
CBSO CHRISTMAS PARTY

CONCERT MODE PROGRAMME

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INTRODUCTION

I'm delighted to be back in Birmingham for these Christmas concerts. It's a city I've worked in many times over the years, including a production very early on in my career of *She Stoops To Conquer* at The Old Rep, nearly thirty years ago.

Much more recently, I was here to unveil a glorious portrait of the director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet, Carlos Acosta, by Portrait Artist of the Year, Curtis Holder, for the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. It's a city with a fantastic and diverse arts scene and I'm so looking forward to these Christmas concerts at the Symphony Hall and to working alongside the CBSO.

I play many of the pieces we'll be hearing on my weekly Classic FM radio show but nothing beats being in the room and hearing the music live. It's a genuine privilege and one I don't take for granted.

There's nothing quite like the feeling of togetherness and joy that getting together at Christmas and belting out some carols can bring. I say 'belting' – that's what I'll be doing - but thankfully I'll be drowned out by a collection of world-class musicians!

I'll be adding my voice to all of yours as we fill the Symphony Hall with Christmas cheer.

Thank you for joining us and I wish you all a wonderful Christmas, whatever your plans, and a prosperous and safe New Year.

Stephen Mangan
Presenter

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. In which country did the tradition of having a Christmas Tree originate?
2. In the film Home Alone, where are the McCallisters going on holiday when they leave Kevin behind?
3. Which Christmas song was the first ever song to be played in space in 1965?
4. What is the best-selling Christmas song of all time?
5. How many reindeer pull santa's sleigh?

6. Feliz Navidad is famous for its simple, bilingual lyrics. Which language is it sung in besides English?
7. Which famous scientist was born on Christmas day in 1642?
8. What year was Mariah Carey's All I Want For Christmas Is You released?

Answers: 1 = Germany. 2 = Paris. 3 = Jingle Bells. 4 = White Christmas. 5 = Nine. 6 = Spanish. 7 = Isaac Newton. 8 = 1994.

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL SEAL

Conductor

Michael Seal is a dynamic British conductor known for his deep understanding of orchestras, shaped by his early career as a violinist with the CBSO. His insider perspective fosters strong rapport with musicians, earning him a reputation for inspiring performances and impressive results on tight rehearsal schedules. Since 2005, he has conducted

the CBSO over 300 times as Assistant or Associate Conductor, including his conducting debut at the BBC Proms in 2023 with the Proms' first Bollywood concert. He is a regular guest conductor with all five BBC orchestras, as well as the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Bournemouth Symphony, and Ulster Orchestra.

Internationally, Michael has conducted major ensembles such as the Brussels Philharmonic, WDR Funkhausorchester Köln, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Kuopio Symphony and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. His podcast “a mic on the podium”—launched during the global pandemic—has received critical acclaim and is now archived in the British Library. Upcoming debuts include the Beethoven Orchestra Bonn (2026) and the Belgian National Orchestra (2027).

STEPHEN MANGAN

Presenter

After graduating from Cambridge University and then RADA, Stephen Mangan began his acting career in the theatre. In 2008 he played the title role in *The Norman Conquests* at The Old Vic and then on Broadway. Stephen was nominated for a Tony Award and the play won Best Revival. Other theatre credits include, *Birthday* and *The People Are Friendly* (Royal Court Theatre), *Jeeves and Wooster* (Duke of York's Theatre), *Hayfever* (Savoy theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (RSC) and *Rules For Living* (National Theatre). His most recent theatre credits include Sean Foley's *The Man in the White Suit* (Wyndham's Theatre), Michael Longhurst's *Private Lives* opposite Rachael Stirling (Donmar Warehouse) & Mike Bartlett's *Unicorn* at (Garrick Theatre) alongside Nicola Walker and Erin Doherty. Stephen has an extensive list of television credits that include BAFTA-winning British sitcom *Green Wing*, *Free Agents*, *Dirk*

Gently, in which he played the title role, Houdini & Doyle, Episodes, opposite Tamsin Greig and Matt LeBlanc, the lead role of Richard Pitt in the comedy Hang Ups alongside Richard E. Grant and Katherine Parkinson and BBC's The Split which ran for 4 seasons. Stephen's film credits include Billy Elliot, Birthday, Postman Pat: The Movie (Voice), Rush, Beyond The Pole, Confetti, Festival and Basil Khalil's A Gaza Weekend.

ELESHA PAUL MOSES

Vocalist

Elesha Paul Moses is an award-winning British vocalist, actress, creative director and producer, celebrated for her powerhouse vocals, electrifying stage presence and remarkable versatility across stage and live music. Rising to prominence as the leading lady in the West End production of Tina The Tina Turner Musical, for which she won the BBTA Award for Best Lead Female in a Musical.

Touring internationally as the star of Whitney Queen of the Night and Tina: What's Love Got To Do With It.

Collaborating with global icons such as Lionel Richie, Tom Jones, will.i.am, and Mathew Knowles, performances at major venues including the Royal Albert Hall, London Palladium, Leeds Castle, Co-op Live Manchester, and multiple orchestral concerts across Europe. Elesha leads Infinity Creative Productions and EPM Entertainment, producing original shows such as The Private Tour, Higher Love, Wicked-er, and the international debut of K-Pop Infinity, launching into Europe in 2026. As well as several creative development workshop projects, including the STEPS "Here & Now" Workshop and the ICE Workshop.

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CBSO Centre
Berkley Street Birmingham, B1 2LF
information@cbsoco.uk
0121 616 6500

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