

The Masked Singer

Starts Saturday 30 December at 7pm on ITV1, ITVX and STV

The show that has the nation chanting 'take it off!' is back, as The Masked Singer returns to ITV1, ITVX and STV.

Hosted by our very own ringmaster, Joel Dommett, our super sleuths return as Davina McCall, Rita Ora, Jonathan Ross and Mo Gilligan are back in the detective chairs as the guessing game begins all over again.

Hoping to join our hall of fame of exclusive Masked Singer winners that includes Queen Bee (Nicola Roberts), Sausage (Joss Stone), Panda (Natalie Imbruglia) and Rhino (Charlie Simpson) are a brand-new cast of twelve celebrities playing twelve characters in the show's signature extraordinary costumes as they take to the stage to sing in disguise and stump the panel and viewers alike.

Introducing this year's characters:

They're a real HOOT... it's **OWL**

Here for a FRYING visit... it's **AIR FRYER**

They're everyone's cup of tea... it's **BUBBLE TEA**

They're made of steely stuff... it's **EIFFEL TOWER**

Ready to take it to the maximus – it's **CHICKEN CAESAR**

Hoping they can sink their teeth into their performance... it's **PIRANHA**

Here to lead us on a merry dance... it's **MAYPOLE**

Ready to bowl you over... it's **CRICKET**

Things are about to get hairy...it's **BIGFOOT**

Guaranteed to give a cracking performance ... its **DIPPY EGG**

Ready to storm the stage...it's **WEATHER**

Get ready to scream and jump on a chair... it's **RAT**

AND HERE IS YOUR FIRST CLUE...





For the first time in The Masked Singer history we hear from each of our characters ahead of the launch of the new series:

BUBBLE TEA said, “My favourite thing about becoming Bubble Tea is just being able to be really playful.”

AIR FRYER said, “Being on The Masked Singer is petrifying and freeing all at the same time.”

DIPPY EGG said, “This is a once in a lifetime experience.”

WEATHER said: “You know the weather is very unpredictable.”

EIFFEL TOWER said, “I’m a huge fan of the show, it was a blast.”

RAT said, “The nerves I had for the Masked Singer are the worst nerves I’ve had in my entire life.”

MAYPOLE said, “Keeping it secret actually hasn't been that hard for me. I've decided to just hide in plain sight!”

OWL said: “I just want to have fun!”

PIRANHA said, “Everything about this show is completely surreal”.

CRICKET said: “I like the fun content of The Masked Singer, I could be creative!”

CHICKEN CAESAR said: “I'm Chicken Caesar! It's great to be here”.

BIGFOOT: "Bigfoot just wants to have a good time and for the audience to have a good time!"

Do you think you know who's hiding behind the mask?



HOST:

JOEL DOMMETT

How excited are you to be back?

Very excited. It's really cool. I think it's certainly the best series, but I think definitely my best series just because of my child arriving. I feel like it's all so joyous and fun. I am viewing it all in an entirely different way. I think that's what happens when you have children anyway and the fact that kids in the audience love it so much, I think it puts that entirely into a new context for me and I just love being a part of it.

The show won a BAFTA, what do you think that says about the show?

I think that's really important for any show. People always took us seriously, but now people really have to take us seriously. We're a BAFTA winning show. It's just entertainment at its finest and, yes, it's silly, but maybe that's what entertainment should be. It's just silly, ridiculous telly that we can all really enjoy.

What do you make of the costumes this year?

Honestly, they are the best costumes ever. If they don't make you smile, well, get out! Air Fryer is unbelievably silly. It's so liberating to be a part of a show where first of all, people really enjoy it and also from my point of view, any idea I have, it's fair game. Even when it comes to the suits! I have a suit which has crazy patterns and kind of looks like wallpaper. So I said to the producers "Could I start the show as the wallpaper?" and make a joke of that? It's so cool as a creative person to just think of something and then it happens. It's the best job ever.

How would you rate the singing this year?

I think we've definitely got some of the best vocalists we've ever had on the show and we've had some really incredible ones in the past. The show goes through an interesting meandering of, we are all here for all the new characters, but then maybe

the better singers start to get through in the last rounds, usually the final. Let's be honest, it's usually really incredible singers left at that point. This year I really do feel like we've got some of the best we've ever had.

PANEL:

DAVINA MCCALL

When you signed up to The Masked Singer, did you have any idea how emotional you'd be watching people dressed in funny costumes, singing their hearts out?

I think there's so many emotional aspects to this show that I wasn't really prepared for! I knew it was going to be fun and I knew it was going to be a bit ridiculous, but I hadn't factored in what it feels like to watch little kids in the studio and seeing how invested they are. Also, I hadn't factored in what it might mean to the singers. So for lots of singers, it's overcoming a huge fear that they've had. It might be doing something for their kids that they wanted to surprise them with. It might be just for the hell of it. And also how weirdly emotional it can be. This series Weather is an interesting character because they have such a beautiful costume and then an unmistakable voice.

You won a BAFTA last year, what do you think that says about the series?

It always swings hugely from being sublimely ridiculous to really stunning and magical. There's a million reasons why I believe it deserves a BAFTA, because if you haven't watched it, you'd think, "Oh, that's just a ridiculous show", but it's so much more than that. There's so many aspects. There's the entertainment aspect. There's the quiz aspect. There's the bit where you can take part in it at home alongside everybody else. It's massive online because everybody's going, "No, I think it's this person. No, actually this person." We've gone next level with the clues this year and they really are disguising their voices. Joel's on the best form ever. His links are so funny. It's different from any other big shiny floor entertainment show because you are not voting somebody off, the audience chooses who are in the bottom two, and they choose who are in the bottom two generally out of a mixture of talent and fun.

How have you prepared for this series?

Do you know what? I've been looking through all the celebrity magazines to see who's around at the moment. I've been doing my homework!

You made Masked Singer history last year with the most amount of correct guesses, what's your secret and are you feeling the pressure this year?

I have no secret, because it's gone this year! I might be a one hit wonder! I don't like it when I know 100% who it is. It actually takes the fun out of it for me. It's much more enjoyable when you think, "do you know what? I think it's this person, but I'm probably wrong".

JONATHAN ROSS

So we're back for series 5...

It's great to be back on The Masked Singer and I can't wait for everyone to see it because it really is a great series. There's something for everyone!

The show won a BAFTA, what do you think that says about the show?

We know the show is popular, because of course we know it gets big viewing figures, but I think maybe it just reflects the fact that people do love the big, silly spectacle of it all. The format is such a strong, such a strange and a unique one and I think that's what people are responding to. It's fun, silly, doesn't take itself seriously, it's beautifully made and always looks spectacular. There's some really good reveals every week. So I think it won the award because people are responding to the fact that it's a really different show and it's really lovely. So much work goes into making it as good as possible.

Do you do any preparation before the show starts?

Yes! I write a big long list of people who I think, conceivably, either UK celebrities or Americans or people who are in the UK who might do the show and I make another list of people who I think absolutely wouldn't do it, because on the one hand you never know, and on the other hand it is good to guess an outrageous name. Then I'll do a list of comedy guesses just so I've got kind of lots of names at my fingertips. My best guess this year is Ryan Reynolds. He's in Wrexham a lot of the time now. You never know. I mean, he's up for a laugh!

What do you make of the costumes this year?

I love all of them. I really loved Weather. I thought that was a really beautiful, quite romantic, quite poetic looking costume. I liked Piranha a lot. They're fun, I have to say. Bubble Tea is great. Well, Bubble Tea and Air Fryer make the show very, very modern, don't they? There's a couple of phrases that weren't in common conversation two or three years ago, and now we've got them dancing on primetime ITV1!

RITA ORA

How excited are you to be back with the Masked Singer gang?

It's amazing to be back. I love being with everyone, we have so much fun together.

Do you think everybody's bringing their 'A' game in terms of singing?

The voices are the best I've ever heard, and the personalities are so amazing. It's super versatile. It just gets better. When you're coming on this show, this is a BAFTA winning show! It's a really amazing kind of family show.

You've been working on the US version of the show as well, what's that been like?

I have missed three episodes and I hate missing this show. It's one of my favourite things to do, I love the panel, I love having this job and I love doing this show. I've come back with better detective skills, I'd like to think. We'll see how good they are but I am very grateful and happy to be back. These guys are like family.

How would you say the talent over here compares to what you saw in the US?

Oh my gosh, it's completely different. Of course the talent for me, I'm biased, because this is my home, it's fantastic. This show in general, the format is just so

insane. So, wherever you go in the world, it's kind of the same energy, to be honest, because the show is just that crazy and the costumes are just as crazy as well.

MO GILLIGAN

Are you enjoying being back with the Masked Singer gang?

It's good to be back on a new series. I think that's the cool thing about doing The Masked Singer, it never feels the same. You are always second guessing who might be taking part. Is it someone I just spoke to recently? Is it someone I've grown up watching and idolising? Or is it just someone where I'm just going to be gobsmacked and shocked? It's the one thing I do each year that just never feels the same, which is just fantastic.

The show won a BAFTA, what do you think that says about The Masked Singer?

I think it's amazing. The Masked Singer has its place amongst Saturday night TV with this award behind it, it's just incredible. I meet people or friends of mine who have kids and they have so many questions for me, they love it, can't get enough of it. It's nice that people ask me questions like, "Do you really not know who it is?" And I meet a lot of taxi drivers and they're always asking me who people are. The way it's captured the nation's imagination is really cool. So to have a BAFTA award, we're up there with the Saturday night greats.

What do you make of the costumes in this series?

I love the costumes! It's something I really look forward to each series. I'm like, "What are they going to produce this year?" Whether it's Bubble Tea or Rat or Dippy Egg, the imagination that gets put in these costumes, you can't even believe. It's so hard to explain when there's a new series and you say a name like Chicken Caesar and it's a chicken dressed as Julius Caesar or you say we have a Piranha that is smiling in pyjamas, that is the concept. It's totally mad!

What's it been like backstage this series?

Everyone comes out of their dressing rooms and it's like coming out on a catwalk, I can't lie. Everyone's wearing really cool stuff for the show, whether it's disco week or circus week! There's some very good outfits that we've all got lined up!

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