

SATURDAY 25 DECEMBER 2021

SAT 19:00 BBC Proms (m00013z7)
2020

Beethoveniana

Joining Beethoven Unleashed, a year-long, BBC-wide marathon marking the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth, a BBC Grand Virtual Orchestra made up of over 300 BBC musicians perform Beethoveniana by composer Iain Farrington, a brand new reworking of Beethoven's nine symphonies commissioned by the BBC Proms to celebrate the opening of the 2020 Proms season.

Farrington describes his work as 'taking Beethoven's music and putting it in a musical washing machine to see which colours run'. Director Toby Amies brings the music to life in this film, premiering exclusively on BBC Four. Choreographed by Cameron McMillan, starring dancers Emma Farnell-Watson and Joshua Smith together in their own lockdown bubble.

SAT 19:10 John Williams Live – Music from the Movies (m0013c0r)
To be advised.

SAT 20:35 Eric and Ernie: Behind the Scenes (b00x9b4n)
Drawing from the BBC film Eric and Ernie, this celebratory documentary narrated by Victoria Wood charts the duo's early years and the hurdles they faced, whilst showing why Eric and Ernie still remain Britain's best loved double act. Featuring specially shot, behind-the-scenes footage from the film, treasured Morecambe and Wise archive and celebrity interviews, the documentary visits important landmarks in their journey and uncovers the hard work and secrets of their phenomenal success.

Featuring contributions from the people who knew Eric and Ernie best: their family, peers, greatest fans and fellow comics of stage and screen, including Cilla Black, Michael Grade, Eddie Braben, Joan and Gary Morecambe, Doreen Wise, Miranda Hart, Lee Mack, Reece Shearsmith, Penelope Keith and Andrew Marr.

SAT 21:35 Their Finest (m0008595)

1940, London, the Blitz. With the country's morale at stake, Catrin, an untried screenwriter from Ebbw Vale, and a makeshift cast and crew work under fire to make a film to lift the nation's spirits - and inspire America to join the war. Leading the cast is the self-absorbed actor Ambrose Hilliard, who is persuaded to coach the handsome young American hero who has been 'parachuted' into the acting profession - but that will only be when the script is produced.

Acclaimed period drama from BBC Films.

SAT 23:25 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.

SAT 00:25 What We Were Watching (m0012tv1)
Christmas 1991

Writer and broadcaster Grace Dent takes a televisual trip back in time to Christmas 1991, as she immerses herself in the sights, sounds and TV schedules of the past.

Among Grace's festive findings are the discovery that this was a time when the BBC schedules were still ruled by TV's big beasts. Edmonds was the first Noel of broadcasting. Brucie was loved by all generations, and fresh-faced young whippersnappers Jeremy Clarkson, Phillip Schofield and Rob Brydon were starting to establish themselves as the stars of the future.

As well as checking out the year's music and fashion themes,

the season's most popular sitcoms and Barry Norman's countdown of the year's movie turkeys, Grace explores some of 1991's greatest Christmas controversies, including Mark Fowler's HIV revelation on the EastEnders seasonal double bill, a retrospective of the comedy of Benny Hill, and most surprising of all, a Songs of Praise Christmas special that had the nation's Grinches complaining in their droves to Anne Robinson's Points of View.

SAT 01:25 Top of the Pops (b086tr9)
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 piped 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.

SAT 02:25 Country Christmas (m0012tvg)
2021

Country Christmas brings the joy and festivities of the holidays to you in this Christmas special. Join first-time hosts Gabby Barrett and Carly Pearce as they get the holiday festivities started on CMA Country Christmas. Sing along to Christmas classics performed by Jimmie Allen with Louis York and The Shindellas, Gabby Barrett, Breland, Brett Eldredge, Lady A, Carly Pearce, Pistol Annies, Carrie Underwood and Lainey Wilson.

SUNDAY 26 DECEMBER 2021

SUN 19:00 The Chronicles of Ernie (m000gjmz)
Series 1

Winter

The Ernie is slowly falling under its winter spell. Early morning mists and vast tranquil silences are punctuated by the faint calls of birds migrating from colder climates to spend their winters on the Ernie. The whopper swan's honking call is a magnet for nature writer Dara McNulty, and down at Portora lock gates, commercial fishermen Eugene Brazil and Roy Shaw are cleaning and checking their nets for European silver eels.

At Enniskillen castle, painter Lorna Smyth is putting the finishing touches to her exhibition of Ernie landscapes. She has been painting all year across the seasons and now her work is ready to show the public.

Winter is a busy time on the Lough for RSPBNI, there are regular surveys to be done of the influx of migratory birds and habitats to be managed for breeding waders like curlews ahead of next year's breeding season.

Winter is also wildfowling season on the lough. Wildfowlers hunt the wild duck, a practice that has been carried out on the lough for centuries. The wildfowlers talk about their sport and how they feel that it is not in contradiction with their love of nature.

French chef Pascal Brissaud is also out on the water enjoying a crisp still winter's day and Row the Ernie are busy stealing winter days before their traditional handbuilt Irish currach. Is taken out of the water until spring. They also take out local school children and celebrate the winter solstice with a dawn row and Christmas lunch on the boat.

SUN 19:30 Dancing the Nutcracker: Inside the Royal Ballet (b086kdzl)

This Christmas, step into the magical world of The Nutcracker. For the first time in many years, the Royal Ballet has given full access behind the scenes for a landmark 90-minute documentary as they prepare for this season's yuletide production.

This year's Nutcracker marks the debut of one of Britain's brightest young stars, Francesca Hayward, in one of the most famous roles in ballet (and every little girl's dream) - the Sugar Plum Fairy. Stepping into the shoes of the greatest dancers ever to grace the stage - from Darcey Bussell to Margot Fonteyn - we follow her as she prepares to dance the role that made her want to be a ballerina when she was just three years old.

The production also sees the debut of numerous young dancers across the company, from its youngest stars at the Royal Ballet School playing the roles of party children and battling mice to the final year students dancing as snowflakes on the journey to the Land of the Sweets.

With unprecedented access to the creative departments, from set designers to tutu makers, and including beautiful performance sequences, this film takes the viewer directly into the Royal Ballet during the busiest and most magical time of the year. In so doing, it reveals not just the talent of the dancers, but also the extraordinary team behind the scenes that makes The Nutcracker one of the world's most spectacular ballets.

SUN 21:00 La bohème from the Royal Opera House (m0012tyr)

Puccini's operatic masterpiece, La Bohème, performed at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Ever since its premiere in Turin in 1896, La bohème has been a huge hit with audiences across the world. Within two years, it had been seen in Buenos Aires, Los Angeles, Prague, Berlin, Manchester and beyond. With over 500 performances chalked up at Covent Garden alone, this opera is one of the most popular and enduring in the repertoire.

In this performance from 2020, Sonya Yoncheva stars as the doomed seamstress Mimì, with Charles Castronovo as Rodolfo, who falls in love with her at first sight. Simona Mihai and Andrzej Filonczyk perform the roles of the on-off lovers, Musetta and Marcello.

Richard Jones's period production brings to life the garret flats and shopping arcades of 19th-century Paris, with designs by Stewart Laing, pitting the rags of the bohemians against the riches of the swanky shopping arcades and restaurants of the French capital.

Poverty and passion collide in a story of friendship and fellowship, love and loss. Featuring some of Puccini's best-loved music, this performance is conducted by Emmanuel Villaume.

SUN 23:00 Moonstruck (m000wnn2)

Loretta Castorini is a dowdy widow, engaged to the timid Johnny Cammareri. In Johnny's absence, she tries to mend the bad blood between him and his brother Ronny, but instead finds herself falling head over heels in love with the passionate young man.

SUN 00:35 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.

SUN 01:35 The Chronicles of Ernie (m000gjmz)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

SUN 02:05 The Turn of the Screw (b00pk76h)

Adaptation of Henry James's classic ghost story 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.

MONDAY 27 DECEMBER 2021

MON 19:00 Sondheim – A Tribute from Andrew Lloyd Webber (m0013kfv)
Andrew Lloyd Webber pays tribute to Stephen Sondheim.

MON 19:02 BBC Proms (b00td8g6)
2010

Sondheim's Eightieth Birthday Celebration

Marking the eightieth birthday of one of Broadway's great innovators, the first ever all-Sondheim Prom at the Royal Albert Hall. The concert includes excerpts from hit shows A Little Night Music, Sweeney Todd and Into the Woods performed by a starry cast of leading figures of the opera and theatre worlds with Bryn Terfel, Maria Friedman, Simon Russell Beale and some special guests. Also on stage is the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by David Charles Abel. Introduced by Katie Derham.

MON 21:05 Sondheim at the BBC (m0012txl)

A celebration of the work of one of the great songwriters and lyricists, Stephen Sondheim, who passed away in November 2021 at the age of 91. A giant of musical theatre, Sondheim first found international fame in 1957 as the lyricist for Leonard Bernstein's West Side Story and would inspire generations from that moment on.

This selection includes some of Sondheim's finest songs, broadcast on the BBC over a period of 60 years, with performances from a cast of his friends and fans that features some of the biggest names of stage and screen, including Shirley Bassey, Sammy Davis Jr, Michael Ball and Liza Minnelli.

MON 22:35 Omnibus (m0012txn)

Sunday in the Park with Stephen

Documentary that follows Stephen Sondheim, during his spell as visiting professor of drama at Oxford University, as he takes students through the creative process of writing a musical.

The film was made during rehearsals for the UK premiere of Sunday in the Park with George, which won the Olivier Award for best musical in 1991.

MON 23:25 Face to Face (m0012txq)

Stephen Sondheim

Jeremy Issacs talks to composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim about his life and work.

MON 00:05 Life of a Mountain (b04y4gd7)
A Year on Scafell Pike

A beautifully cinematic documentary following a year in the life of England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike, through the eyes of the farmers who work the valleys and fells, those who climb the mountain for pleasure and those who try to protect its slopes.

Filmed over a twelve-month period, it follows the seasons on the mountain from spring lambs through to winter snows. The contributions of the British Mountaineering Council and National Trust volunteers make clear the crucial importance of maintaining the landscape quality of England's highest peak for future generations.

MON 01:05 The Great Mountain Sheep Gather (m000hb4r)

Scafell Pike is England's tallest mountain and home to a flock of native Herdwick sheep. Every summer, their shepherd must gather these notoriously hardy sheep and bring them down to the farm for shearing.

The Great Mountain Sheep Gather charts this journey across the fells with epic bird's-eye view photography descending into the valley below. This timeless event has taken place in the Lake District for over a thousand years. Opening at dawn with the shepherd blindly navigating the foggy peaks and crags, this film reveals the skill, knowledge and bravery needed to care for a flock in this rugged land.

As the fog lifts to expose the breathtaking landscape, and the small pockets of sheep merge into one big group, the voice of Lakeland shepherd Andrew Harrison allows us to see this unique world through his eyes – the knowledge of the dogs, farmers and sheep passed down from generation to generation for centuries, the challenges of life in the fells, and the conflict posed by visitors and the 21st century.

Specially commissioned poetry written by Mark Pajak and read by Maxine Peake provides a counterpoint to the shepherd's

insights throughout this film. The programme's unique visual perspective includes riding along on a dog, a sheep and with the shepherd himself. The bleats, barks and birdsong echoing down the valley create an evocative natural soundtrack.

Once the flock has assembled as one, this immersive chronicle follows the group as they descend and are greeted by sunshine and a sense of relief once they arrive at the farm. Five hundred sheep must now be sheared - the tale of a shepherd's life.

MON 02:45 Omnibus (m0012txn)

[Repeat of broadcast at 22:35 today]

TUESDAY 28 DECEMBER 2021

TUE 19:00 Australia: Earth's Magical Kingdom (m000388w)

Series 1

Land

Asked to imagine Australia's wilderness many people immediately picture its arid outback, but its landscapes are in fact surprisingly varied. Traveling from the peaks of the aptly-named Snowy Mountains - touched by Antarctic winds - to tropical Queensland we discover how animals have learned to thrive across the continent's harsh and beautiful extremes.

We meet an echidna, a curious creature related to the only other monotreme on the planet, the platypus, that has the rare ability to lower its body temperature to endure icy winters. The Dryandra Woodlands south of Perth provide the last stronghold for a native marsupial that once ranged all across Australia. The charming numbat, now reduced to less than a thousand individuals in the wild, survives on a diet of termites on the forest floor.

Elsewhere, where animals have been able to remain in their forest habitat, tree kangaroos can be found climbing along branches in the forest canopy alongside palm cockatoos, whose intelligence is comparable to that of dolphins. The male palm cockatoo, or 'palmie', breaks off sticks and uses them to beat out rhythmic messages to his partner. Bird intelligence is taken to even greater heights, however, by the black kite. Gathering burning sticks and embers from bush fires, it drops them into dry grass to spread a curtain of flame that flushes out insects and small prey. Only in Australia have these remarkable phenomena been witnessed.

TUE 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m0012tzd)

2021

The Invisible Enemy

Professor Jonathan Van-Tam dives into the microworld of viruses, revealing how these invisible invaders can infect our bodies and how a revolution in testing may transform medicine forever. With the help of immunologist Professor Katie Ewer and virologist Professor Ravi Gupta, this action-packed lecture reveals the inner workings of the virus by blowing it up and inviting the audience to take part in a heist mission. Can they hijack our cell machinery to replicate? Up against the virus is our immune system, designed to fight back. We also dive into a nose to uncover the wonders of snot and whittle down the winner of a game of antibody bingo to crack how our immune system can defeat this invisible enemy.

One of the most impressive scientific advances of the past two years has been the development of new testing techniques in our battle against Covid-19. We peel back the mysteries of PCR, hack into a super-sized lateral flow and show how modern diagnostic technology could shape the future of medicine.

The Christmas Lectures are the most prestigious event in the Royal Institution's calendar, dating from 1825 when Michael Faraday founded the series. They are the world's longest-running science television series and always promise to inspire and amaze each year through explosive demonstrations and interactive experiments with a live theatre audience.

TUE 21:00 West Side Story (m0005hx1)

Classic Broadway musical.

The tensions between rival gangs the Jets, whose members include 'white' Americans, and a Puerto Rican gang, the Sharks, reach boiling point in a hot New York summer. At a neighbourhood dance, Tony, the co-founder of the Jets, meets Maria, the sister of Bernardo, the leader of the Sharks. Their romance is thwarted by the gang rivalries.

TUE 23:20 Into the Woods (b068x2bm)

Big-screen adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's Broadway hit,

featuring an ensemble cast who bring a host of fairy tale favourites to life.

As a childless baker and his wife search for their happily ever after, Cinderella looks to escape the wrath of her wicked stepmother. An unassuming Red Riding Hood skips to the bakery to buy her grandmother some bread, whilst a pre-beanstalk era Jack just wants his cow to give him some milk. As their paths begin to cross, the characters realise that they will have to help each other out if they want their dreams to become a reality.

TUE 01:20 Australia: Earth's Magical Kingdom (m000388w)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

TUE 02:20 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m0012tzd)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

WEDNESDAY 29 DECEMBER 2021

WED 19:00 Australia: Earth's Magical Kingdom (m0003g8h)

Series 1

Ocean

This episode sets out to understand why marine species are drawn to the coasts of Australia and discovers that the country's three surrounding oceans – the Southern Sea, the Pacific and The Indian Ocean - create a unique environment for ocean voyagers of all types.

In the clean waters of Pearson Island off South Australia, Australian sealsions, once a rare sight are now protected from hunting and are thriving. Meanwhile in the wide shallows of Spencer Gulf, June is the time for a midwinter gathering of spectacularly colourful giant cuttlefish who battle for mates. The cold Southern Ocean also brings humpback whales from Antarctica to give birth and triggers the breathtaking spectacle of thousands of Australian spider crabs, the largest crustaceans in the world, congregating under the piers of Port Philip Bay to moult. It is a grisly time as the first to reveal their soft shells are cannibalised by their neighbours. Still, there is safety in numbers as bigger predators, smooth stingrays, sweep over the congregation sucking them from the seabed.

A hundred miles up the coast from Sydney, Cabbage Tree Island is home to one of only two breeding colonies of Gould's petrel in the world. Chicks must find their way across rocky ground, scale the vertical trunks of giant cabbage tree palms and overcome their vicious spines in order to capture the breeze to become airborne. They will spend the next five to six years at sea.

Off the west coast the Lacedpede Islands are bathed in the warm currents of the Indian Ocean. 18,000 pairs of brown boobies build makeshift nests here whilst further south Shark Bay lives up to its ominous name as tiger sharks sweep in to prey on a whale carcass. It is a sight that brings boatloads of onlookers.

WED 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m0012tz5)

2021

The Perfect Storm

Professor Jonathan Van-Tam uncovers what drives a virus to world domination and reveals how maths may be the secret weapon to thwart it. Joined by airborne infection expert Professor Catherine Noakes and mathematician Professor Julia Gog, the team face the disgusting fallout of a super-sneeze, reveal the shocking invisible forces inside our masks and unravel the mathematical models of contagion with a gigantic game of lucky dip.

In this lecture, no science is off the table. From microbiology to engineering, the Covid-19 pandemic has pooled the talent of scientists in every discipline to work together in ways never seen before. Can the audience be the scientific heroes of the hour and crack the riddle at the end of the show?

WED 21:00 Billy Connolly: Made in Scotland (b0bwzhy6)

Series 1

Episode 1

In British comedy there is a line in the sand and that line is Billy Connolly. Before he found fame on an international level, British comedy was an end-of-the-pier kind of affair - but through sheer talent and force of personality, Connolly ploughed a different and deeply personal yet universal approach

to comedy and in doing so he changed the face of British comedy forever.

He has been called the Beatles and Jesus of comedy by his peers and an immature 'manure mouth' by the leader of the Scottish Zion Baptist Church. So say what you like about him but you can't deny everyone wants to know him. And that is what Made In Scotland is about - it is Billy as you have never seen him before - intimate, deeply personal and very funny.

Weaved around personal accounts and interviews from famous faces, Billy's life is revealed in all its glory - a shaggy dog story approach to his work - and one that has turned him from Billy Connolly the welder into Billy Connolly - The Big Yin.

Part one of two one-hour specials features Eddie Izzard, Ross Noble, Micky Flanagan, Lord Grade, Tracey Ullman, AL Kennedy, Val McDermid, Sharleen Spiteri and Eddi Reader. The film shows a true reflection of his far influence and still maintaining his unique but personal approach to comedy.

WED 22:00 Billy Connolly: Portrait of a Lifetime (p0535lq5)

Celebrating Billy Connolly's seventy-fifth birthday and 50 years in the business, three Scottish artists - John Byrne, Jack Vettriano and Rachel Maclean - each create a new portrait of the Big Yin. As he sits with each artist, Billy talks about his remarkable life and career, which has taken him from musician and pioneering stand-up to Hollywood star and national treasure.

WED 23:00 Williams: Formula 1 in the Blood (m0002p1x)

In-depth documentary from BBC Films showing an interesting insight into Sir Frank Williams, his career and family. From nothing other than an obsession with speed, Williams builds one of the world's most enduring Formula One racing teams, but a near fatal car accident in 1986 at the height of this success leaves Frank fighting for his life and the future of the team hanging in the balance.

WED 00:45 Handmade in the Pacific (b0blhnjs)

Series 1

Pou

Maori master carver Logan Okiwi Shipgood crafts a beautiful 6ft tall 'pou' statue from native New Zealand timber. With chainsaws, adzes, and around 30 chisels, Logan gradually reveals the figure of Hene Te Akiri, a Maori warrior princess, as he lovingly chips away at the wood. Inlaid with sacred shells and given a powerful facial tattoo to denote her social rank, the finished statue is finally revealed to the public.

Logan explores the deep spiritual connection between Maori carvers and the objects they create, and the significance of his home - Rotorua - in the revival of Maori art and culture in the 20th century. For Maori today, carving remains a key way of telling stories and honouring ancestors, and Logan - an internationally famous sculptor and carver - is proud to be doing his bit to keep these traditions alive.

WED 01:15 Handmade in the Pacific (b0hm6pjj)

Series 1

Kapa

Indigenous Hawaiian artist Dalani Tanahy spends weeks painstakingly beating tree bark into a sheets of cloth-like fabric. This ancient Hawaiian artform known as 'kapa' was once the staple material of the islands. But after Captain Cook introduced cotton, and the Americans overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy, kapa-making completely disappeared.

Dalani is one of a handful of dedicated practitioners who has spent her life bringing this artform back. Why? Because kapa-making has become integral to the nascent Hawaiian cultural nationalism that is taking hold in indigenous communities of Hawaii. Kapa-making has become a powerful source of pride and identity, but it's a lot of work. Trees have to be planted and tended, cut, stripped, and the bark beaten and fermented. Then sheets of bark are joined together to make a single sheet. Natural dyes and paints are printed on. And only then is the kapa ready to be worn.

Dalani takes us through the process of making a piece of kapa from start to finish, and delivers her kapa to a dancer, who plans to use this kapa as a traditional 'hula' skirt.

The film ends with an emotional performance at the Royal Palace in Honolulu, Hawaii. A traditional 'hula' dance is performed, to honour Hawaii's last monarch, Queen Lilo'uokalani. Like the kapa itself, the Queen, rudely overthrown by Americans, has become a symbol of reborn Hawaiian identity.

WED 01:45 Australia: Earth's Magical Kingdom (m0003gbh)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

WED 02:45 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m0012tz5)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

THURSDAY 30 DECEMBER 2021

THU 19:00 Australia: Earth's Magical Kingdom (m0003mxv)

Series 1

Human

Despite Australia's relatively small population, the human impact on wildlife has been dramatic. This episode explores Australia's natural history success stories and those being left behind as the continent undergoes rapid change.

Starting in Australia's second largest city Melbourne, this film sees how possums, tree-dwelling marsupials, have taken to sharing trees in busy city parks. They are breeding successfully but when pressure from the neighbours becomes too great, they risk encounters with heavy traffic and domestic cats in order to find shelter in rooves and garden sheds. Meanwhile, the cold-blooded inhabitants of Brisbane's parks are demonstrating evolution in overdrive. In a timescale of roughly 150 years, as the city has risen around them, eastern water dragons have become metropolitan dragons - genetically different and twice the size of their wild cousins. Without trees to climb their limbs are getting longer and claws shorter. A suburban garden is the stage for a flamboyant spider the size of a grain of rice. He taps out a colourful and rhythmic display for his suitor who will choose whether he will become her meal or her mate.

Far beyond the bustle of the city, dingoes eek out an existence in the inhospitable environment of a desert goldmine, while yellowtail grunTERS present the extraordinary spectacle of fish crossing a road. And with climate change and deforestation a growing and major threat one farmer is on a mission to save koalas on his land that are quite literally dying of thirst.

THU 20:00 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m0012tzh)

2021

Fighting Back

Professor Jonathan Van-Tam explores the inner workings of vaccines to reveal how these medical marvels can help win the war on viruses and potentially fight diseases such as cancer. Joined by vaccine scientist Professor Teresa Lambe and microbiologist Professor Sharon Peacock, the team peel away the scabs of smallpox and inject the puss of a milkmaid to uncover the key milestones that led to vaccines over 200 years ago. Science has not stopped since. The Covid-19 vaccines are a triumph, but can the audience take them a step further? Can they use a vaccine to blow up cancer cells on the lecture theatre floor?

Viruses have a trick up their sleeve. They can mutate. A pack of dastardly dogs help unlock the secrets of variants, from Alpha to Omicron, but scientists are one step ahead. The pandemic has pushed the speed and scale of genetic sequencing technology to unprecedented levels and we can crack the virus's genetic code to watch it evolve in near-real time. It's a crucial tool to stay on top of Covid-19. Combined with solutions from nature, from fruit bats to furry llamas, science may never be the same again.

THU 21:00 Billy Connolly: Made in Scotland (b0bwz0f)

Series 1

Episode 2

In British comedy there is a line in the sand and that line is Billy Connolly. Before he found fame on an international level, British comedy was an end-of-the-pier kind of affair - but through sheer talent and force of personality, Connolly ploughed a different and deeply personal yet universal approach to comedy and in doing so he changed the face of British comedy forever.

He has been called the Beatles and Jesus of comedy by his peers and an immature 'manure mouth' by the leader of the Scottish Zion Baptist Church. So say what you like about him, but you can't deny everyone wants to know him. And that is what Made In Scotland is about - it is Billy as you have never seen him before - intimate, deeply personal and very funny.

Weaved around personal accounts and interviews from famous faces, Billy's life is revealed in all its glory - a shaggy dog story approach to his work - and one that has turned him from Billy

Connolly the welder into Billy Connolly - The Big Yin.

This final instalment (featuring Eddie Izzard, Ross Noble, Micky Flanagan, AL Kennedy, Tracey Ullman, Val McDermid, Sharleen Spiteri and Eddi Reader) finds Billy back in the Scotland of his childhood, where he reveals that knitted woolly swimming trunks were not a figment of his imagination.

THU 22:00 Billy Connolly: A Scot in the Arctic (p032kj7)

'The Big Yin' embarks on a big adventure, as comedian Billy Connolly ventures from stage to ice - a frozen Arctic Ocean inhabited by ten-foot polar bears. The Scots mirth-maker is armed only with a small flimsy tent, a video camera and a BBC film crew. Not an ideal way to spend a week.

THU 22:50 A Star Is Born (1954) (b0078zpn)

Musical drama in which a famous actor with a drink problem decides to help a budding young singer after hearing her perform. He signs her up with a film studio, where she lands the lead role in a big musical. The two become close and later marry, but while her career continues to blossom, his takes a downward turn.

THU 01:40 Australia: Earth's Magical Kingdom (m0003mxv)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

THU 02:40 Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (m0012tzh)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

FRIDAY 31 DECEMBER 2021

FRI 19:00 Top of the Pops (b04wj56)

New Year's Eve 2014

As we say goodbye to an incredibly memorable 2014, Feame Cotton and Reggie Yates host a New Year's Eve party to celebrate the big hits of the year and cap the programme with the last number 1 of 2014.

With the biggest-selling album of 2014, record-breaking man of the year Ed Sheeran joins the Top of the Pops new year's eve celebration. Jess Glynne gets the party started with her dance floor filler Right Here before joining Clean Bandit to perform their latest collaboration. The Vamps make a welcome return to Top of the Pops, breakthrough artist Charli XCX joins in too, new kid on the block George Ezra makes a welcome appearance and understated disco diva La Roux joins in the revelry. Irish rockers the Script celebrate another great year, and home-grown talent Ella Henderson joins in the new year's eve party. Labrinth brings his soul-infused groove to the party, and Professor Green and Tori Kelly take to the stage.

Plus Fearne and Reggie take a look back at all the biggest pop headlines and stories of 2014. All in all Top of the Pops New Year's Eve is the party to start all parties on the last night of 2014!

FRI 20:00 TOTP2 (m000qpmv)

Party Special

Steve Wright presents a TOTP2 party special featuring Ricky Martin, Showstoppers, Hot Chocolate and Robbie Williams.

FRI 20:40 ABBA at the BBC (b03lyzpr)

If you fancy an hour's worth of irresistible guilty pleasures from Anni-Frid, Benny, Bjorn and Agnetha, this is the programme for you. ABBA stormed the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest with their winning entry Waterloo, and this programme charts the meteoric rise of the band with some of their greatest performances at the BBC.

It begins in 1974 with their first Top of the Pops appearance, and we even get to see the band entertaining holidaymakers in Torbay in a 1975 Seaside Special. There are many classic ABBA tunes from the 1979 BBC special ABBA in Switzerland, plus their final BBC appearance on the Late Late Breakfast show in 1982.

This compilation is a must for all fans and includes great archive interviews, promos and performances of some of ABBA's classics including Waterloo, Dancing Queen, Does Your Mother Know, Thank You for the Music, SOS, Fernando, Chiquitita and many more.

FRI 21:40 Radio 2 In Concert (b09ckn1w)

Chic featuring Nile Rodgers

Jo Whitley welcomes Grammy-winning Nile Rodgers and his

multi-platinum selling band Chic, in an intimate performance in 2017 at the iconic Radio Theatre for BBC Radio 2 In Concert.

Bringing their seminal songs, sound and groove, the American disco legends take to the stage to not only celebrate the release of their album, It's About Time, but also to rejoice in a career that has spanned more than 40 years and included a string of influential, groundbreaking tracks like Freak, I Want Your Love, Good Times and Everybody Dance – all hits that have stood the test of time!

FRI 22:40 When Harry Met Sally (m000vthr)

Can a man and a woman be friends without sex getting in the way? Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal find out in Rob Reiner and Nora Ephron's classic romantic comedy.

FRI 00:10 Detectorists (b09f2ndg)

Series 3

Episode 1

Lance's flat isn't his own any more and Andy's staying with the mother-in-law. But at least they have their old faithful permission to escape. Or do they? The dark cloud of a solar farm threatens the tranquillity.

FRI 00:40 Detectorists (b09ffxyn)

Series 3

Episode 2

Just as they're losing their farm, Lance and Andy start finding good stuff. But old enemies are sniffing around. Home lives are chaotic as usual and Lance is persuaded to try hypnotherapy for an awkward affliction. With mixed results.

FRI 01:10 Detectorists (b09g64vk)

Series 3

Episode 3

With time running out, Andy and Lance go to great (action-packed) lengths to protect their land. Away from the fields, life is no less stressful as Andy quits his job and Lance finds an unwelcome guest in the spare room. An audacious theft leaves Lance reeling.

FRI 01:40 Detectorists (b09gvm77)

Series 3

Episode 4

Lance is obsessed with finding the thief that stole his gold, which means he can ignore the melodrama going on at home. Andy's lies are catching up with him too. They decide that camping out is the safest option.

FRI 02:10 Detectorists (b09hgd2)

Series 3

Episode 5

Andy and Lance become eco-warriors when they find their beloved oak tree is due to be felled. But a 24-hour helpline turns out to be more of a hindrance. Andy stumbles upon treasure when, for once, he wasn't even looking.

FRI 02:40 Detectorists (b09j0qcs)

Series 3

Episode 6

'There's something about karma going on' is Lance's wise observation, and there certainly seems to be something in the air. They have one last day on the farm, one last chance to pull out all the stops and find that gold. Terry's got a new gazebo. Perfect time for a rally.