

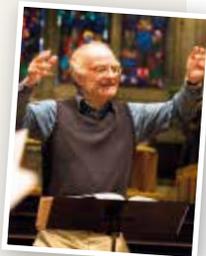


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JINGLE BELLS

Claire Jackson gives her pick of early Christmas concerts to get the season started

The festive season brings many annual musical favourites, such as **Bach's Christmas Oratorio** (sung at Gloucester Cathedral on December 2) and **Britten's A Ceremony of Carols Op 28** (included as part of the **Cantabrigians' Christmas Concert at Christ's College Chapel** on December 3). There's no better way to get into the Yuletide spirit than with **John Rutter's Christmas Celebration** (December 6, Royal Albert Hall, London; December 11, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester) featuring the composer himself on the podium (Christmas jumpers optional; sing-along voice essential).



However, there's a more secular orchestral trend to look out for this year: the Christmas film with live soundtrack. A new **Love Actually concert tour** (coming to a city near you!) begins in Manchester (December 1, Bridgewater Hall) and



travels to Bristol (December 2, Colston Hall), Glasgow (December 3, Royal Concert Hall), Birmingham (December 4, Birmingham Symphony Hall), Edinburgh (December 5, Usher Hall) and London (December 10, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane). A full orchestra will perform Craig Armstrong's score in real time while the film is projected on to a large screen.

Home Alone also gets the concert treatment courtesy of the **Royal Northern Sinfonia**, who perform the soundtrack alongside the film at Sage Gateshead (December 3).



Carducci Quartet: If your name's not down you're not coming in

MUSIC ON THE MOVE

Out in the cold

Musicians often refer to their instruments as 'extensions of their body'. While this may sound like something from Pseud's Corner, the attachment is understandable, given the amount of time an instrumentalist spends with their equipment. Like any professional whose work relies on a particular tool, musicians often find it stressful to be separated from their kit. I once interviewed a violinist who took her fiddle into the toilet cubicle with her, despite offers from myself and her publicist to babysit it in her brief absence. But then, when the violin in question is a Stradivarius worth thousands – if not millions – of pounds, I wouldn't let it out of my sight, either.

The practicalities of life as a jobbing musician mean that instrumentalists travel regularly. Although some airlines, such as easyJet, have adopted 'musician-friendly' rules – in part down to a lively

campaign led by the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) – others remain inflexible. British Airways is the latest carrier to become embroiled in the debate after recently changing the wording of its hand baggage policy to appear to no longer guarantee that instruments such as violins

“I once met a violinist who took her fiddle into the toilet with her, despite my offer to babysit”

and guitars can be placed in overhead lockers inside the cabin. The company has since agreed to review the detail, in conversation with the ISM. The fun begins before musicians even reach the check-in desk, though: this week, the Carducci Quartet tweeted that they had been told their instruments were not allowed on the Heathrow airport bus. (Sidenote: singers don't get away unscathed from travelling, as depicted via

memes of sopranos wearing over-sized scarfs, and keyboardists tend to get what they're given, which varies hugely depending on the venue.)

Words: Claire Jackson @claireiswriting