deep into the former East Germany. Saxony is a largely unknown destination for UK walkers, but, as Julia discovers, it contains some remarkable landscape. The sandstone mountains, set alongside the mighty Elbe river, are a bizarre mix of forest, gorge and rock towers. Two hundred years ago, they were the focal point for a rush of Romantic artists filled with a new desire to explore landscape for themselves. The wonder of local nature has been attracting visitors ever since.

TUESDAY 28 DECEMBER 2010

TUE 19:00 Wonders of the Solar System (b00rkksq)
Original Series

Order Out of Chaos

Professor Brian Cox visits some of the most stunning locations on earth to describe how the laws of nature have carved natural wonders across the solar system.

Brian reveals how beauty and order in earth's cosmic backyard was formed from nothing more than a chaotic cloud of gas. Chasing tornados in Oklahoma, he explains how the same physics that creates these spinning storms shaped the young solar system. Out of this celestial maelstrom emerged the jewel in the crown, Brian's second wonder - the magnificent rings of Saturn.

On an ice-choked lagoon in Iceland, he sees the nearest thing on earth to Saturn's rings. Using the latest scientific imagery and breathtaking graphics, he explains how the intricate patterns round Saturn are shaped by the cluster of more than 60 moons surrounding the planet.

One of those moons makes a spectacular contribution to the rings and is the third wonder of the solar system. Brian describes the astonishing discovery of giant fountains of ice erupting from the surface of Enceladus, which soar thousands of kilometres into space.

TUE 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (b00x1v7f)
2010

Why Elephants Can't Dance

How can a hamster survive falling from the top of a skyscraper, ants carry over 100 times their own body weight and geckos climb across the ceiling?

In the first of this year's Christmas lectures, Dr Mark Miodownik investigates why size matters in animal behaviour. He reveals how the science of materials - the stuff from which everything is made - can explain some of the most extraordinary and surprising feats in the animal kingdom.

By the end, you will understand why you will never see an elephant dance.

TUE 21:00 Britain Goes Camping (b00t5hcl)
[Repeat of broadcast at 02:10 on Sunday]

TUE 22:00 Maid in Britain (b00wyr1r)
A look at how domestic servants have been portrayed on television, from The Forsyte Saga in the 60s to Downton Abbey and Upstairs, Downstairs today. Why are butlers, cooks and nannies such staples of television drama long after their real-life roles have declined? Are these shows socially relevant or mere escapism, and how accurately does television reflect the experiences of real-life servants?

Featuring archive from Brideshead Revisited, Jeeves and Wooster and The Duchess of Duke Street, contributors include Julian Fellowes (Downton Abbey), Jean Marsh (Upstairs, Downstairs), Susan Hampshire (The Forsyte Saga) and Wendy Craig (Nanny).

TUE 23:00 The Shooting Party (b0079393)
1913, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War. A group of aristocrats gathers at the estate of Sir Randolph Nettleby for a weekend shoot. As the terminal decrepitude of a dying class is reflected in the social interactions and hypocrisy of its members, only world-weary Sir Randolph seems to realise that the sun is setting.

TUE 00:35 Rich Hall's 'The Dirty South' (b00t26zf)
Rich Hall sets his keen eye and acerbic wit on his homeland once again as he sifts truth from fiction in Hollywood's version of the southern states of the USA. Using specially shot interviews and featuring archive footage from classic movies such as Gone With the Wind, A Streetcar Named Desire and Deliverance, Rich discovers a South that is about so much more than just rednecks, racism and hillbillies.

TUE 02:05 Eddie Waring: Mr Rugby League (b00tnwkv)
Eddie Waring introduced millions of TV viewers to rugby league, but within his own northern heartland he was both loved and loathed. For some he was loveable Uncle Eddie, to others an embarrassing northern caricature who appeared on light entertainment shows and failed to take the game seriously. Waring painted a picture of 'the north' that caused problems on his home patch. Were people laughing with him, or at him, at the game of rugby league and the wider north?

He was also more than a hired voice, he was an expert and an entrepreneur - a fixer and a visionary who entered dangerous territory as he attempted to take the game to new levels. This is the story of his controversial role in the history of rugby league.

TUE 03:05 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (b00x1v7f)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

WEDNESDAY 29 DECEMBER 2010

WED 19:00 Wonders of the Solar System (b00rmpqh)
Original Series

The Thin Blue Line

Professor Brian Cox reveals how something as flimsy as an envelope of gas - an atmosphere - can create some of the most wondrous sights in the solar system. He takes a ride in an English Electric Lightning and flies 18 km up to the top of earth's atmosphere, where he sees the darkness of space above and the thin blue line of our atmosphere below. In the Namib desert in south-west Africa, he tells the story of Mercury. This tiny planet was stripped naked of its early atmosphere and is fully exposed to the ferocity of space.

Against the stunning backdrop of the glaciers of Alaska, Brian reveals his fourth wonder: Saturn's moon Titan, shrouded by a murky, thick atmosphere. He reveals that below the clouds lies a magical world. Titan is the only place beyond earth where we've found liquid pooling on the surface in vast lakes, as big as the Caspian Sea, but the lakes of Titan are filled with a mysterious liquid, and are quite unlike anything on earth.

WED 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (b00x1ygp)
2010

Why Chocolate Melts and Jet Engines Don't

Dr Mark Miodownik zooms into the microscopic world beneath our fingertips. In this unfamiliar landscape, strange forces dominate the world and common sense goes out of the window. He reveals how this tiny hidden world can make objects behave like magic, and discovers the secrets of the extraordinary metals that make jet engines possible.

With a mass audience taste test, Mark reveals why chocolate is actually one of the most sophisticated and highly engineered materials on the planet, using special crystals designed to melt in the mouth. He looks forward to new era of self-healing materials where a broken mobile phone or car bumper could heal itself and how, one day, material scientists might even create artificial life.

WED 21:00 Wellington Bomber (b00tr2p5)

One autumn weekend, early in WWII at an aircraft factory at Broughton in North Wales, a group of British workers, men and women, set out to smash a world record for building a bomber from scratch. They managed to build a Wellington Bomber in 23 hours and 50 minutes. They worked so quickly that the test pilot had to be turfed out of bed to take it into the air, 24 hours and 48 minutes after the first part of the airframe had been laid.

So who were the men and women who made this record-breaking Wellington? Britain's propaganda machine made a 12-minute film about the attempt and Peter Williams Television has traced six of them, one of whom, Bill Anderson, was only 14 years old. Their story of the excitement of the attempt is the heart of this documentary.

The Wellington was a special aircraft, as historian Sir Max Hastings says. It was held in great affection by those who flew it, mostly because its geodetic construction enabled it to survive enormous damage, as Flt Lt 'Tiny' Cooling remembers. He flew 67 missions in Wellingtons.

More Wellingtons were built during WWII than any other British aircraft, except the Spitfire and the Hurricane, the stars of the Battle of Britain. And, unwittingly, the Wellington, Britain's main strike bomber, played an important role in the Battle of Britain, as this documentary reveals.

WED 22:00 Gomorrah (b00wqyz)

Power, money and blood are the values that the residents of the province of Naples and Caserta confront every day. They have practically no choice and are forced to obey the rules of the local Mafia. Only a lucky few can even think of leading a normal life. Five stories are woven together in this violent scenario, set in a cruel and ostensibly-invented world, but one that is deeply rooted in reality.

WED 00:10 Timeshift (b00wvlll)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:30 on Monday]

WED 01:10 A History of Horror with Mark Gatiss (b00v9gy5)

Frankenstein Goes to Hollywood

Three-part series in which actor and writer Mark Gatiss (The League of Gentlemen, Doctor Who, Sherlock) celebrates the greatest achievements of horror cinema.

A lifelong fan of the genre, Mark begins by exploring the golden age of Hollywood horror. From the late 1920s until the 1940s, a succession of classic pictures and unforgettable actors defined the horror genre - including The Phantom of the Opera starring Lon Chaney, Dracula with Bela Lugosi, and Frankenstein starring Boris Karloff.

Mark explains just how daring and pioneering these films were, and why they still send a chill down the spine today. He also traces how horror pictures evolved during this period, becoming camp and subversive (The Old Dark House and Bride of Frankenstein, both directed by Englishman James Whale), dark and perverse (films like Freaks, which used disabled performers), before a final flourish with the psychological horror of RKO Pictures' films (Cat People, I Walked with a Zombie), which still influence directors today. However, by the early 1950s the monsters were facing their biggest threat - the rise of science fiction films in the post-war atomic era.

Along the way, Mark steps into some of the great sets from these classic films, hears first-hand accounts from Hollywood horror veterans, discovers Lon Chaney's head in a box and finds out why Bela Lugosi met his match in Golders Green.

WED 02:10 Timeshift (b0074t74)

Series 6

Transylvania Babylon

A comic exploration of the cult of Dracula. From Bela Lugosi to bloodsucking bikes, with a Mexican tag-wrestling version thrown in for good measure, this ghoulish compilation is an entertaining homage to the vampire tradition gifted us by Bram Stoker's famous Count.

WED 02:40 Crooked House (b00gf5cz)

The Wainscoting

When schoolteacher Ben unearths an old door knocker in the garden of his new home, the curator suggests it may come from the now-demolished house, reputed to be haunted. Ben prompts the curator to tell him stories about the house's past.

It's 1786, and Joseph Bloxham is a self-made man and something of a star in fashionable coffee-house society. Some though, like the sceptical Noakes, take a dim view of his shady business ethics. Bloxham has used his ill-gotten gains to buy the old Geap Manor, paying no heed to the warnings of Noakes and his friend Duncalfe, but when Bloxham starts to hear ghastly sounds in the newly-installed panelling of his drawing room it seems he might have more than just a mouse hiding in his wainscoting.

WED 03:10 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (b00xlygp)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

THURSDAY 30 DECEMBER 2010

THU 19:00 Wonders of the Solar System (b00rtg5k)

Original Series

Dead or Alive

Professor Brian Cox visits some of the most stunning locations on Earth to describe how the laws of nature have carved natural wonders across the solar system.

The worlds that surround our planet are all made of rock, but there the similarity ends. Some have a beating geological heart, others are frozen in time. Brian travels to the tallest mountain on Earth, the volcano Mauna Kea on Hawaii, to show how something as basic as a planet's size can make the difference between life and death. Even on the summit of this volcano, Brian would stand in the shade of the tallest mountain in the solar system, an extinct volcano on Mars called Olympus Mons, which rises up 27 km.

Yet the fifth wonder in the series isn't on a planet at all. It's on a tiny moon of Jupiter. The discoveries made on Io have been astonishing. This fragment of rock should be cold and dead, yet, with the volcanic landscape of eastern Ethiopia as a backdrop, Brian reveals why Io is home to extraordinary lakes of lava and giant volcanic plumes that erupt 500 km into the sky.

THU 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (b00xlyny)

2010

Why Mountains Are So Small

Why is the tallest building on earth less than half a mile high? Why don't we have mountains as tall as those on Mars?

In his final Christmas lecture, Dr Mark Miodownik investigates the world of the very big and very tall. He reveals that, at this scale, everything is governed by a battle with one of the strangest forces in the universe - gravity. With help from acrobats, levitation devices, spiders, birthday cake candles and even some sticky goo, Mark discovers how gravity can make solid rock behave like a liquid and investigates whether one day it might be possible to build a structure from Earth into space, taking us beyond the reach of gravity without the use of a rocket.

THU 21:00 The First Men in the Moon (b00vfgw)

Mark Gatiss's adaptation of HG Wells's science fiction classic. July 1969, and as the world waits with bated breath for the Apollo astronauts to land on the moon, a young boy meets 90-year-old Julius Bedford. He's a man with an extraordinary story of how, way back in 1909, he got to the moon first, and, together with the eccentric Professor Cavor, discovered a terrifying secret deep beneath its seemingly barren surface.

THU 22:30 Wallander (b00wbvsw)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Sunday]

THU 00:05 Lennon Naked (b00sv451)

Christopher Eccleston is John Lennon in a drama which charts his transition from Beatle John to enduring and enigmatic icon.

Writer Robert Jones articulates the burden of genius, as well as issues of fatherhood and fame, covering a period of wildly fluctuating fortunes for Lennon from 1967-71. When the Beatles' manager Brian Epstein died unexpectedly in 1967 it was a turning point in Lennon's life and the film focuses on the turbulent and intense period of change that followed, and how John was haunted by his troubled childhood.

It also reveals the impact of re-establishing contact with his long-

lost father and the events that led Lennon to shed everything both personally and creatively, including calling time on the Beatles. Meeting Yoko Ono was the catalyst for this new era and the film explores the development of their extraordinary relationship, their growing disillusionment with Britain and what caused Lennon to abandon the UK to start a new life in America - a process which ultimately led Lennon to record arguably the most powerful solo work of his career.

THU 01:30 A History of Horror with Mark Gatiss (b00vffvs)

Home Counties Horror

Three-part series in which actor and writer Mark Gatiss (The League of Gentlemen, Doctor Who, Sherlock) celebrates the greatest achievements of horror cinema.

Mark uncovers stories behind the films of his favourite period - the 1950s and 60s - which fired his lifelong enthusiasm for horror. These mainly British pictures were dominated by the legendary Hammer Films, who rewrote the horror rulebook with a revolutionary infusion of sex and full-colour gore - all shot in the English Home Counties.

Mark meets key Hammer figures to find out why their Frankenstein and Dracula films conquered the world, making international stars of Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. He looks at the new boom of horror that followed in Hammer's wake, including the ravishing Italian movie Black Sunday, and talks to the influential American producer Roger Corman about his disturbing and dreamlike Edgar Allan Poe films. He also explores the intriguing cycle of British 'folk horror' films, such as The Wicker Man and Mark's personal favourite, Blood on Satan's Claw.

Mark also speaks to leading horror ladies Barbara Steele and Barbara Shelley about their most famous roles, makes a pilgrimage to Whitstable, home of Peter Cushing, and finds out why Dracula's bedroom activities got the British censor steamed up.

THU 02:30 Crooked House (b00gf512)

Something Old

When schoolteacher Ben unearths an old door knocker in the garden of his new home, the curator suggests it may come from the now-demolished house, reputed to be haunted. Ben prompts the curator to tell him stories about the house's past.

In the 1920s, Lady Constance de Momery presides over a costume ball for her grandson, but all is not as it seems and when young heir to the estate Felix de Momery announces his engagement to sweetheart Ruth, his friends Billy and Katherine seem far from pleased.

Is the happy couple's destiny inextricably linked with another tragic wedding day many years ago and does the sight of a ghostly bride in a grave-stained wedding dress explain why there has not been a wedding at Geap Manor since then?

THU 03:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (b00xlyny)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

FRIDAY 31 DECEMBER 2010

FRI 19:00 Rigoletto (b00wyr6v)

Film version of Verdi's tragic masterpiece Rigoletto, starring Placido Domingo in the title role. Rigoletto is set in the renaissance splendour of Mantua and its three acts feature magnificent palaces and historical locations across the city. The opera tells the story of the court jester Rigoletto and his beautiful daughter Gilda - it's a tale full of love, intrigue and passion and it's filled with some of Verdi's most famous melodies.

FRI 21:05 Chopin Prelude in F# Major (b00xqy21)

With pianist Alfredo Perl.

FRI 21:15 Rick Stein's Taste of Italian Opera (b00sm1g0)

Chef Rick Stein takes a light-hearted look at the role that food played in the creation of Italian opera and shows how music and food are intrinsically linked in Italy. He draws parallels between cooking and composing, noting how both involve the skilful combination of ingredients and how they share the common purpose of bringing pleasure to many. Rick also explains why he thinks the music of Verdi, Rossini and Puccini are linked to the food of the regions where they lived and worked.

FRI 22:15 Swingin' Christmas (b00wyltw)

Michael Parkinson presents the sensational John Wilson

Orchestra in a celebration of festive musical treats from the golden age of swing, with soloists Seth MacFarlane, Anna-Jane Casey and special guest Curtis Stigers. The Christmas classics include Winter Wonderland, Baby It's Cold Outside, Let It Snow and White Christmas.

FRI 23:40 The Swing Thing (b00g3694)

Documentary telling the story of swing, an obscure form of jazz that became the first worldwide pop phenomenon, inspired the first ever youth culture revolution and became a byword for sexual liberation and teenage excess well before the Swinging Sixties.

In the process, swing threw up some of the greatest names in 20th century music, from Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington to Billie Holiday and Frank Sinatra. The film uses archive and contemporary accounts to shed light on why it endures today.

FRI 01:10 A History of Horror with Mark Gatiss (b00vjm4v)

The American Scream

Three-part series in which League of Gentleman star, Doctor Who and Sherlock writer Mark Gatiss celebrates the greatest achievements of horror cinema.

Mark explores the explosion of American films of the late 1960s and 70s which dragged horror kicking and screaming into the present day. With their contemporary settings and uncompromising content, films like *Night of the Living Dead* and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* remain controversial. But Mark argues that these films - often regarded as only being for hardcore fans with strong stomachs - have much to offer. Made by pioneering independent filmmakers, they reflected the social upheavals of American society and brought fresh energy and imagination to the genre.

Mark gets the inside story from a roster of leading horror directors, including George A Romero, whose *Night of the Living Dead* and *Dawn of the Dead* turned zombies into A-list monsters; Tobe Hooper, director of the notorious *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*; and John Carpenter, whose smash hit *Halloween* triggered the slasher movie boom.

Mark also celebrates the other great horror trend of the era - a string of satanically-themed Hollywood blockbusters, including *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist* and *The Omen*. Along the way Mark visits the Bates Motel, gets mobbed by zombies and finds out what happened to *Omen* star David Warner's decapitated head.

FRI 02:10 Crooked House (b00gf5sy)

The Knocker

When schoolteacher Ben unearths an old door knocker in the garden of his new home, the curator suggests it may come from the now-demolished house, reputed to be haunted. Ben prompts the curator to tell him two stories about the house's past.

Back in the present day, commitment-shy Ben begins to discover that, though demolished, Geap Manor casts a long shadow. Having recently left his girlfriend Hannah for a life of excitement over cosy domesticity, he is excited by the curator's stories and screws the ancient door knocker to his new front door. However, he soon finds himself getting more excitement than he bargained for as the past begins to intrude rudely with a loud knock at the door in the night and a terrifying journey into Geap Manor's bloody past.

FRI 02:40 The Games That Time Forgot (b00t6yc0)

Alex Horne tries to discover why some games survived, and examines the best of those that did not.

Whilst revisiting his own childhood haunts, he attempts to relaunch the ancient sport of the Quintain, horseless jousting, and tries his damndest to understand the rules of the Jangling Match. Not forgetting his attempt to restage the forgotten spectacle of Cricket on Horseback.

This might just be a journey to the very heart of sport itself, but if not, it will be a lot of fun playing games that have not been seen for hundreds of years and even more fun discovering why.