

# NEWS RELEASE



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December 6, 2023

**For immediate release**

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## MPT to premiere locally produced *Christmas Couples' Retreat*

**Film anchors nearly 70 hours of holiday programming airing throughout December**

**OWINGS MILLS, MD** – Maryland Public Television (MPT) will air *Christmas Couples' Retreat* on Sunday, December 17 at 3 p.m. on MPT-HD. The film will make its broadcast premiere as part of nearly 70 hours of programming offered by the statewide public TV network to recognize the winter holidays. A preview of the film is available [HERE](#).

In *Christmas Couples' Retreat*, three couples (Christene Marie, Vincent De Paul, Karina Michel, Tony DiVirgilio, Sherrod Taylor, and Dana May Jamison) make a friendly pact to attend a retreat over the holidays to strengthen their respective relationships. A famed therapist (Vanessa Meadows) guides the couples through old frustrations, new feelings, and the arrival of an uninvited guest. Find out if a cozy vacation in an idyllic mansion and a little holiday magic will be enough to help them rekindle romance.



*Christmas Couples' Retreat* was filmed in **Baltimore County** at the famed [Gramercy Mansion](#). The historic Tudor mansion, which sits on 45 acres of land in **Stevenson**, was commissioned in 1902 by Alexander Cassatt, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and brother to renowned painter Mary Cassatt.

*Christmas Couples' Retreat* is produced by [Five Arts Films](#) and is directed by Baltimore native Salvatore Zannino. “*Christmas Couples' Retreat* is a festive, heartwarming, evergreen story,” says Zannino. “I’m thrilled to share it with families during the most joyous time of the year.”

MPT’s local presentation of *Christmas Couples' Retreat* is made possible through the support of Citron Restaurant and the Chesapeake Film Festival.

*Christmas Couples' Retreat* airs as part of MPT’s festive holiday programming. Additional programs airing on MPT-HD and MPT2/Create® surrounding the December holidays include the culinary delight *Mary Berry's Highland Christmas*, the perennial favorite holiday special of *Call the Midwife*, and the enchanting sounds of *Season of Light: Christmas with the Tabernacle Choir*.

Several MPT shows and specials will also contribute to the holiday lineup in December. The public affairs program *Direct Connection*, which airs Mondays at 7 p.m., will devote much of its programming to holiday consumer tips. The popular series *Maryland Farm & Harvest* and *Artworks* will air holiday specials throughout the month. Festive MPT-produced specials, including *Hal Prince's Broadway* and *Jewish Delis: Something to Kvell About!* will round out the season's offerings.

In addition to airing on MPT-HD, MPT2/Create® and through each channel's livestream, programs celebrating the holidays can be found at [mpt.org/holidayprograms](http://mpt.org/holidayprograms), on MPT's [online video player](#), and on the [PBS App](#).

## **MPT primetime holiday premieres**

### **[Season of Light: Christmas with the Tabernacle Choir](#) – Tues., Dec. 12, 8 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

Prepare to be enchanted this holiday season when Lea Salonga and Sir David Suchet join forces with The Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra. Tune in for timeless carols, treasured Christmas songs and a heartwarming story of heroic service.

### **[America's Test Kitchen Special: Home for the Holidays](#) – Wed., Dec. 13, 9 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

The entire cast is home for the holidays, and they're sharing their tips and tricks for planning a stress-free gathering, while also recounting personal holiday memories and revealing their all-time favorite holiday recipes from the Test Kitchen archives.

### **[Christmas Couples' Retreat](#) – Sun., Dec. 17, 3 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

Three couples attend a retreat during the holidays to strengthen their respective relationships. New feelings emerge when one couple's son shows up to the retreat uninvited and falls for the manager. The famed therapist guiding the retreat works through feelings of her own after getting to know the groundskeeper.

### **[Debbie Gibson Holiday](#) – Mon., Dec. 18, 8 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Singer-songwriter, producer, and actress Debbie Gibson shares insight and inspiration about recording her first holiday album *Winterlicious* and performs some classic and new holiday hits. Singer Joey McIntyre of *New Kids on the Block* also discusses what it's like working with Gibson. Hosted by Jen Eckert at the Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, N.J. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **[Mary Berry's Highland Christmas](#) – Mon., Dec. 18, 9 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

Mary Berry is coming to the rescue of three sets of people who need her help to put on a "fantastic feast" as a spectacular treat for a loved one in this series. In each episode Mary Berry and her two celebrity helpers will teach inexperienced cooks a selection of delicious and impressive dishes so they can wow their families, friends, or workmates at a special party.

### **[The Savoy at Christmas](#) – Tues., Dec. 19, 8 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

The holiday season has arrived at The Savoy and staff welcome hundreds of guests and diners across Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. Go behind-the-scenes during the holiday festivities as every department prepares. Narrated by Celia Imrie. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **[George Perris – The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!](#) – Wed., Dec. 20, 9 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Join George Perris and his big band as they celebrate the holiday season with a special performance filmed from his home country of Greece. In addition to Christmas carols, George and the band perform spiritual and uplifting songs every family loves to hear and holiday classics with a Greek flair.

***A Christmas Carol Goes Wrong* – Sat., Dec. 23, 9 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Blacklisted by the BBC, the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society do not take their ban lying down and force themselves back on the BBC by hijacking a production of *A Christmas Carol*. More information is available [HERE](#).

***Christmas at Westminster: An Evening of Readings and Carols* – Sat., Dec. 23, 10 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Westminster Choir College presents their yearly holiday music concert. Recorded in the Princeton University Chapel, the program features more than 400 musicians in five different choirs. Together with a number of secular readings, the evening brings beauty and comfort to viewers at this special time of year.

***Call the Midwife Holiday Special* – Mon., Dec. 25, 8 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

With Christmas approaching, the midwives move to their maternity clinic and are delighted when their first patient is a familiar face. Life in Poplar returns to normal after the tragic train crash, and everyone unites for a festive talent show.

***Cultural Expressions: Kwanzaa* – Tues., Dec 26, 8 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

This one-hour documentary explores the seven principles that are the foundation of Kwanzaa by sharing seven real-life stories of impact. These stories reveal how each principle plays a role in the Black community, enhanced by cultural elements of dance, storytelling, music, and spoken word. More information is available [HERE](#).

***Karamu: Feast for the 7th Day* – Tues., Dec 26, 8 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Host Sira Williams explores the tradition of Kwanzaa and demonstrates how to prepare a traditional feast for Karamu, the seventh day celebration. More information is available [HERE](#).

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**About Maryland Public Television**

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and [Thinkport.org](http://Thinkport.org). MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit [mpt.org](http://mpt.org).