

December 17, 2017

THE SUNDAY TIMES

**INTERVIEW**  
**ALEX HASSELL, STAR**  
**OF THE MINIATURIST**

**BEST FILMS ON TV**  
**FROM SHAUN THE SHEEP**  
**TO BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
**BAKE OFF, VICTORIA,**  
**DOCTOR WHO...**

# CULTURE

## BUMPER TV GUIDE

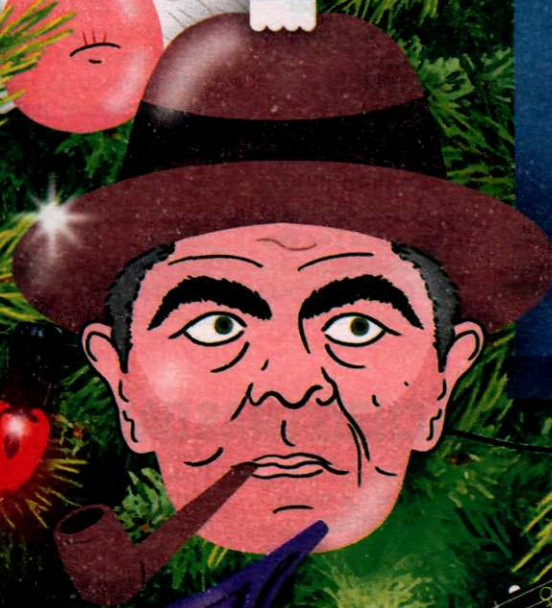
OUR PICK OF THE BEST PROGRAMMES ON TELEVISION  
AND RADIO OVER THE TWO-WEEK HOLIDAY SEASON





FULL 14-DAY LISTINGS FOR DECEMBER 17-30

# TV & RADIO



## ALL YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS



## STEP INTO XMAS: A 14-DAY

## FAMILY FARE



Parents prank their kids in the gentle hidden-camera fun of **Born Silly** (Today, C4, 4.50pm). **The Lego Story — Brick By Brick** (Monday 18, C5, 8pm) follows the history of the world-beating toy. There are plenty of classics returning, including **The Farmer's Llamas** (Christmas Eve, BBC1, 1.45pm) and **The Gruffalo** (Wednesday 27,

BBC1, 3.45pm). By yuletide TV law, **The Snowman** is on Christmas Eve (C4, 5.20pm), and a new animation based on Julia Donaldson's **The Highway Rat**, pictured, is a Christmas Day highlight (BBC1, 4.45pm) — hopefully, the furry star of that won't also make an unwanted appearance in **Ratburger** (Christmas Eve, Sky 1, 6pm).

## CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

What better way to get into the true spirit of things than with 5,000 voices raising the roof at the Royal Albert Hall in **Songs Of Praise The Big Sing** (Christmas Eve, BBC1, 1.15pm). You could then plan a route to midnight across TV

and radio, with **Carols From King's** (BBC2, 5.45pm; BBC2 Scotland, 7.15pm) and **The Story Of Carols** (Classic FM, 8pm); to ease you into the day itself, both BBC1 and ITV have carols, readings and choirs galore from 11.45pm. **The World's Best Christmas Lights** (Saturday 23, C4, 8pm) follows Liverpool's Christmas Decorators on a trip to Bethlehem to decorate Manger Square. Just around the corner from the square is Banksy's Walled Off Hotel, and in **The Alternativity** (today, BBC2, 9pm), Danny Boyle travels there to help put on a performance of the Nativity in the car park. Oh, and he has to make it snow.

## COMEDY



Got the shopping done? Then sit back and get festive with **Smashie's Xmastastic Playlist** (Saturday 23, Gold, 4pm), and relax while the staff of **Trollied** (Christmas Eve, Sky 1, 9.30pm) take the strain. Anyone hoping for the sight of Charlie Brooker despairing in a dark room will be disappointed that there is no Screenwipe, but **Have I Got 2017 News For You?** (Friday 22, BBC1, 9pm) and **Frankie Boyle's New World Order** (Friday 29, BBC2, 10pm) will do their best to fill in. While Channel 5 remembers **Les Dawson — In His Own Words** (Friday 22, 10pm), there is a reminder of Rodney Bewes in the classic **Whatever Happened To The Likely Lads?** (Christmas Eve, BBC4, 8.15pm). And if you would rather be somewhere else, join John Hamm in Hong Kong on **Travel Man** (Boxing Day, C4, 8pm).

## BRINGING SUNSHINE

It's not legally Christmas if there is no Eric and Ernie. If only the real thing will do, the 1977 **Morecambe & Wise Christmas Show** (Christmas Day, BBC2, 5.35pm) is the one with Angela Rippon and the newsreaders. Otherwise, Friday 29 is your night, when **Leading Ladies** (BBC2, 7pm) reflects on the indignities that befell Shirley Bassey, Vanessa Redgrave and Glenda Jackson; **Eric & Ernie's Home Movies** (BBC2, 8pm) covers the duo's career using their personal archive; and **Eric, Ernie & Me** (BBC4, 9pm) celebrates the writer Eddie Braben (played by Stephen Tompkinson) and shows the pressures he was under to keep them funny.

## HOW TO GET THROUGH CHRISTMAS DAY

Viewers used to full boxset immersion, revelling in the watercooler violence of *Godless* or shuddering at *Stranger Things*, might find Christmas Day TV and its insistence on jolly collective experience more disconcerting than *The Upside Down*. Traditional staging posts such as **The Queen** (BBC1, 3pm) or **Morecambe & Wise** (BBC2,

**Regeneration game** Wave goodbye to Doctor Capaldi

5.35pm) might be too much for the new TV solipsist: better to ease in with all-ages animation **The Highway Rat** (BBC1, 4.45pm) or the modern sci-fi of **Doctor Who** (BBC1, 5.30pm), in which Peter Capaldi will finally regenerate into Jodie Whittaker.

Rounding up beloved contestants, **The Great British Bake Off** (C4, 7.40pm) is a heartwarming example of a show redeemed, while **First Dates At Christmas** (C4, 9pm) proves no man is an

island, no matter how poor their dinner small talk.

Those still unconvinced by the communal experience might find solace in the smart misanthropy of Shakespearean sitcom **Upstart Crow** (BBC2, 8.25pm), Emma Thompson bringing Nicole Kidman-like film star glamour by appearing as Elizabeth. Otherwise, Netflix *Scrooges* can comfort themselves that normal TV autonomy can be resumed on Boxing Day, when everyone needs some time alone.

Victoria Segal



## FILMS: TEN OF THE BEST

**Beauty And The Beast** (2017) *Christmas Day, Sky Cinema Premiere, 3.10pm/8pm* Disney's live-action remake of its 1991 cartoon is, of course, meant primarily for children with a love of romantic fairy tales, and it seems to have gone down well with those viewers, to judge by its huge box-office takings. This success is fairly well deserved. The film's star, Emma Watson, is merely competent, but she is surrounded by a swoony, picturesque show with exemplary technical effects (including those