

**SATURDAY 19 DECEMBER 2020**

**SAT 19:00 The Two Ronnies Sketchbook (b007cdzh)**  
Christmas

Back again for one very last extra special Christmas outing, the Two Ronnies bring you their favourite treats from their many classic Christmas shows. Look out for The Milkman's Christmas Message, Christmas Day in the Yukon and a lavish interpretation of Alice through the Looking Glass - Ronnies style. Music comes courtesy of Katie Melua singing Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

**SAT 19:20 Top of the Pops (m000qpgf)**  
Christmas Special 1995

Bjork and Jack Dee introduce the biggest-selling songs of 1995, plus the Christmas Day Number One.

**SAT 20:20 What We Were Watching (m000qpgb)**  
Christmas 1995

Grace Dent embarks on a televisual trip back in time by setting the remote control for December 1995 and serving up an irreverent look back at the festive viewing options that faced the nation in the past.

Exploring how much what is shown on our screens has changed involves some deep diving into EastEnders' annual festival of gloom to find that Arthur Fowler is behind bars and Pat Butcher is being lusted after by Roy and Frank. Grace also discovers that TV schedulers of the time appeared to have sex on the brain, with a surprisingly high number of seasonal shows featuring subjects and scenes that would make a family audience in 2020 blush with embarrassment.

There is also an in-depth look at infidelity in the morally questionable sitcom Goodnight Sweetheart, we join Hetty Wainthropp on her very first BBC investigation and go trapezing on a hot-air balloon with a truly spectacular Record Breakers challenge. And we remind ourselves of the genius of the late, great Rik Mayall – here reading Jack and the Beanstalk on Jackanory for an audience of real Young Ones as only he could.

**SAT 21:20 One Foot in the Grave (m000qpgk)**  
The Wisdom of the Witch

The Meldrews have a tarot reading that prophesies disaster for Victor. Patrick and Pippa sell their home, but a house clearance crew are mistaken for their removal men. Patrick and Victor get snowed in at an old house with a jealous boyfriend and a huge spider.

**SAT 22:20 Saturday Night Fever - The Ultimate Disco Movie (b09jxjxs)**

John Travolta and Barry Gibb star in Saturday Night Fever - The Ultimate Disco Movie, with Bruno Tonioli. This documentary celebrates the 40th anniversary of the 1977 blockbuster dance movie, and sees Strictly Come Dancing's Bruno, who was a young dancer in New York in 1977, walk us through the steps that made the movie legendary. He also revisits the streets of New York where the film was shot and looks back at the success of a film that gave everyone disco fever.

Travolta, Gibb and other members of the cast and crew give gripping accounts of supreme success against a backdrop of setbacks and unexpected twists and turns. Bruno unpacks the skill, athleticism and dedication of Travolta, whose incandescent performance prompted a disco dance craze. We also hear about the potent influence of impresario Robert Stigwood, whose faith in Travolta, and a group who had hit a glitch in their career - The BeeGees, proved visionary.

With clips from the original movie, as well as astonishing access to those involved and rarely seen on-location archive, this programme retells the nail-biting evolution of a groundbreaking US film that originated in the work of a British journalist, saw a director fired, suffered mafia threats, filmed guerrilla style on the streets of Brooklyn, had a newcomer cast, benefited from disco hits written in a weekend and delivered a white suit and a performance from the man who wore it that have gone down in history.

Other interviewees include actors Karen Lynn Gorney, Donna Pescow, Joseph Cali and Paul Pape, producer Kevin McCormick, former head of RSO records Bill Oakes, writer Nik Cohn, director John Badham, dance instructor Denney Terrio, costume designer Patricia von Brandenstein and location manager Lloyd Kaufman.

**SAT 23:30 The Bee Gees at the BBC... and Beyond (b04v8679)**

Classic Bee Gees studio performances from the BBC and

beyond including all the big hits, rare 60s performances from European TV, including a stunning I Started a Joke, a rarely seen Top of the Pops performance of World, the big hits of the 70s and some late performances from the 90s, with the brothers Gibb in perfect harmony.

**SAT 00:30 Disco at the BBC (b01cqt74)**

A foot-stomping return to the BBC vaults of Top of the Pops. The Old Grey Whistle Test and Later with Jools as the programme spins itself to a time when disco ruled the floor, the airwaves and our minds. The visual floorfillers include classics from luminaries such as Chic, Labelle and Rose Royce to glitter ball surprises by The Village People.

**SAT 01:30 Top of the Pops (m000qcx2)**

Anthea Turner presents the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 24 May 1990 and featuring Beats International, En Vogue and The B-52s.

**SAT 02:00 Top of the Pops (m000qcx4)**

Simon Mayo presents the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 31 May 1990 and featuring Black Box, Sam Brown and Adamski.

**SAT 02:30 Top of the Pops (m000qpgf)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:20 today]

**SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER 2020**

**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 Oliver Twist (b008lykc)**

Series 1

Episode 1

Drama adaptation of Charles Dickens's much-loved tale of a young orphan boy. A young, unmarried woman gives birth to a baby boy, Oliver Twist. She dies, leaving a letter and a locket which are stolen by a workhouse servant. Oliver finds himself in London where he is introduced to the seductive world of Fagin and his gang and soon finds himself in trouble with the law.

**SUN 21:30 Stella Street (m000qph8)**

Series 1

Xmas on Stella Street

Spoof soap set in the glamorous location of Surbiton, now apparently home to a host of famous stars. Jack Nicholson heads off to L.A. Roger goes round to David's and Jimmy visits Joe. John Hurt's accident has unpredictable consequences.

**SUN 21:45 The Kumars at No 42 (p0872rsh)**

Christmas Special 2003

Christmas edition of the comedy show about a chat show host who lives and works at home with his family in Wembley. Sanjeev is joined by Neil Morrissey and Cliff Richard.

**SUN 22:15 Goodness Gracious Me (b0077nx4)**

Christmas Special

The Asian comedy sketch show features the Coopers sitting down to their Christmas dinner and the staging of the very cosmopolitan Hounslow nativity play.

**SUN 23:00 Soul Noel: Gospel and Soul Stars Sing Christmas (b00wvc3)**

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.

**SUN 00:00 A Christmas Carol (m0001kwy)**

Simon Callow enacts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, the miserly owner of an old counting house, who is visited by the ghost of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, on Christmas Eve. Marley warns Scrooge he is doomed in the afterlife unless he pays heed and learns from three ghosts who will visit him during the night. The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come show Scrooge how his mean, uncaring behavior has oppressed those around him as they visit episodes from his past, his present and his future life. By the end Scrooge is humbled and redeemed and transforms into a generous, kind-hearted man.

Viewers can listen in stereo or binaural via headphones

**SUN 01:15 Mrs Dickens's Family Christmas (b018nt6m)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

**SUN 02:15 Oliver Twist (b008lykc)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

**MONDAY 21 DECEMBER 2020**

**MON 19:00 The Two Ronnies Sketchbook (b007cb75)**

Episode 3

Ronnie Corbett and Ronnie Barker entertained millions with their inimitable brand of comedy - from gags, sketches and unique monologues to spectacular music numbers. The Two Ronnies Sketchbook reunites the comedy legends behind their famous desk as they reveal their own personal memories from one of the most impressive comedy catalogues in mainstream entertainment. Great chemistry, great music and great fun.

**MON 19:30 The Joy of Painting (m000qph3)**

Winter Specials

Wintertime Discovery

Imagine stumbling upon this little surprise cabin and shed, nestled in the snowdrifts! Bob Ross shows you how easy it is to paint it.

**MON 20:00 Charles Dickens and the Invention of Christmas (b008lykb)**

Griff Rhys Jones reveals how Dickens created the idea of a traditional family Christmas through one of his best-known books, A Christmas Carol. From the moment it was published in 1843, the story of miserly Ebenezer Scrooge captured the imagination of Victorian Britain. Santa Claus, Christmas cards and crackers were invented around the same time, but it was Dickens's book that boosted the craze for Christmas, above all promoting the idea that Christmas is best celebrated with the family.

Interviewees include former on-screen Scrooge, Patrick Stewart, and writer Lucinda Hawksley, great-great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens himself.

**MON 21:00 Oliver Twist (b008lykp)**

Series 1

Episode 2

Drama adaptation of Charles Dickens's much-loved tale of a young orphan boy. Sikes escapes back to London with a badly wounded Oliver, where he is nursed by Nancy. Sally tells Mrs

Comey about the letter, the locket and Oliver's mother. Rose continues her search for Oliver, but is discovered by Monks, who immediately tells Brownlow of her secret mission.

**MON 22:25 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.

**MON 23:25 How Quizzing Got Cool: TV's Brains of Britain (b084fs6s)**

We all love a good quiz. So here's a question - when did ordinary contestants turn into the pro-quizzers of today? Giving the answers are Victoria Coren Mitchell, Judith Keppel, Chris Tarrant, Mark Labbett, Nicholas Parsons and many more. Narrated by Ben Miller.

**MON 00:25 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 01:25 The Joy of Painting (m000qph3)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

**MON 01:55 Oliver Twist (b008lyqp)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

**TUESDAY 22 DECEMBER 2020**

**TUE 19:00 James May: The Reassembler (b086t7e9)**

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 Joy of Painting (m000qpfk)**

Winter Specials

A Mild Winter's Day

Winter scenes don't have to be cold! With a touch of the sun's warmth, painter Bob Ross turns the chill of winter into a golden day.

**TUE 20:00 Yes, Minister (b0074qsm)**

Series 3

Party Games

Sitcom about a British government minister and the advisers who surround him. The seasonal festivities at the Department of Administrative Affairs are overshadowed by rumours of a cabinet reshuffle. But a leadership election and the Eurosausage affair could lead to great things for Jim Hacker.

**TUE 21:00 Mother Love (m000qpfm)**

Series 1

Part 1

Wedding bells sound for Kit and Angela. But Kit's mother's hatred for his father, her estranged husband Alex, threatens their happiness.

Adapted by Andrew Davies for TV from Domini Taylor's novel.

**TUE 22:45 Face to Face (m000qpfq)**

Dame Diana Rigg

Sir Jeremy Isaacs talks to actress Dame Diana Rigg, who became an overnight success when she starred as Avengers girl Emma Peel in the 1960s, and went on to award-winning lead roles in Medea, Mother Courage and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

**TUE 23:20 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.

**TUE 00:20 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 01:50 Top of the Pops (b09jc3k1)**

The 1984 Christmas special of the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 25 December 1984. Featuring Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Howard Jones, Duran Duran, Nik Kershaw, Culture Club, Thompson Twins, Jim Diamond, Wham!, Paul Young, George Michael and Band Aid.

**TUE 02:50 The Joy of Painting (m000qpfk)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

**WEDNESDAY 23 DECEMBER 2020**

**WED 19:00 The Two Ronnies Sketchbook (b007cbdq)**

Episode 5

Reunited before Ronnie Barker passed away in 2005, the comedy legends return behind their famous desk to give an insight into the backstage stories behind some of their classic moments and their own personal memories from one of the most impressive comedy catalogues in mainstream entertainment.

**WED 19:30 The Joy of Painting (m000qpgm)**

Winter Specials

Winter Lace

Snow-covered trees and shrubs appear to be dressed in finest lace among the soft glows of winter. A unique Bob Ross painting!

**WED 20:00 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.

**WED 21:00 Mother Love (m000qpgp)**

Series 1

Part 2

Furious that Alex has moved on after the death of his new wife, how will Helena deal with the next betrayal?

Conclusion of Andrew Davies's drama, adapted for TV from Domini Taylor's novel.

**WED 22:45 Mark Lawson Talks To... (b0155b4t)**

Diana Rigg

Mark Lawson talks to the revered actress Dame Diana Rigg about her life and 50-year career on stage and screen. In this thoughtful interview she explores her early years in India, her conflicted feelings about being seen as sexy and the pleasures of professional success into her 70s.

Rigg rose to prominence as proto-feminist Emma Peel in The Avengers and her feisty Bond girl won over 007 in On Her Majesty's Secret Service. She has brought her RSC training and psychological insight to a number of distinguished performances including Medea, Mother Love and Rebecca. Her versatility has been showcased in comic turns on The Morecambe and Wise Show and Extras and musical numbers in

Evil Under the Sun and the Stephen Sondheim musical Follies. She continues to pursue her passion for the theatre and a varied career that has brought 'no regrets at all'.

**WED 23:45 Carole King and Friends at Christmas (b018p1hq)**

Recapture the mellow vibe of your favourite easy listening shows from the 60s and 70s with this festive feast of classics old and new. All-time great Carole King plays songs from her recent seasonal album, including Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas, and Sheffield crooner Richard Hawley mixes self-penned songs with his own take on Silent Night.

An imaginative bill is completed by the perky vocal harmonies of the Puppini Sisters doing Let It Snow, the dreamy widescreen sound of Brighton outfit the Mummers performing White Christmas and the velvet tones of latter day Nat King Cole. Brooklyn-based jazz vocalist Gregory Porter, crooning the Christmas Song.

Choose between your best cardigan or Rat Pack tuxedo, pour yourself an eggnog, get the chestnuts roasting, put your feet up and join the party!

**WED 00:45 Country Christmas (m000qcx8)**  
2020

American country musician Thomas Rhett and his wife Lauren Akins present CMA Country Christmas 2020.

Packed full of performances from some of the biggest names in country music, expect festive classics and country favourites from Dan + Shay, Darius Rucker and Lindsey Stirling, Florida Georgia Line, Gabby Barrett, Kelsea Ballerini, Lady A, Little Big Town, Tim McGraw and host Thomas Rhett.

**WED 01:25 The Joy of Painting (m000qpgm)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

**WED 01:55 James May: The Reassembler (b086t7e9)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 on Tuesday]

**WED 02:25 A Christmas History of Sacred Music (b00wvdcj)**  
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

**THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER 2020**

**THU 19:00 Fanny Cradock Cooks for Christmas (p05jvml9)**  
Series 1

Your Christmas Cake

The inimitable Fanny Cradock takes traditional recipes and uses her practical know-how to make Christmas cookery easier.

Fanny gives you two recipes to choose from, the traditional black plum cake and an unusual 'white' Christmas cake. There is advice, too, on making almond paste and icing the cake.

**THU 19:15 The Joy of Painting (m000qpg1)**  
Winter Specials

Snowfall Magic

Experience the mystique of snowflakes gently tumbling in the silence of the forest. Join painter Bob Ross for this lovely winter masterpiece.

**THU 19:45 Viva Las Vegas (b0078tvq)**

Lucky Jackson needs money to get an engine good enough to enter his car into the Vegas Grand Prix. He earns the money working as a waiter but loses it again and has to enter the hotel talent contest. His opponent in the contest is the beautiful hotel swimming instructor Rusty Martin. Lucky doesn't just want to win the money; he wants to win her heart.

**THU 21:05 Elvis: The Rebirth of the King (b09kkkbbx)**

The widely accepted Elvis narrative is that the Vegas period was the nadir of his career, but this film argues that Elvis reached his peak both as a singer and performer in the first few years of his Vegas period. He became, in those short years, the greatest performer on earth. The film tracks this five-year renaissance with some of his key musical and artistic collaborators of the period, including the creator of his most memorable jumpsuits, to celebrate the greatest pop reinvention of all time.

**THU 22:05 TOTP2 (m000qpg3)**

Elvis Special

A TOTP2 special, first broadcast in 1997 to mark the twentieth anniversary of Elvis Presley's death. Features performances by Cher, Bryan Ferry, Danny Mirror, Shakin' Stevens, Alison Moyet and the King himself.

**THU 22:55 ...Sings Elvis (b00pqcg3)**

2011 marked the 75th anniversary of Elvis Presley's birth and was celebrated by a host of performances by artists covering the King's classic songs culled from the BBC archives.

Some of Britain's biggest stars were introduced to rock n roll as teenagers via their idol Elvis, and Cliff Richard, Paul McCartney, Tom Jones and John Cale all pay their tribute. The original songwriters of some of Elvis's greatest hits perform their own versions of classic tracks, including Carl Perkins singing Blue Suede Shoes and Mac Davis doing In the Ghetto.

Other artists paying homage from across five decades include The Deep River Boys, the Stylistics, Boy George, Alison Moyet, Pet Shop Boys and Robbie Williams. There will be jumpsuits, pelvic thrusts, brilliant tunes ... and Glen Campbell's Elvis impersonation.

**THU 23:55 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.

**THU 01:55 The Joy of Painting (m000qpg1)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:15 today]

**THU 02:20 Elvis: The Rebirth of the King (b09kkkbbx)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:05 today]

**FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER 2020**

**FRI 19:00 TOTP2 (b00wyhgr)**

Christmas

Mark Radcliffe digs deep into the Top of the Pops archives to bring some festive performances.

**FRI 19:40 Royal Opera All-Star Gala (m000qphh)**

Antonio Pappano conducts a stellar cast of singers in favourite arias, duets and choruses from operas by Rossini, Donizetti and Puccini, along with the thrilling finale of Bizet's Carmen.

Italian baritone Vito Priante offers haircuts as the Barber of Seville, and Lisette Oropesa dazzles with her flawless soprano coloratura before being joined by American tenor Charles Castronovo for some heartwarming comedy in Donizetti's The Elixir of Love. Mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina starts out as Cinderella celebrating her good fortune and then magically transforms into femme fatale Carmen for the tragic finale of Bizet's great opera. The drama increases with Kristine Opolais singing the role of doomed diva Tosca, with Canadian baritone Gerald Finley joining her for the searing Te Deum from Puccini's masterpiece.

The chorus and orchestra of the Royal Opera House are arrayed throughout the stalls of the fabulous auditorium at Covent Garden to maintain social distancing.

Presented by Katie Derham.

**FRI 21:10 Maria by Callas (m000qphk)**

Documentary film that for the first time tells the life story of legendary Greek/American opera singer Maria Callas, completely in her own words. Tom Volf's account, which took four years of painstaking research to assemble, includes

performances, TV interviews, home movies, family photographs, private letters and unpublished memoirs – nearly all of which have never been seen before.

Maria by Callas reveals the essence of an extraordinary woman who rose from humble beginnings in New York City to become a glamorous international superstar and one of the greatest artists of all time.

**FRI 23:05 Florence Foster Jenkins (b084zbf0)**

Based on a true heartwarming story. In the autumn of 1944, as war rages in the Pacific, New York heiress and founder of the Verdi Club Florence Foster Jenkins devotes her life to music with the unwavering support of her eminent actor and monologist husband St Clair Bayfield. Delighted to provide support for other musicians, she is finally inspired by a Lili Pons recital to revive her own singing career, despite having very little talent in that regard.

**FRI 00:50 Ice Dream: Lapland's Snow Show (m0001v0s)**

On the edge of the Arctic Circle some of the biggest names in art and architecture - including Zaha Hadid, Anish Kapoor, Yoko Ono, Tatsuo Mihijima and Future Systems - recently gathered to produce an extraordinary collection of artworks made of ice and snow. See ice harvested by chainsaw, flaming vodka coursing through Hadid's ziggurat (and threatening to melt it) and Anish Kapoor get cross as his 'Red Solid' begins to look more like a pink slush puppy. Charlie Luxton investigates.

**FRI 01:20 Electric Proms (b00850nd)**

2007

Paul McCartney

Paul McCartney performs a selection of old Beatles hits plus newer solo songs at the Roundhouse in London.

**FRI 02:20 What We Were Watching (m000qpgg)**

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:20 on Saturday]