

SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER 2019

SAT 19:00 Nothing Like a Dame (b0b5y3xn)

Together, they are 342 years old. They are in their seventh decade of cutting-edge, epoch-defining performances on stage and on screen. Funny, smart, sharp, competitive, tearful, hilarious, savage, clever, caustic, cool, gorgeous, poignant, irreverent, iconic, old... and unbelievably young.

Special friends, special women and special dames - and this special film is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to hang out with them all, at the same table, at the same time, and enjoy sparkling and unguarded conversation spliced with a raft of astonishing archive.

Atkins, Dench, Smith, Plowright. The dream dame team. Don't miss it.

SAT 20:15 As Time Goes By (b007bzvb)

Series 9

As Time Goes By - Compilation Special

One-hour special of the romantic sitcom. Alistair and Judith have married, and Sandy and Harry have gone to Canada. On their own at last, Jean and Lionel look back on their life together.

SAT 21:15 Mrs Brown (b0078lkb)

Dramatisation of one of history's most unusual love stories. Queen Victoria is grieving over her husband's death and finds herself unable to carry out public duties. John Brown is summoned from Balmoral to walk the Queen's pony in the hope that she will start to become herself again. The confident Highlander displays a distinct lack of respect for court protocol and quickly becomes the Queen's most trusted companion.

SAT 22:55 Philomena (b03ttndm)

Drama recounting the true story of Philomena Lee, a Catholic woman who gives birth out of wedlock in 1950s Ireland. Abandoned by her family, she is forced to live in an abbey, where the nuns sell her infant child for adoption. Philomena keeps her secret for 50 years before eventually enlisting the help of jaded journalist Martin Sixsmith in tracking down her estranged son.

SAT 00:30 Peaky Blinders (b09j0hxs)

Series 4

Dangerous

The Peaky Blinders are lured by the Italians into a cat-and-mouse chase on the streets of Birmingham, where it becomes clear that Tommy has met his match. Trapped in Small Heath, Tommy tries to console himself with a visit from an old flame but it soon becomes clear that he can't always get what he wants.

As his factory lies idle, Tommy confronts the possibility that the Communists might win and he will be deemed a traitor to his class. Meanwhile, Changretta prepares to spring another trap.

SAT 01:30 Peaky Blinders (b09jhn03)

Series 4

The Duel

Tommy finds himself engaged in bloody battle with Luca Changretta and his gang. The family gather to find out what happened, but Lizzie has even greater news to break.

Meanwhile, an army colonel has questions for Ada about her past as a communist, and Jessie Eden confirms just how far she is prepared to go in pursuit of her cause. And sensing an opportunity to capitalise on his situation, Luca Changretta makes his way to London to present a plan to Alfie Solomons.

SAT 02:30 Peaky Blinders (b09k8gjf)

Series 4

The Company

It is the night of the big fight - Bonnie Gold versus Goliath. But as the bell rings and the crowd goes wild, dangers lurk in the shadows for Tommy Shelby and his family.

When Changretta plays his final ace, he sets in motion a series of events that will change the Peaky Blinders forever.

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 2019

SUN 19:00 Mrs Dickens's Family Christmas (b018nt6m)

Looking at the marriage of Charles Dickens through the eyes of his wife Catherine, Sue Perkins exposes the lesser known reality of the Dickens family Christmas - very different from the heart-warming versions he presented in A Christmas Carol.

Sue turns her attention to the woman behind the man, revealing parallels between the female characters he created and his changing affections for his wife, namely, in Dickens's mind, her transition from innocent virgin to middle-aged frump.

Scrutinising Dickens's public defence in a national newspaper of his treatment toward Catherine, Sue seeks to set the record straight, promulgating her unconditional love for Dickens and support for his career.

Along the way, she has plenty of laughs, evokes the realities of Victorian marriage, interviews many of today's leading biographers of Mr and Mrs Dickens, explores Charles's role in creating Christmas as we know it - and gets to make a twelfth night cake.

SUN 20:00 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em (b007884y)

Series 2

Father's Class

Frank and Betty try to get some practice at looking after children by taking Judy and Alison for a day out at the zoo. And Frank attends a maternity class - without Betty. He finishes the day off with a rather dangerous rollerskating routine.

SUN 20:30 The Good Life (b0077x05)

Silly, But It's Fun

The Goods and the Leadbetters plan their respective Christmases, but neither go according to plan. Classic comedy from 1977.

SUN 21:00 All About the Good Life (b00wyhth)

The programme explores the enduring appeal of the classic sitcom. With contributions from, amongst others, Richard Briers, Penelope Keith, Monty Don, Brian Sewell and John O'Farrell, All About the Good Life goes behind the scenes and reveals all you ever wanted to know about the series - from choosing outfits for Margo to the iconic title sequence.

SUN 22:00 The 12 Drinks of Christmas (b03mjypr)

Brothers-in-law and drinking buddies Alexander Armstrong and Giles Coren choose the booze that will give them their Christmas spirit. From mulled wine and fizz, eggnog and sloe gin to brandy and Boxing Day hangover cures, together these 12 drinks are the festive selection pack that will ensure their family's Christmas is full of good cheer.

For Alexander Armstrong and Giles Coren Christmas is about enjoying time with their families. In their case, that means each other since they are brothers-in-law. Just like the rest of us, they spend much of the festive season indoors eating and drinking.

Every year Britons spend over £10 billion on alcohol at Christmas. And every year, exactly what is drunk in the Armstrong-Coren family is the subject of some debate. Alexander is usually hosting and he likes to push the boat out, spoiling his guests with the finest booze he can get his hands on. Giles does not really see the point of splashing out on wine since everyone's already a bit squiffy by the time they sit down for lunch. As far as he is concerned a bottle or four of something cheaper would do just as well.

This year Giles and Alexander intend to settle this controversy once and for all. They are going to put together their definitive Christmas selection pack. But theirs will not come in a net stocking with a cardboard Santa at the top. It will come in bottles. However, just like the traditional selection pack, overconsumption may cause nausea.

They look for twelve different festive drinks they can agree on. Sometimes they find the winner in a category together, other times they champion different things. In some categories they source their contenders, in others they make their own creations from scratch. Together their festive dozen represents everything they need to ensure they are brimming over with the spirit of Christmas.

SUN 23:00 Timeshift (b008l3cn)

Series 7

Stuffed: The Great British Christmas Dinner

It's the season of peace and goodwill to all, when we think of those less fortunate than ourselves. It's also the time of year when we stuff our faces and gorge and drink ourselves silly. Christmas dinner is served. Being the last great feast in the

British culinary tradition, what role does it play today?

With contributions from actor Simon Callow, cultural critic Jonathan Meades, food writers Paul Levy, Prue Leith and Diana Henry, and historians Kate Colquhoun and Kathryn Hughes, this fun documentary asks why the British remain so wedded to this meal? What does it say about us as a nation? Can it survive in a rapidly changing and culturally diverse Britain of different faiths, food fads and health concerns?

For many, Christmas dinner means the anxiety and pressure to get it right, the endless advice from every celebrity chef reinventing the wheel and the bizarre traditions that must be maintained at all costs. For others it's a time to savour good food, dine with family and friends and connect with ancient customs and rituals. Either way, we end up completely stuffed.

SUN 00:00 TOTP2 (b01pm5m1)

Christmas 2012

Mark Radcliffe digs deep into the archives to deliver some familiar and unfamiliar festive treats. Straight from the vaults are some perennial Christmas favourites from the likes of Slade, Wizzard, Shaky, Wham, Macca and Jona Lewie.

Also, this year there is a punk Christmas vibe with The Ramones and the ultimate post-punk supergroup The Greedies with Phil Lynott on vox and a smattering of Sex Pistols as backup band.

French chanteuse Francoise Hardy pops up in a winter wonderland setting, and the queen of gospel Mahalia Jackson spoils us with a soulful performance of Silent Night from 1964.

And not forgetting the usual fun with The Wombles, The Snowmen and The Barron Knights and their 60s Christmas medley impersonating all the greats. Mikey Dread wishes us all a reggae reggae Christmas. All in all, a collection of special archive performances designed to help you and your kin have a very merry Christmas!

SUN 01:30 Lucy Worsley's Christmas Carol Odyssey (m000c5y4)

In this festive treat featuring the Kingdom Choir and Hampton Court Choir, Lucy Worsley reveals that there's much more to our best-loved carols than meets the eye. She reveals how their stories add up to a special kind of history of Christmas itself. In the ancient past, the wassail, a pagan fertility ritual, gave us door-to-door carol singing. Wassailing was also an integral part of an older midwinter festival that was adopted by Christianity when it came to Britain, and was rebranded as 'Christmas'.

Religion, however, soon turned its back on carols. They were far too frivolous for the Puritans, who wanted to ban Christmas altogether. French Catholics on the other hand didn't mind fun and frolics, and Lucy crosses the channel to learn a French renaissance jig, written by a dancing priest in the 16th century. The tune she dances to went on to become the carol Ding Dong Merrily on High in the 19th century.

In strict Protestant Britain, the carol survived outside the Church and new ones turned up in some surprising places. Lucy visits the British Library, where she discovers an 18th-century children's book that contains a little memory game called The Twelve Days of Christmas. Christmas carols could also be politically dangerous and subversive. British Catholics were oppressed for generations after the Reformation, but one Catholic scribe, John Francis Wade, hid a coded message of support for a Jacobite rebellion in the carol O Come All Ye Faithful.

Eventually, the Church of England couldn't resist the power of the carol, and finally opened its doors to all of them, thanks to a chance pairing of words and music in Hark the Herald Angels Sing, performed in the programme by the renowned gospel ensemble, The Kingdom Choir. In the 20th century, Ralph Vaughan Williams's passion for English folk music took him to the villages of Surrey. Here, Lucy meets a folk singer who tells the tale of an elderly farm labourer, Henry Garman, who sang a tune for Vaughan Williams, which became O Little Town of Bethlehem.

Finally, in the snowy Austrian Alps, Lucy discovers the simple story of a young parish priest with a poem in search of a tune. When he found one, the result was Silent Night. During the First World War, this simple carol would become a hymn for peace during the famous Christmas truce of 1914. Silent Night also reminds us that carols are, and have always been, 'popular music', music for the people, fulfilling an enduring need to celebrate and sing together at Christmas.

SUN 02:30 Charles I: Killing a King (m000cf12)

Series 1

Episode 2

January, 1649.

On Tuesday 9 January 1649, crowds gather in Cheapside, London as a proclamation is read out. King Charles I will be put on public trial at Westminster Hall in ten days' time. It sends shockwaves through the city.

The next day, commissioners - senior judges from around the country - gather to prepare for the unprecedented trial of the king. Their meeting is recorded in surviving transcripts. Words like 'wicked', 'tyrannical' and 'cruel' are all used to describe the monarch. Although the consensus is that Charles is a tyrant, only half of the commissioners appointed actually attend the meetings at Westminster Palace, in fear of being indicted as traitors. Support is on thin ice and many parliamentarians are uneasy about the process of a treason trial, for the outcome is plain for all to see. Lord Fairfax, the lord general of the New Model Army, is representative of the view of many parliamentarians. He believes a compromise should be made and declares he will have no part in the King's trial. However, Fairfax's counterpart - Oliver Cromwell is going full steam ahead. He allegedly states, 'We will cut off his head with the crown upon it!'

Up and down the country, printing presses are in overdrive. A wave of pamphleteering discusses the topic of the day - Crown versus Parliament. However, one printed text has not been cleared for circulation. On 14 January, the first edition of Eikon Basilike (Royal Portrait), a spiritual autobiography of the king, is destroyed before it can leave the print house.

Parliament cannot risk the release of powerful royalist propaganda as they struggle to build a case against the king. They are already hamstrung by the existing law, which has been written by the monarchy. In less than a week they need to create a watertight charge that will see Charles brought to justice for his crimes against a devastated country. The trial will essentially accuse the king of war crimes.

On 20 January, the first day of the trial, Westminster Hall is packed. People hang off balconies to watch as the king is made to answer to the common man. The charge is delivered - 'tyrant, traitor, murderer' - but no-one could have predicted what was to happen next. Charles will not acknowledge the court, a court he deems illegitimate. If the king will not plead guilty, or not guilty, there is little trial to be had.

Over the next three days, the king and the lord president, John Bradshaw, become embroiled in a battle of wills. Is it Charles's arrogance that leads him to refuse to accept the authority of the court, or is it a cunning and politically astute method to defend his crown and his life? With only days left to try the king, Parliament have to move fast. Otherwise, they will end up on the scaffold.

MONDAY 23 DECEMBER 2019

MON 19:00 Top of the Pops (b03mpphw)

The Story of 1979

1979 was a unique year for Top of the Pops, which saw the show record its highest audience of 19 million viewers and in which physical format singles sales hit an all-time high of 79 million. 1979 is maybe the most diverse year ever for acts on Top of the Pops with disco at its peak, new wave, 2 Tone, reggae, rock, folk and electro records all making the top five.

Original interviews with Gary Numan, Nile Rodgers, Woody from Madness, Jah Wobble, Chas and Dave, Janet Kay, Linda Nolan, Jim Dooley, Secret Affair, the Ruts, Legs and Co and many others tell the story of an exceptional year.

In the year that the 'winter of discontent' saw continuing strikes black out ITV and TOTP reduced during a technicians strike to a narrator introducing videos, the show also found itself the site of conflict backstage. TOTP's old guard of 70s MOR acts had their feathers continually ruffled by new wave bands, as the Skids spat at the Nolan Sisters backstage and Generation X urinated off the roof onto the Dooleys.

Elsewhere in the corridors of TV Centre, in preparation for playing their single Death Disco, Public Image Ltd demanded their teeth be blacked out in make-up to appear ugly, while Gary Numan remembers the overbearing union presence which prevented TOTP artists moving their own microphones without a union technician and the Musicians Union trying to ban him from the show for his use of synthesizers.

The most popular musical styles of 1979 were 2 Tone, reggae and disco. The latter saw Nile Rodgers, the man of the year, score four hits with Chic as well as writing and producing a further four hits with Sister Sledge, Sheila B Devotion and Sugarhill Gang, who appeared with what would prove to be the first ever rap hit.

Jamaican and UK reggae artists scored continual hits through the year and then watched as the Police notched up three hits

with white reggae and the label 2 Tone revived the 60s reggae style known as ska. In November, in what is remembered as the 2 Tone edition, all three of the label's new acts - Madness, Specials and Selector - appeared on one historic night and took the show by storm, with Madness capping off their performance of One Step Beyond by leading a 'nutty train' conga through the studio.

MON 20:00 What We Were Watching (m000cr9j)

Christmas 1979

Join Grace Dent on a television trip back in time to Christmas 1979 as she immerses herself in the sights, sounds and schedules of 40 years ago. As well as exploring what the nation's viewers enjoyed watching on the box of delights, Grace sees if she can beat the year's Mastermind grand finalist, and how well she fares on the Generation Game's famous conveyor belt game.

With the 1970s a much-maligned period, it's a surprise to find that the festive fortnight's top shows had women winning when it came to seasonal goodwill. Penelope Keith and Wendy Craig led the way in sitcoms, Barbara Woodhouse had everyone on their best behaviour, and the most exciting music shows featured classic performances from Kate Bush and Debbie Harry's Blondie. It was also the year that Tommy Cooper nearly killed off Michael Parkinson on live television, and The Black Stuff boys first went job hunting.

Of course, not all of Auntie Beeb's programme presents stand the test of time quite so well. Basil Brush has a bizarre duet with Sasha Distel, Kenny Everett's Blankety Blank appearance is far from being in the best possible taste, and the BBC's female children's presenters put dignity to one side as they compete in a beauty contest featuring high kicks and sparkling leotards.

MON 21:00 Mark Kermode's Secrets of Cinema (m0001ky5)

Mark Kermode's Christmas Cinema Secrets

In a special seasonal edition of his acclaimed series, film critic Mark Kermode celebrates one of the most perennial of all genres: the Christmas movie. Mark unwraps a glittering selection of Christmas cinematic treats, from much-loved classics to hidden gems, Hollywood blockbusters to international films, and reveals the film-making techniques and storytelling secrets that make them so successful.

Mark demonstrates how, as with all great genres, a key to the success of the Christmas movie lies in its adaptability. Christmas cinema embraces a remarkable range of styles and themes, from fairy tale fantasy to high-octane action, family drama to horror. But a great Christmas movie does more than simply set its story in the festive season. It captures something magical - the Christmas spirit - and in this programme, Mark shows you how.

MON 22:00 Queen: Rock the World (b09d5xpf)

Behind-the-scenes archive documentary following Queen's Freddie Mercury, Brian May, Roger Taylor and John Deacon as they record their sixth album News of the World and embark on a groundbreaking tour of North America.

By 1977, Queen had become a major headlining act in the UK, releasing chart-topping albums and singles as well as playing sell-out concerts in all the country's major venues. However, they were facing an increasingly hostile music press, who had a new favourite in punk and had turned against the elaborate, multi-layered recording techniques that had become the hallmark of the band's previous albums.

But an unfazed Queen had their sights set on greater things. As the band announced plans to record their next album, the expectation was it would be another production extravaganza, but Freddie, Brian, Roger and John already had other ideas. News of the World showcased them at their most raw, simple and best, returning to their roots as a live act. With a self-imposed limit on studio time and produced entirely on their own for the first time, this stripped-back album took the fans and press by surprise and demonstrated Queen's ability to transcend fashions. It was to prove a seminal moment in the band's history.

At the time, BBC music presenter Bob Harris was given exclusive and extensive access to the band to cover this period. Conducting insightful interviews with all four band members as well as filming them at work in the studio as they were planning and rehearsing their forthcoming North American tour, and then following them as they performed across the US, Bob captured a band attempting to replicate their huge domestic success on the global stage. Curiously, the documentary he set out to make was never completed, and the footage lay unused in the archive until now.

To mark the 40th anniversary of the release of the News of the World album, the footage has now been carefully restored and

revisited to compile this hour-long portrait of a group setting out to take the next step on their remarkable journey to becoming one of the biggest bands on the planet. Armed with an array of new songs, including the monster hits We Will Rock You and We Are the Champions, Queen dazzled the American audience and laid the foundations of a relationship that endures to this very day.

Coming full circle, this film is bookended by footage shot in the summer of 2017 as Brian May and Roger Taylor took Queen back to the US with Adam Lambert as lead singer. Revisiting many of the cities they had performed in 40 years previously and including many of the songs from that 1977 album, they prove that despite the tragic loss of Freddie Mercury over 25 years ago, Queen can still rock the world.

MON 23:00 Queen: The Legendary 1975 Concert (b00p4hgm)

On Christmas Eve 1975, Queen crowned a glorious year with a special concert at London's Hammersmith Odeon. The show on the final night of their triumphant UK tour was broadcast live on BBC TV and radio, and has become a legendary event in Queen's history.

Featuring stunning renditions of early hits Keep Yourself Alive, Liar and Now I'm Here alongside Brian May's epic guitar showcase Brighton Rock, a rip-roaring version of the then new Bohemian Rhapsody and the crowd-pleasing Rock 'n' Roll Medley, this hour-long concert shows Queen at an early peak and poised to conquer the world.

MON 00:05 Kate Bush at the BBC 1979 (b00k35n4)

1979 Christmas special featuring Kate Bush. She performs Gymnopédie No 1, Symphony in Blue, Them Heavy People, Madrigal, December, Wedding List, Egypt, Ran Tan Waltz, Man with the Child in His Eyes and Don't Push Your Foot on the Heartbreak.

Guest star Peter Gabriel sings Here Comes the Flood and duets with Kate on Another Day.

MON 00:50 All Aboard! The Sleigh Ride (b06t3psw)

In a Slow TV Christmas special, BBC Four rigs a traditional reindeer sleigh with a fixed camera for a magical journey across the frozen wilderness of the Arctic. Following the path of an ancient postal route, the ride captures the traditional world of the Sami people who are indigenous to northern Scandinavia and for whom reindeer herding remains a way of life.

Filmed in Karasjok, Norway - 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle - this journey takes us through breathtaking scenery not normally glimpsed by anyone other than the Sami. Deliberately unhurried, the rhythmic pace of the reindeer guides us along an epic two-hour trip that takes us over undulating snowy hills, through birch forests, across a frozen lake and past traditional Sami settlements.

Facts about the reindeer, natural history, Sami culture and the Arctic climate are delivered by graphics and archive stills embedded into the passing landscape. With no commentary, music or presenter - just the crunching of snow and the soft tinkle of a reindeer bell - this hypnotic sleigh ride is an enchanting experience to put everyone in the Christmas spirit.

MON 02:50 Charles I: Killing a King (m000cf0z)

Series 1

Episode 3

On 23 January 1649, the third day of the king's trial, Charles continues to publicly dispute the High Court's legitimacy. There is no choice other than to move forward and enforce the charge against him. After two days of hearing witness testimonies concerning the king's presence in battle, the evidence against him is overwhelming.

On 27 January, the king walks into the courtroom for the final time. He has come prepared to compromise, but it is too late for that now. John Bradshaw delivers an epic oration. He draws on constitutional history, including Magna Carta, and accuses the king of breaking his oath. Bradshaw states that the king was appointed by the people and it is the people who can remove him from power. 'Farewell, sovereignty.'

Sentence is passed - Charles will be executed. Utterly beguiled, the king is removed from the courtroom, and over the next three days he prepares for death. Although the verdict has been delivered, Parliament's cause is still fragile. Charles's son, Prince Charles, is in The Hague mustering support for the crown. Invasion plans are already underway, and the clock is ticking. Parliament must get the king to the scaffold and put an end to the monarchy they believe has torn the country apart.

Despite the king's strength, determination and vigour in the courtroom, he begins to accept his fate and spends most of his

time in prayer. He says an emotional goodbye to his two children who remain in England. Elizabeth and Henry. Their likeness from this time is captured in an exquisite portrait miniature. Princess Elizabeth never recovered from the trauma of parting with her father. She records an account of their last, devastating moments together.

As the king gathers his affairs and his state of mind, the death warrant is hurriedly drawn up and signatories - some say under duress from Cromwell - are gathered. Cromwell's determination comes from his belief that he is enacting God's will and delivering justice for the people who suffered at the hands of the feckless King. His mind is set. The execution must be carried out.

On a freezing morning on Saturday 30 January 1649, Charles I wakes up at 5am and puts on two thick shirts to offer him some protection from the blistering cold. Determined not to appear afraid, he must not shiver. As the king prepares for death, Parliament are appalled to discover there is no act that prevents succession. In haste they pass the act as a legal emergency.

Finally, shortly before 2pm, the king is led through Banqueting House. He may have looked up at the Rubens ceiling that depicts his father ascending to the side of God as is his divine right. He makes his way through a window and onto the scaffold to deliver his final speech to the people, now inked into the pages of history. Lying down at the low block, he says 'Wait for the sign' before he stretches his arms aside and his head is struck off.

People flock to the scaffold to dip their rags and kerchiefs in the blood of the king. Hair is cut from his severed head, to be preserved as relics, and the little pearl earring that delicately hung from his ear is carefully removed and remains preserved to this day.

On a freezing, bleak January day, King Charles I was killed and a republic was born. But did he die as a murderer or as a martyr?

TUESDAY 24 DECEMBER 2019

TUE 19:00 James May: The Reassembler (b086f7c9)
Series 2

James May: The Christmas Reassembler

Much like Santa Claus, James May has spent the year in his workshop getting ready for Christmas, in a festive special in which he reassembles his favourite childhood Christmas present.

But this isn't just any Christmas present, this is the one that changed his life and sent him on to a path of mechanical intrigue and reassembly. This is the Hornby Flying Scotsman with realistic chuffing sounds which James ripped open on Christmas Day 1972.

Laid out in all its 138 tiny component parts, James lovingly reassembles the train as well as his memories of Christmases and toys past. From the exhilarating remagnetising of the motor's magnets to some thrilling wheel-quarterming amidst a backdrop of James's continued bafflement of electricity, we watch as James rebuilds the entire train set and hopes at the end his Christmas wish will come true and the train will start up and realistically chuff into the night.

TUE 19:30 The Last Igloo (m000cr9s)

Documentary that follows a lone Inuit as he hunts, fishes and constructs an igloo. It tells the story of skills that are disappearing and of how climate change is affecting the lives of Greenland's indigenous people.

With its focus on the ingenious craft of igloo building before it becomes too late to record it, this is a meditative and poetic sensory immersion in a landscape of ice and snow, an elegy to a world that is melting away.

TUE 21:00 Top of the Pops (b086trr9)
Christmas Hits

The Top of the Pops Christmas Hits compilation is made up of hits down the years, mostly performed on those classic episodes of Christmas Top of the Pops in a seasonal studio. We include songs that reached the charts in December, from Ian Dury & the Blockheads to Madness, East 17 and Coldplay.

There are hits that made the enviable Christmas Number 1 spot from the likes of The Human League & Pet Shop Boys, songs that were pipped to the post and perennial Christmas classics from Slade, Mud and Frankie Goes to Hollywood to name but three. We also have a special rediscovered rare performance opening the programme from the psychedelic era Rolling Stones from 1967 and not broadcast for over 40 years.

Christmas Top of the Pops adorns the studio in tinsel to give a perfect playlist for any festive party.

TUE 22:00 Martin's Close (m000cr9v)

Adaptation of a ghost story by MR James. 1684. John Martin is on trial for his life. Facing him, the infamous 'hanging judge' George Jeffreys. However, this is not a cut-and-dried murder case.

TUE 22:30 The Turn of the Screw (b00pk76h)

Drama studying the interactions between the living and the dead.

A young governess, Ann, is sent to a country house to take care of two orphans, Miles and Flora. Soon after her arrival, Miles is expelled from boarding school. Although charmed by her young charge, she secretly fears there are ominous reasons behind his expulsion.

With Miles back at home, the governess starts noticing ethereal figures roaming the estate's grounds. Desperate to learn more about these sinister sightings she discovers that the suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of her predecessor hold grim implications for herself.

As she becomes increasingly fearful that malevolent forces are stalking the children the governess is determined to save them, risking herself and her sanity in the process.

Part of the BBC Christmas 2009 season.

TUE 00:00 The Lost Ghost Story with Mark Gatiss (b03n2rnc)

Mark Gatiss steps into the mind of MR James, the enigmatic English master of the supernatural story. How did this donnish Victorian bachelor, conservative by nature and a devout Anglican, come to create tales that continue to chill readers more than a century on?

Mark attempts to uncover the secrets of James's inspiration, taking an atmospheric journey from James's childhood home in Suffolk to Eton, Cambridge and France, venturing into ancient churches, dark cloisters and echoing libraries along the way.

TUE 01:00 TOTP2 (b03njpp0)

Christmas Special 2013

Mark Radcliffe returns with another Top of the Pops 2 Christmas smorgasbord of festive footage favourites and Merry Christmas archive straight out of the BBC vaults, including perennial favourites from the likes of Slade, Wizzard, Wham, Jona Lewie, The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl, Paul McCartney, and John and Yoko.

Plus there is a bespoke Christmas performance from Boyzone, a peek at The Killers' annual Christmas video, and archive treasures from Teardrop Explodes, Darts, Mud, Depeche Mode, Emeli Sande, The Hollies and Little Jimmy Osmond, to name but a few.

All in all, a collection of special Christmas archive performances created to help you and your kin enjoy a very Merry Christmas!

TUE 02:30 Nothing Like a Dame (b0b5y3xn)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Saturday]

WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER 2019

WED 19:00 The Magic Flute from Glyndebourne (m000cr9p)

The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, recorded at Glyndebourne Festival 2019. Directed and designed by Barbe & Doucet, with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth, and sung by David Portillo as Tamino, Björn Bürger as Papageno, Sofia Fomina as Pamina, Caroline Wettergreen as the Queen of the Night and Brindley Sherratt as Sarastro.

Prince Tamino is on a quest to rescue the beautiful Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the Night, from her father Sarastro, who has abducted her. Aided by birdcatcher Papageno, he finds her and is drawn to the brotherhood led by Sarastro. Tamino submits to a series of trials to prove his worthiness to join their order and is rewarded with Pamina's hand in marriage. Papageno is also rewarded with a wife, and the Queen of the Night and her forces of darkness are defeated.

WED 21:40 Detectorists (b06tdq5d)

2015 Christmas Special

Special seasonal episode of the award-winning comedy about metal detectorists Andy and Lance. With his Anglo-Saxon treasure on display at the museum and the reward money finally on its way, Lance hasn't even found so much as a ring-pull in months. Russell thinks he knows why - it's the Curse of the Gold.

WED 22:10 The Duchess (b016r10h)

Period drama based on the tumultuous life of the 18th-century duchess of Devonshire, a bright, popular aristocrat who is trapped in a failed marriage and has to face personal conflicts - including living with her husband's mistress and falling passionately in love with a young politician.

Based on Amanda Foreman's best-selling novel Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

WED 23:55 Inspector Montalbano (b01c6dsd)

The Snack Thief

Detective Montalbano investigates the murder of a local businessman called Lapecora. Lapecora's widow suspects that he was killed by his lover Karima, a young Tunisian woman who mysteriously disappeared on the day of the murder. After succeeding in tracking down Karima's five-year-old son Francois, Montalbano realises that the case might be linked to that of a Tunisian man, also killed in mysterious circumstances on the same day that Lapecora died. Meanwhile, Montalbano's partner Livia, who has been entrusted with looking after Francois, becomes very attached to the young orphaned boy.

In Italian with English subtitles.

WED 01:40 Tom Jones and Beverley Knight's Gospel Christmas (b09jld6x)

Gospel Christmas returns from the heart of Cardiff to celebrate a special evening of music and spiritual cheer with Sir Tom Jones and Beverley Knight. The blend of traditional gospel, carols and songs of spiritual intent from modern greats like Prince and Bob Dylan are performed by choirs and a house band from the British gospel scene, and will add up to the freshest of winter warmers.

WED 02:40 What We Were Watching (m000cr9j)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Monday]

THURSDAY 26 DECEMBER 2019

THU 19:00 The Sound of Movie Musicals with Neil Brand (m0001jgs)
Episode 1

In this first episode of a three-part series, presenter and musician Neil Brand argues that the movie musical was the most important form of cinema from the advent of the age of sound. Beginning with the very first film musical, 1929's Broadway Melody, Brand looks at the huge and lasting impact of the musical and, in his trademark analysis of songs at the piano, takes us through some of the most important numbers in this first golden age.

The remarkable success of Broadway Melody winning one of the first ever Academy Awards meant that film studios were eager to cash in on the possibilities of musical film. But, as Brand reveals, this was not always to guaranteed success. He shows how the first big-budget, all-colour musical, 1930's King of Jazz, failed to capture the box office. He discusses how its lack of actual African American jazz musicians was one of its problems, by looking at the first dedicated African American musical - King Vidor's Hallelujah. With the help of a gospel choir from the Mother AME Zion Church in New York, he examines how much Hallelujah actually reflected life in the Deep South in 1920s America.

Continuing the theme, Brand goes on to explain how the Great Depression in 1930s US actually inspired some of the most progressive and memorable examples of the first golden age of movie musicals: MGM's 42nd Street and Gold Diggers of 1933. These were remarkably socially aware films, and as Neil demonstrates, songs such as We're in the Money and Remember My Forgotten Man were both beautifully tuneful and lyrically poignant.

In an unexpected turn, the programme shifts focus to the USSR, where a little-known story of musical film is uncovered. From the early 1930s, Joseph Stalin actually commissioned a series of film musicals to promote the ideology of the Soviet Union. Beginning with the slapstick of 1934's The Jolly Fellows, two years later came Circus, one of the most extraordinary musical films in Russian history. A tale of an exiled American woman with a mixed-race child, Circus was a remarkable piece of propaganda promoting the Soviet Union as a country of racial inclusion, exactly as Stalin began his 'great purge' - to silence

any dissenters from his communist plan.

Back in Hollywood, the musical was surging forward with a whole new level of song and dance movie star; most significantly, the incredible partnership of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers. Brand visits the Royal Ballet in London, where principal dancer Steven McRae dances and analyses one of Astaire's most jaw-dropping numbers, No Strings. Neil also guides us through the music of Top Hat's iconic song Cheek to Cheek.

Finally, we explore how the introduction of fantasy and fairy tale invigorated the movie musical in the latter years of the 1930s. Walt Disney's Snow White was a gamble that took three years to make but became one of the highest grossing films of all time, followed by MGM's unforgettable The Wizard of Oz, released to cinemas a mere two weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War.

THU 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m000crbl)
2019: Secrets & Lies - The Hidden Power of Maths

How to Get Lucky

Dr Hannah Fry uncovers the secrets of luck in this year's Christmas Lectures, to discover what really controls our destiny. Kicking off the lectures with a mind-boggling stunt to prove how counterintuitive our gut instincts can be, Hannah launches into a lecture full of daring live experiments and surprising discoveries.

From predicting the chance of snow at Christmas to dodging erupting volcanoes with Prof Chris Jackson, Hannah explores whether we really can predict the future. She meets the maths gurus behind Liverpool Football Club's winning streak to spill the beans on how analysing the numbers can give a team an edge in the Premier League, and reveals the tricks to perfecting your Christmas cracker pull to win the prize every time.

Hannah also gathers tips from mind-performance coach Dr Michael Gervais, the 'secret weapon' crafting Olympic athletes' lucky mindsets, and the man responsible for Felix Baumgartner's jump from space, when 'first time lucky' meant life or death. Enrolling the help of maths comedian Matt Parker for the pinnacles of the lecture, the duo find order in unruly crowds, and whittle the audience down to the luckiest person in a series of challenges, before finally putting them to the test to prove whether they truly are one in a million. Using a host of maths tricks - from probability to game theory - Hannah discovers if we can in fact make our own luck, and ultimately shares the secrets to help us all lead luckier lives.

THU 21:00 One Foot in the Grave (p00d70rc)
One Foot in the Algarve

The Meldreys go on holiday to Portugal with Mrs Warboys, who is hoping for romance with her penpal Alfonso. Photographer Martin Trout follows them there, believing they have a roll of film that belongs to him. Peter Cook guest-stars.

THU 22:35 British Sitcom: 60 Years of Laughing at Ourselves (b07vxlml)

Documentary celebrating the British sitcom and taking a look at the social and political context from which our favourite sitcoms grew. We enjoy a trip through the comedy archive in the company of the people who made some of the very best British sitcoms. From The Likely Lads to I'm Alan Partridge, we find out the inspiration behind some of the most-loved characters and how they reflect the times they were living in.

Narrated by Rebecca Front, with commentary and insider knowledge from Steve Coogan, Richard Curtis, Beryl Vertue, James Corden, Jack Dee and top writing team Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais.

THU 23:35 TOTP2 (b04wjxjr)
Christmas Special 2014

Mark Radcliffe returns with another Christmas edition of Top of the Pops 2, delivering a feast of festive delights direct from the BBC vaults.

Trawled from the depths of the BBC archive, there are Christmastide gems from Britpop heroes Blur, Chrissie Hynde with The Pretenders, some kilt-clad Bluebells and a demure and festive performance from Katie Melua, not to mention a classic rendition of Baby It's Cold Outside from Welsh compatriots Cerys Matthews and Sir Tom Jones.

Macca also makes a welcome return to the TOTP 2 Christmas celebration and, while you surround yourself with paper, bows and bits of tape, let the inimitable Kurtis Blow provide the soundtrack with his unique take on Christmas rappin'.

Plus perennial yuletide favourites from the likes of Slade, Wham!, Roy Wood, East 17 and Mud, and some rarely seen footage from comeback queen Kate Bush. The Jackson 5 and Johnny Mathis also pop up.

THU 01:05 ... Sings Disney Songs (b018jpk4)

The BBC takes on the Mouse in a brilliant and sometimes baffling medley of styles and eras blending everything from light entertainment to children's TV, celebrating interpretations of Disney tunes over the last 40 years. The Bare Necessities, When You Wish upon a Star and Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah are standout highlights, with more recent pop hits from Celine Dion and Elton John bringing us up to date. Clips come from archive shows including Shirley Bassey, It's Lulu, Top of the Pops, Blue Peter, Brubeck and Louis Armstrong's Show of the Week.

THU 02:00 The Sound of Movie Musicals with Neil Brand (m0001jgs)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

THU 03:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m000crbl)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

FRIDAY 27 DECEMBER 2019

FRI 19:00 The Sound of Movie Musicals with Neil Brand (m0001kz4)

Episode 2

In the second episode of the series, Neil Brand looks at how the movie musical entered a second golden age in the aftermath of World War II.

He starts by examining one of the most striking films of that era: 1942's Die Grosse Liebe. This was made at the height of the conflict, and was a Hollywood-style musical with a distinctly German propaganda bent. Starring Hitler's favourite chanteuse, Zarah Leander, it sent a patriotic and pro-war message through its songs, and became the highest-grossing film ever in the time of the Third Reich.

Once war had ceased, the American musical once again began to thrive with a colour (literally) and exuberance more pronounced than before. Central to its success, Brand argues, was the emergence of Gene Kelly as the superstar of this new age of Hollywood. Talking with Kelly's widow, Patricia Ward Kelly, he looks at how this star brought the musical film into the streets of America, most famously with Singin' in the Rain, long believed to be one of the greatest films ever made in any genre.

While musicals lit up the idea of the American Dream, they were also a crucial part of national identity in other countries. In newly independent India, the musical became both a popular form and also a tool for reinforcing cultural identity. Brand takes an in-depth look at two of the most significant movies of this period: Guru Dutt's Pyassa, and Mother India, long held as perhaps the most defining work of post-war Hindi film.

But it wasn't just in India that the musical had taken hold of, and reinvigorated, what films could achieve. In China, the Shaw Brothers studios had leapt on the idea of music being a box office draw, and with two remarkable films, The Love Eterne and Hong Kong Nocturne - the latter a remarkable 'swinging 60s' romp - taken the country's cinema to a whole new, Hollywood-inspired level.

Hollywood itself had been forced to adapt to keep up with the times. Rock and roll was seen as the future of musicals, first with simple B movies like Rock around the Clock, but later with the more sophisticated MGM movies of Elvis Presley, most notably Jailhouse Rock. And the rock musical kick started a renaissance in British film too, as Cliff Richard and The Shadows took to the screen in blockbusters such as The Young Ones and Summer Holiday. Neil meets Shadows guitarist Bruce Welch to get the insider story of how these Brit flicks became huge successes.

As the 1960s motored on, the movie musical hit both a boom and a bust. In France, Jacques Demy's The Umbrellas of Cherbourg was a brilliant New Wave reimagining of the musical form as a kind of working-class operetta. Meanwhile, in Hollywood, Robert Wise's The Sound of Music became a pinnacle of the form, catapulting Julie Andrews to superstardom and becoming one of the most profitable films of all time.

On the other hand, a series of big budget flops suggested the musical had run its course in the world of film. Who could forget Clint Eastwood warbling tunelessly through Paint Your Wagon? What would the future of the Hollywood musical be, if it had one?

The answer was a genius to rival Gene Kelly as a movie musical

titan, choreographer-turned-director Bob Fosse. Dropping in on a dance class in New York where Fosse's highly unique style is still being taught today, Neil Brand shows how with Sweet Charity and Cabaret, Fosse totally revived the fortunes of the musical film.

FRI 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m000crbb)

2019: Secrets & Lies - The Hidden Power of Maths

How to Bend the Rules

Dr Hannah Fry reveals how data-gobbling algorithms have taken over our lives and now control almost everything we do, without us being aware of it. Pitching the UK speed-cubing champion against a machine in the opening seconds of the lecture, Hannah sets the pace for a rapid voyage through this superhuman world.

Hannah teams up with famed YouTuber Tom Scott to create a viral video and decipher YouTube's secret algorithm, comes face to face with four-legged guests to put animal image recognition machines to the test, and reveals how the NHS is matching organ donors in chains across the country to save hundreds of lives.

But the breakthroughs are not restricted to the real world. Bafta award-winning special guests reveal the secrets of CGI in films such as The Avengers and Lord of the Rings, and super-sized laser illusions bring the Royal Institution to life. An unexpected feathery guest opens our eyes to a new type of coding, where computers can be trained like animals using tasty rewards, with maths comedian Matt Parker and computing expert Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon bringing the topic to life.

Finally, Hannah reveals how we've all been training up Google's AI in this way for years without realising it, and discovers how Google Health is using big data to give doctors a helping hand. The power of algorithms is undeniable. Hannah ultimately discovers how we can bend the world to our will and make anything possible, with a bit of mathematical thinking.

FRI 21:00 TOTP2 (b00sfz04)
80s Special

Mark Radcliffe presents a look back at some of the most memorable Top of the Pops performances from the 80s including Adam Ant, Kylie and Jason, Culture Club, Bucks Fizz, Yaz, Duran Duran and Wham!

FRI 21:30 Fleetwood Mac's Songbird - Christine McVie (m0008k8q)

Christine McVie is undoubtedly the longest-serving female band member of any of the enduring rock 'n' roll acts that emerged from the 1960s. While she has never fronted Fleetwood Mac, preferring to align herself with 'the boys' in the rhythm section whom she first joined 50 years ago, Christine is their most successful singer-songwriter. Her hits include 'Over My Head', 'Don't Stop' and 'Everywhere'.

After massive global success in both the late 1970s and mid-1980s, Christine left the band in the late 1990s, quitting California and living in semi-retirement in Kent, only to rejoin the band in 2013. In this 90-minute film, this most English of singers finally gets to take centre-stage and tell both her story and the saga of Fleetwood Mac from her point of view.

FRI 23:00 Fleetwood Mac: A Musical History (m0001kz2)

Fellow musicians, journalists and fans celebrate Fleetwood Mac with a selection of their best-loved songs.

Fleetwood Mac are the great survivors of British and American rock music. For more than fifty years they've overcome break-ups and breakdowns to become one of the most successful bands of all time. They have sold over 100 million records worldwide, with their 1977 smash Rumours accounting for nearly half of those sales.

They have endured, like all great bands, because of the complimentary talents of its members. From Peter Green to Christine McVie, Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham, it has contained some extraordinary songwriters. With brilliant musicians on all instruments, the band has been able to turn the songs into commercial gold. Above all the tough determination of the two men who gave the band their name has seen Fleetwood Mac through thick and thin.

Fleetwood fan Edith Bowman provides a narrative overview alongside other celebrity fans, who all pay tribute to the band in this hit-filled hour. Contributors include KT Tunstall, Travis's frontman Fran Healy, Toyah Willcox, Sian Pattenden and Emma Dabiri.

FRI 00:00 Fleetwood Mac: Don't Stop (b00nq7q9)

Fleetwood Mac are one of the biggest-selling bands of all time and still on the road. Their story, told in their own words, is an epic tale of love and confrontation, of success and loss.

Few bands have undergone such radical musical and personal change. The band evolved from the 60s British blues boom to perfect a US West Coast sound that saw them sell 40 million copies of the album Rumours.

However, behind-the-scenes relationships were turbulent. The band went through multiple line-ups with six different lead guitarists. While working on Rumours, the two couples at the heart of the band separated, yet this heartache inspired the perfect pop record.

FRI 01:00 TOTP2 (b09jxn35)

Xmas 2017

This celebratory Christmas compilation voiced by the wonderfully sardonic - even grumpy - but festive voice of Mark Radcliffe guides us down memory lane with staple Christmas TOTP facts and performances that will create the perfect playlist for any Xmas shindig.

This programme of merriment delivers the essential Christmas hits from a tinselled TOTP studio from the likes of Wizzard, Slade, Mariah Carey and The Flying Pickets, along with other vital classics from Kylie and Jason, The Darkness, Abba, The Spice Girls, Coldplay, Ed Sheeran and many more to get one and all in the festive spirit!

FRI 02:30 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures

(m000crbb)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]