

THE RUSSELL HOWARD HOUR ANNOUNCES CHRISTMAS SPECIAL PLUS ADDS MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY AND TIM MINCHIN TO UPCOMING GUEST LINE-UP

"hugely physical with his performances and relentlessly funny."
Iman Amrani, The Guardian

"if anyone can put a smile on our face when it comes to the latest developments across the nation and around the globe, it's surely Russell Howard. Smart but with a more engaging personality than other satirists"

★★★★ **Mark Wareham, The Mail on Sunday**

It was announced today, 12th November, that **Russell Howard** will take a look back at the biggest moments this year alongside chatting to a special guest, inviting his favourite performers including **London Hughes, Aisling Bea** and **Guz Khan** to reflect on festive 'Life Lessons' and celebrating 2020's 'Good Deeds' in a jam packed Christmas special episode of *The Russell Howard Hour* on Thursday 17th December on Sky One and NOWTV at 10pm. Academy Award® winning actor **Matthew McConaughey** and Olivier Award® winning comedian and musician **Tim Minchin** have also been added to the guest line-up for shows transmitting on the 19th and 26th November respectively.

Russell has returned to present his satirical take on global news, politics and stories dominating the cultural zeitgeist with the fourth series of *The Russell Howard Hour*. The critically acclaimed and highly topical show was the most successful entertainment series to launch on Sky One and has since amassed over 400 million views on social media with multiple segments going viral such as: a [passionate backing of the British police](#) (10 million views), [a case for millennials](#) (7 million views), [a dissection of the porn industry](#) (6 million views), [an anti-vaxxers takedown](#) (3.5 million views) and [Why Can't Boris Talk in Proper Sentences?](#) (1.9 million views).

Russell is once again conducting in-depth interviews with guests both in studio and via a satellite link, with the show featuring interviews with an array of fascinating guests previously including; **Ed Sheeran, Jim Carrey, Jack Black, Naomi Klein, Louis Theroux, Tyson Fury, John Oliver, Alesha Dixon, Elizabeth Banks, Dizzee Rascal, Elizabeth Day, Tan France, Brian Cox, Armando Iannucci, Mo Gilligan**, Cambridge Analytica reporter **Carole Cadwalladr**, disability activist **Sinead Burke** and KKK converter **Daryl Davis**.

The show has also seen the return of **Good Deeds**, championing the nation's spirit of generosity, plus intimate live performances from comedians and musicians. For the first time, in a new strand titled **Life Lessons**, Russell is joined by well-known faces and emerging talent to tackle life's biggest questions head on.

Every episode is available to watch worldwide on Russell's [YouTube channel](#), which has over one million subscribers and is broadcast in Australia close to UK transmission on Sky One and NOW TV.

During the first lockdown, Russell was on our screens presenting a new Sky One show, *Russell Howard's Home Time*, from his childhood bedroom. Russell is currently on his (postponed due to Coronavirus) third and largest world tour *Respite* which will take him to 69 cities across 24 countries in 5 continents, and started with a sold-out, critically acclaimed UK arena run in Autumn 2019. Russell's 2017 sell-out international tour, *Round the World*, saw him break the record for the largest English speaking stand-up show in China and play a record-breaking 10 night run at the Royal Albert Hall, overtaking 8 in a row jointly held by **Frank Sinatra** and **Barry Manilow**. The tour culminated with the global release of Netflix Special *Recalibrate*.

Russell has over 6 million followers on social media.

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Other Things The Press Said About The Russell Howard Hour:

★★★★ Heat Magazine ★★★★★ The Daily Star ★★★★★ TV Times ★★★★★ The Daily Express ★★★★★ Star Magazine

"one of the world's top comedians"
Martin Hemming, The Sunday Times

"Howard's routines provide a more pointed critique of government incompetence and malfeasance than you might expect...his interview segments offer extended chats with an eclectic range of guests beyond the same old roster of celebrities"
Jack Seale, Radio Times

"Altogether more politicised and hard-hitting....It was a treat to find Howard showing so much bite... it's not often you get such spiky satire on Sky1...Howard and his Hour should be applauded."
Michael Hogan, The Daily Telegraph

"A welcome return for comedian Russell Howard and his sardonic but ultimately affirmative and optimistic take on global news and politics. What sets Howard apart from other TV satirists is his faith in human nature."
Ed Power, The i

"With previous guests including the likes of Louis Theroux, Naomi Klein, Jim Carrey and Ed Sheeran, expect Howard to be joined in the studio and via video link by start to talk through the coronavirus pandemic, the US presidential election and whatever other surprises 2020 still has in store for us"
Ammar Kalia, The Observer and The Guardian

"Underestimate Russell Howard at your peril. The broad grin and general bonhomie may suggest someone from the fluffier end of comedy, but behind that smile is a performer with real teeth ready to tear into current affairs and the many failings of our lords and masters. Now he's back for a fourth series of the Sky One show that provides a platform for his stand-up act, along with interviews with a diverse range of personalities from politics and showbiz, plus performances by guest comics"
Mark Wareham, The Mail On Sunday

"There is no denying the popularity of Russell. As his topical comedy returns for its fourth series, the numbers it can boast are staggering- it's had over 400 million views on social media and has covered topics as varied as the porn industry and Ku Klux Klan"
Eleanor Relf, The Sun

"sharper than is widely believed; this fourth series of stand-up should see him with plenty to get his teeth into"
Gabriel Tate, The Telegraph

"the star doesn't shy away from the biggest news stories of the week...hilarious"
Louis Staples, The Independent

"a big hit for Sky"
Forbes

"Matt Hancock has been hilariously skewered by Russell Howard in a viral video mocking the Conservative politician."
Darren Richman, The Independent

"Comedian Russell Howard has taken on one of Matt Hancock's general election video tweets, and won."
Mia Jankowicz, The New European

"comedian Russell Howard has given Cleverly a taste of his own medicine on Twitter by doctoring, sorry editing, sorry, shortening these clips of the Tory party chairman. And the results are very satisfying indeed"
The Poke

"No show makes the current dreadful political of the world funnier than The Russell Howard Hour...the entire hour is worth watching for each and every instalment...sure to have you belly laughing. Howard also does some of the very best interviews in the biz....If you're looking for a show that will help you find just a sliver of hope and joy in the world, this is the one for you."

Lea Palmieri, Decider (US)

"The Russell Howard Hour, a weekly comedy series on Sky 1 in which Howard brings his characteristic wit and observational humor to the stories dominating the cultural zeitgeist."

Dane Rivera, UPROXX (US)

"Russell Howard has truly gone global...Though he may be known for his cheeky, happy-go-lucky demeanour, Howard has never been one to shy away from the bigger issues...Whether it's highlighting child hunger, unashamed praise for the police, or taking aim at Trumps' views on transgender people in the military, the varying topics are all things Howard has a strong opinion on."

Alex Nelson, The i

"a refreshing antidote to the default world-weary cynicism of so many of his comedy peers."

Sharon Lougher, Metro

"no one can seriously deny him his place at comedy's top table...the way in which Howard views the world has changed. He is more reflective, less flippant, than he used to be"

Rupert Hawksley, The Daily Telegraph

What the press has said about Russell's current stand-up tour, Respite:

"Howard is a megastar"

★★★★ Allan Radcliffe, The Times

"Howard's presence and manner are honed art forms, and his pacing is close to perfection. His set is tightly-packed, relentless, accelerating and energetic. But every word is crystal clear. This tightrope between rushing and dragging is rarely so well walked."

★★★★ Alex Bruce, Chortle

"In Respite he takes stock of the current chaos and concludes that we need more fun.... Howard says laughter brings people together. It certainly did last night."

★★★★ Bruce Dessau, Evening Standard

"Hero's return for the uplifting comedy king...Howard is undeniably one of the biggest names in comedy"

★★★★ Josh Stephenson, Metro

"Howard masterfully builds a show that is hilarious and convincing in equal manner"

★★★★ Owen Richards, The i

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Russell Howard:

- Russell was most recently on our screens twice a week presenting a new Sky One show, *Russell Howard's Home Time*, from his childhood bedroom for which he donated his fee to NHS Charities Together and The Trussell Trust. The series saw Russell give his unique perspective on current world events, as he chatted to some famous faces and interesting people in lockdown including Marc Maron, Jack Whitehall, Louis Theroux, Katherine Ryan, Greg Davies, Michelle Wolf, John Richardson, Guz Khan, James Bay, Stephen Merchant, Kasabian's Serge Pizzorno, and heroes on the front line including Bafta and Emmy award winning film maker Hassan Akkad, intensive care doctor Aoife Abbey and mental health volunteer Caitlin Grant.
- Russell began his third and largest world tour *Respite* with a sold-out and critically-acclaimed UK arena run in Autumn 2019. In total, the rescheduled tour will take Russell to 69 cities across 24 countries in 5 continents with 250,000 tickets already sold to date.
- Earlier this year Russell was on our screens with the third series of *The Russell Howard Hour* on Sky One. The show was the most successful new entertainment series to launch on the channel since 2010 and has since received over 400 million views across social media as a result of multiple segments going viral. Filmed in front of a studio audience, Russell conducts in-depth wider social interviews with an array of interesting people after having guests including Ed Sheeran, John Oliver, Alesha Dixon, Chris O'Dowd, Naomi Klein, Jamie Oliver, Louis Theroux, Diane Abbott, Greg Davies, Fiona Bruce, Richard Curtis, Stephen Merchant, Jack Black and Elizabeth Banks to name a few. The fourth, fourteen-part series (14 x 60') is already commissioned.
- Russell Howard and his mum Ninette were on our screens with the fourth series of Comedy Central's *Russell Howard & Mum: Globetrotters* in 2019. The first three series reached 4.2M individuals, with the first series being the highest rated new commission on the channel the year it launched. After achieving as much as +241% on the 16-34s slot average and +172% on the adults slot average, series three and four were commissioned with extended episodes.
- A Netflix special of Russell's previous critically acclaimed world tour titled *Recalibrate* launched worldwide in December 2017.
- Russell's 2017 sell-out international tour, *Round the World* saw him play a total of 87 dates with runs in the UK, USA, Canada, Europe, China, New Zealand and Australia. This tour also saw a record-breaking 10-night run at the Royal Albert Hall, overtaking eight in a row jointly held by Frank Sinatra and Barry Manilow, and performing the biggest ever stand-up show in China.
- Whilst Russell was touring *Round The World* in 2017, his previous stand-up show *Wonderbox* (2014) went viral with 15 million views in China (with Mandarin subtitles) and 55 million views worldwide. Russell Crowe and Stephen Fry are amongst some of the Twitterati who shared the heart-warming story of Russell and a sick fan's triumph over adversity.
- The last series of *Russell Howard's Good News* saw multiple sections go viral, including a passionate backing of junior doctors and the NHS (8.2 million views), an interview destigmatising Tourette's (4.9 million views) and a demonstration of the absurdity of the tampon tax (10.2 million views).
- *Russell Howard's Good News* is available around the world via a YouTube channel launched in 2014 – allowing fans to watch full episodes of the show (without piracy) in countries where the show wasn't already broadcast – and has had over 48 million views and been watched in 180 countries (including North Korea and Vatican City)
- Christmas 2015 saw Russell's first comedy-drama with the premiere of, *A Gert Lush Christmas* (BBC Two). As well as co-writing the special, Russell starred for the first time along-side his sister Kerry Howard (*Him & Her*, BBC Three), Greg Davies (*The Inbetweeners*, *Man Down*, Channel 4), Neil Morrissey (*Men Behaving Badly*, *Waterloo Road*, BBC1), and Sophie Thompson (*EastEnders*, BBC1).
- Russell's stand-up series, *Russell Howard's Stand Up Central*, which aired from April 2015 on Comedy Central (UK) achieved viewing figures of 159% above the slot average for its first episode.
- Episodes of *Russell Howard's Good News* have even been subtitled and uploaded to Chinese video site AcFun, where the show has also been watched over 4 million times.

- Russell has over 6 million followers on social media.
- 10 series of *Russell Howard's Good News* has seen Russell write and star in 96 episodes.
- *Russell Howard's Good News* was regularly the most watched show on iPlayer across all BBC Channels.
- On the 10th anniversary of the channel, a poll of over 10,000 readers of *Digital Spy* voted *Russell Howard's Good News* as the best ever BBC Three Show, beating shows such as *Little Britain* and *Gavin & Stacey*
- Russell's 2014 *Wonderbox* tour saw him perform to over 285,000 fans at 40 shows across the UK and Ireland, including four consecutive nights at London's Royal Albert Hall.
- Russell extended his 2014 *Wonderbox* tour across the world following over 17,000 suggestions from his fans after he asked them via Facebook where they'd most like to see him perform. The extra sold out dates saw Russell travel to New York, LA, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington DC, Denver, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Auckland.
- Russell's tour in 2011, *Right Here, Right Now* saw him perform to over 240,000 fans across the country, including three sold out dates at London's O2 arena.
- Russell performed to over one million people on his UK and international tours from 2006-2014.
- Russell Howard has four bestselling stand-up DVDs, 2014's *Wonderbox Live*, 2011's *Right Here, Right Now*, 2008's *Russell Howard Live* and 2009's *Russell Howard Live – Dingleberries*, which have sold over 619,000 DVDs and all been in the top 5 DVD comedy chart.
- Russell was voted Heat Magazine's "Weird Crush of the Year 2013"
- Russell made 58 appearances on *Mock The Week* between 2006 and 2010.
- In addition to being a regular on *Mock The Week*, Russell was twice featured on *Live At The Apollo* and appeared on *Would I Lie To You* (BBC One), *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* (BBC Two), and *8 Out 10 Cats* (Channel 4).
- In 2010 Russell took part in the Sport Relief Million Pound Bike Ride with David Walliams, Jimmy Carr, Fearne Cotton, Miranda Hart, Patrick Kielty and Davina McCall – cycling 874 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End in 4 days and raising over £1,337.099.
- In 2010 Russell ran the London Marathon, raising money for the National Society for Epilepsy – a condition from which his brother suffers. He completed the 26 mile course in 4 hours and 15 minutes and raised over £7,000.
- Russell Howard's fifth ever stand-up gig got him to the final of Channel 4's *So You Think You're Funny*.
- In 2006 Russell Howard was nominated for the Edinburgh Fringe Comedy Award for his show *Wandering*, which followed with a nationwide sell-out tour.
- From November 2006 to July 2008, Russell co-hosted The Russell Howard Show (BBC 6 Music) with fellow comedian Jon Richardson in a Sunday morning slot previously hosted by Russell Brand.

About Avalon

Avalon is a multi-award-winning talent management, television production and live promotion group with offices in London, Los Angeles and New York.

The company represents a prolific roster of artists including comedians, actors, presenters, writers and directors and produces numerous ground-breaking television shows. Series currently in production include: *Not Going Out* (BBC), the UK's longest running sitcom on air; *Taskmaster* (Channel 4), the hit entertainment format showing in 100 countries; multi Emmy-winner, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (HBO); *The Russell Howard Hour* (Sky), the network's most successful entertainment show launch since 2010; *Starstruck*, a new sitcom from the 2018 Edinburgh Comedy Award winner Rose Matafeo (HBO)

Max/BBC); *Everything's Gonna Be Okay*, from creator Josh Thomas (Freeform); *Breeders*, a new sitcom starring Martin Freeman and Daisy Haggard (FX/Sky); *The Iliza Shlesinger Sketch Show* (Netflix); new series of the iconic British satirical puppet show, *Spitting Image* (BritBox UK); and multiple comedy specials for Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max and Netflix. Other landmark Avalon shows include BAFTA winning and multi Emmy nominated, *Catastrophe* (Amazon Prime Video/Channel 4), *Fantasy Football League* (BBC/ITV), multi BAFTA-winning TV *Burp* (ITV), and seven seasons of *Workaholics* (Comedy Central USA). Avalon also distributes its catalogue of programmes to over 150 countries worldwide.

As a leading promoter of live comedy, Avalon produced *Newman and Baddiel: Live at Wembley*, the UK's first arena comedy show; *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the first West End show to win all four UK 'Best New Musical' awards; and has continued to produce and promote live shows globally, as well as promoting more winners and nominees of the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Award than any other company.

For Avalon news visit: www.avalonuk.com/press or follow @avalonent

About Sky

With 24 million customers across seven countries, Sky is Europe's leading media and entertainment company and is proud to be part of the Comcast group. Our 32,000 employees help connect our customers to the very best entertainment, sports, news, arts and to our own local, original content.

Following the success of Sky originals like *Chernobyl*, we plan to double our investment in original content by 2024. We're also developing a new TV and movie studio, Sky Studios Elstree, which is expected to lead to the creation of over 2,000 new jobs and generate an additional £3 billion of production investment in UK creative sector in the first five years alone.

Our technology allows customers to watch what they want, when they want, how they want, and as we connect millions of families to content they love, we believe it is our responsibility to do it safely. That's why we offer services like Sky Broadband Buddy and the Sky Kids app. And our online streaming service, NOW TV, brings viewers all the enjoyment of Sky with the flexibility of a contract-free service.

We also believe that a company of our scale has a responsibility that goes beyond our business, and into the community. We recently announced a series of commitments to help tackle racial injustice and improve diversity and inclusion. To ensure the commitments are delivered, Sky will invest £10million per year across its markets for each of the next three years. We're committed to being Europe's first net zero carbon entertainment company by 2030 – two decades before we have to – and we're an inclusive employer recognised by The Times and Stonewall for our commitment to diversity.

About NOW TV

NOW TV is a leading UK streaming service, giving you the best TV, box sets, movies, sports and kids entertainment whenever, and wherever, you want it. Pick from the range of content passes including Entertainment, Sky Cinema, Sky Sports, Kids and reality TV with hayu.

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