



SOUNDS LIKE CHRISTMAS AT THE V&A

27 November 2017 – 6 January 2018

@V_and_A @museumchildhood #SoundsLikeChristmas

Full programme available at vam.ac.uk/Christmas

vam.ac.uk/singingtree

- V&A celebrates Christmas with season inspired by sound and music
- Christmas tree designed by Es Devlin
- Display exploring Christmas Number One's
- Free events including daily concerts, pop-ups and screenings

The V&A is staging a month-long musical celebration of Christmas across its South Kensington and V&A Museum of Childhood sites. Featuring choirs, candlelit concerts, pop-up performances, film screenings, a spectacular Christmas tree, decoration making workshops and more, the festive period will be celebrated through music from opera to Christmas number ones. This year's theme is inspired by the current major V&A exhibition *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics*.

'The Singing Tree' designed by Es Devlin

This year's Christmas tree in the grand entrance will take the form of a cloud of floating words, contributed by our visitors. It has been conceived by Es Devlin, stage designer for leading performers including Kanye West and Beyonce as well as the Royal Opera House and National Theatre. This spectacular and innovative tree will feature digital word projections that create a poem. Accompanying the tree is a layered polyphonic soundscape of human and machine generated voices. Over the next two weeks in the lead up to installation of the tree and throughout the Christmas season, visitors will be invited to contribute a festive word as they enter the V&A and online. These will be combined and processed through text and sound algorithms to create this polyphonic poem sculpture. The tree will be created in collaboration with video designer Luke Halls, creative technologist Ross Goodwin, creative agency Sunshine and music and sound collective Res.Lab.

Displays

Special seasonal installations and Christmas displays highlight key objects relating to the music of Christmas from the collection. At South Kensington, a display celebrating the UK Christmas Number One will explore this yearly tradition through LPs, record sleeves and sheet music, with songs from Bing Crosby to Band Aid. Compilations of Christmas pantomime performances from the

National Video Archive of Performane (NVAP) will be on show in the Theatre and Performance Gallery. To coincide with Sounds like Christmas at the V&A, Gold Fir have created three commissioned soundscapes that draw on the history, objects, architecture and heritage of three galleries in the Museum. At the Museum of Childhood visitors are invited to enjoy a display and audio trail exploring the changing sounds of Christmas with specially commissioned pieces by the acclaimed sound artist Neil Luck.

Activities and performances

At South Kensington, there will be daily carol concerts and weekly candlelit concerts, including a singalong of Christmas Number Ones led by Musical Director Sam Coates; a performance from the Monteverdi Choir, returning after Sir John Eliot Gardiner's first performance at the Musuem in 1967; a performance from the Royal College of Music of Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, a comic opera about a clever fox. There will also be a Christmas wreath workshop, the chance for visitors to make and play their own instruments and a festive family rave with Big Fish Little Fish. A wide range of activities will be staged to entertain families at the Museum of Childhood including a Christmas designer market, Sing-A-Long Saturdays and a 3-day 'Make Some Noise' celebration of music.

V&A Christmas Gifts

Our Christmas shop has an eclectic range of gifts that surprise and charm. Culture enthusiasts will be thrilled with a V&A Membership which grants them a whole year of unlimited free entry to all our exhibitions, access to the new Members' Room and a host of other exclusive benefits, including 10% off in the shop and online. Design connoisseurs will also find a specialist collection of books on all aspects of the designed world including photography, architecture, fashion, graphics, jewellery, sculpture, textiles and more. The V&A also has its own publishing range, which features 150 fabulously illustrated books on the V&A's exhibitions, collections and research.

- Ends -

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Tree designer Es Devlin is the winner of the 2017 London Design Medal and is known for the kinetic illuminated stage sculptures that she creates in collaboration with Beyoncé, Kanye West, U2, Adele and on the stages of the Royal Opera House, National Theatre, the London Olympics as well as her recent installation works *MirrorMaze* in Peckham and *PoemPortraits* at the Serpentine Gallery.
- Visitors can contribute a word to the Christmas tree by visiting vam.ac.uk/singingtree
- More details on the Christmas programme at the V&A is available via the V&A website; <https://www.vam.ac.uk/christmas>
- Some events are free and others are charging and must be booked via the V&A website.

OPERA: PASSION, POWER AND POLITICS

30 September – 25 February 2017

In collaboration with the Royal Opera House

Sponsored by Societe Generale

Opera: Passion, Power and Politics is a spectacular and vivid journey through 400 years of operatic and European history. From the Victoria and Albert Museum in collaboration with the Royal Opera House, this is the only exhibition to ever explore opera on a grand scale. Led by an exquisite sound experience, the exhibition immerses you in key moments in the history of opera from its roots in Renaissance Italy to today's premieres. Working with opera specialists and theatre, lighting and sound designers, the V&A presents a unique, theatrical experience that will bring visitors to the heart of opera in the Museum's stunning new Sainsbury Gallery.

Admission from £19 (concessions available) #OperaPassion

For further PRESS information please contact Callum Walker on c.walker@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

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