**Madrid, 24 November 2023**

**The city will offer a broad programme of cultural and leisure activities with the theme “Madrid, A City with a Star”**

**The districts take centre stage in the city council's Christmas programme**

* **The magic of the Star of Bethlehem will light up Madrid and its tail will leave dazzling art installations in five districts**
* **The cultural programme includes hundreds of activities in different districts: parades, workshops, concerts, theatre, circus, choir performances and markets**
* **From the magnificent Nativity scene in Madrid City Hall to the traditional Neapolitan Nativity scene at the Royal Palace, Madrid’s Nativity scene itinerary passes through all the city’s districts**
* **Madrid will fill with music as it hosts concerts in its squares, balconies and churches**
* **There will be northern lights in Centro, a candy cane forest in Barajas, a giant snow globe in Carabanchel, a walk full of presents in Tetuán and iridescent Christmas baubles in Arganzuela**
* **The Royal Emissaries will visit booksellers along Cuesta de Moyano to find out what the city's little ones—and not so little ones—like to read**
* **Estrella Morente is the guest artist who will perform with the Madrid Municipal Symphonic Band (BSMM) in the traditional Epiphany charity concert at Teatro Real**
* **The 2024 Three Kings Parade, inspired by the gift of innocence as a symbol of unity and respect for different generations, will pay tribute to our elderly**
* **The USA is the guest country at *Madrid, Navidad de Encuentro* in Matadero Madrid, a venue which will host some of the city’s main Christmas events**

This year’s Christmas programme, themed “Madrid, A City with a Star” and put together by the Department of Culture, Tourism and Sport, was presented today in the Casa de la Villa building by Madrid’s mayor, José Luis Martínez-Almeida.The Star of Bethlehem will arrive in Madrid’s sky and will leave a tangible trail in five districts (Carabanchel, Tetuán, Arganzuela, Centro and Barajas), with light art installations we’ll be able to enjoy from 15 to 22 December. Every year, the Star of Bethlehem will rotate so that its tail can eventually reach all of Madrid’s districts.

“Today kicks off a programme that will allow us to enjoy a time of peace and love”, said Almeida, who encouraged listeners to enjoy it “from any part of the city, in all of its districts, which will host a very broad range of cultural expressions”. The mayor also underlined that Madrid would welcome “the extraordinary culture of the United States” this Christmas, saying that the guest country would “fill Matadero, an iconic space, with its unique view of Christmas, its cuisine, its culture, its decorations and its ornaments”.

**Magic all over the city**

Nativity scenes, music, theatre, film, parades, artisanal goods, food and an endless list of activities will be the focus of a varied and surprising programme of shows and activities for all audiences, designed with an emphasis on families and children and with the aim of paying tribute to the elderly, to whom the 2024 Three Kings Parade is dedicated. This year, the parade takes its inspiration from the gift of innocence as a symbol of unity and respect for different generations. All information regarding Christmas activities, including traditional markets and ice-skating rinks, is available at [www.navidadmadrid.com](http://www.navidadmadrid.com).

Christmas magic will light up the city with dazzling installations.In Barajas, an interactive candy cane forest will provide a unique visual and sensory experience (11am to 10pm). In Carabanchel, a giant interactive snow globe is set to plunge us into a winter wonderland (11am to 10pm). Tetuán will feature an illuminated interactive walk full of presents (11am to 11pm) and in Arganzuela, around Madrid Río Park, countless iridescent Christmas baubles will fill the space, creating a display of light and colour that transports the observer to a dream world (11am to 11pm).

In addition, Borealis, a captivating installation by Swiss artist Dan Acher, will transform the central courtyard of Condeduque Cultural Centre with the magical lights of the aurora borealis, challenging our perceptions and encouraging us to reflect on our relationship with nature and technology. The score, created by French composer Guillaume Desbois, will round out the sensory experience (7pm to 11pm).

**Saint Jerome: more beautiful than ever**

As it moves through the city, the tail of the Star of Bethlehem will also light up—in the form of an art intervention—one of the city's most iconic churches. The Church of Saint Jerome the Royal will become a surreal, many-hued fresco in a colour display that will take over and illuminate every last detail of its facade using a system created by Patrice Warrener, whose work has been displayed on the world's most important buildings. Madrid will host the installation on 21, 22 and 23 December from 6pm to 12 midnight. To complement the visual art at Los Jerónimos, on the night of 23 December the Choir of Low Voices of Madrid will give a magical performance. Conducted by Juan Pablo de Juan, the outstanding choir will offer a concert at three different times (6.30pm, 8pm and 9pm) on the church's staircase.

**Christmas will suffuse Madrid with music**

Christmas will fill the city with music as its streets, squares, balconies and churches host concerts that will infuse it with Christmas rhythms, melodies and sounds from every style and era of music, performed by jazz, classical, Baroque, soul, gospel, pop, swing and flamenco bands. In addition, on the Epiphany—which is dedicated to the elderly this year—a choir of boy sopranos will travel around the city giving concerts in different municipal centres.

On 17 December starting at 12.30 pm, the Zambombada de Madrid will travel through Plaza de la Villa, Calle Mayor, Calle de Santiago, Plaza de Ramales and Plaza de Oriente. The musical parade will welcome the festive season with traditional *rondallas* and *cuadrillas* from different parts of the region of Madrid and its neighbouring provinces. The music will continue with Navidad Castellana, a concert by Arrabel in the events room at Puerta de Toledo Cultural Centre (29 December at 7pm).

There will also be musical performances in some of the city’s most charming squares. First, in Cabo Noval Gardens (Plaza de Oriente), we’ll be able to hear Alaia (21 December at 8pm), followed by Christmas cantatas by Casas Regionales de Madrid Capital (22 and 23 December at 12 noon), whose members will wear the typical dress of their respective regions.

We’ll also be able to enjoy jazz renditions of Christmas carols by Antonio Serrano Sexteto (22 December at 8pm) and a flamenco *zambomba* concert with Remedios Reyes and Family (23 December at 8pm). This year, the emblematic Plaza de la Paja will join in the Christmas celebrations, hosting performances by Izo FitzRoy, a big name in contemporary soul (29 December at 8pm), La Casa Gitana, with a gypsy flamenco *zambombá* (30 December at 8pm), and Swing Engine Street Sextet (30 December at 8pm), with a set of jazz classics perfect for dancing.

Christmas music will also sound out on some of the city’s most iconic balconies, including those of Teatro Español, with performances by Rebeca Rods and Black Light Gospel Choir (19 December at 9pm) and María Mezcle (20 December at 9pm); Casa de la Panadería, with the Madrid Youth Choir (26 December at 8pm); and the Casa de la Villa building, with Gospel Ladies (27 December at 8pm) and Roni di Capo (28 December at 8pm).

As usual, this year we’ll also be able to enjoy the Music in Churches series. The Church of Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro will host performances by the Baroque classical music ensemble Forma Antiqva and by the Niño Josele Flamenco Band (19 and 20 December, respectively, at 8.30pm), while the Church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (28 and 29 December at 8pm) will feature Katia Guerreiro and Sandra Carrasco & David de Arahal. This year’s list of venues includes a new addition: the Parish Church of San Ginés (2 and 3 January at 6.30pm), which will host performances by Cecilia Bercovich and the KamBrass Quintet. Another series, Los Distritos Cantan (The Districts Sing), will be held from 21 December to 4 January in the CentroCentro auditorium in Cibeles Palace, organised in partnership with the Madrid Choir Federation. It’s a classic Christmas event which puts the spotlight on choirs from the city's different districts.

**Estrella Morente will light up Teatro Real with a dazzling Epiphany Concert**

Estrella means “star” in Spanish, and the artist will live up to her name this year at Teatro Real opera house. Organised by the city council and held every year on 5 January, the 2024 edition of the Epiphany Concert will feature Estrella Morente. Accompanied by the Madrid Municipal Symphonic Band (BSMM), conducted by Jan Cober, she will kick off the programme on a very special day (5 January at 12 noon). It will be a real experience and an opportunity to see flamenco rise to very special heights. It’s also a charity concert whose proceeds will go to the Aladina Foundation. Tickets will go on sale at 10.30am on 13 December at [www.teatroreal.es/es](http://www.teatroreal.es/es)

**Classic Nativity scenes around the city**

The itinerary of Madrid’s Nativity scenes includes the one displayed at Madrid City Hall, which is designed by the Association of Nativity Scene Makers of Madrid and includes the sea for the first time this year. The traditional popular scene leaves no doubt of the talent of master Nativity scene maker José Luis Mayo. The panoramic view, which features different heights and wrap-around scenic design with 360-degree visibility, provides a one-of-a-kind experience that combines tradition with contemporary creativity. Admission is free (subject to capacity limits) from 23 November to 5 January, from 10.30am to 7pm (special timetables: 24 and 31 December and 5 January, from 10.30am to 1pm; Closed Mondays and on 25 December and 1 January).

We’ll also be able to visit the Nativity scenes at San Isidro Museum, the Madrid History Museum, the Casa de Correos building (Madrid’s regional government headquarters) and the Royal Palace, as well as the traditional Nativity scenes displayed by Madrid's districts. As usual, this year Madrid’s itinerary of Nativity scenes includes the ones displayed in El Corte Inglés department stores.

***Madrid, Navidad de Encuentro* at Matadero Madrid**

Madrid is a welcoming city which embraces visitors and encourages them to share their customs and celebrations with us. This season, Matadero Madrid will turn into a meeting point which will host some of the city's main Christmas and family events. At the fifth edition of *Madrid, Navidad de Encuentro*, the United States will be the guest country. From 22 December to 3 January, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy, we’ll be able to enjoy a sample of the North American country’s cultural diversity in the form of music, literature, film, artisanal goods and gastronomy. In addition, we’ll be able to appreciate America’s rich soundscape on the stage in Plaza Matadero, with an eclectic range of morning and evening concerts. The USA will also have a presence in the Eñe Festival in Casa del Lector and in Nave 17-Aulario.

The spaces, also located in Matadero, will host a large number of offerings for the whole family and a very broad programme with everything from puppet shows to poetry to rap, as well as storytelling with tales from the native peoples of the Americas and stories in English, pictorial activities, performing arts, unique games, a roller disco, a food truck zone and an endless range of activities and experiences. There will also be outdoor spaces for kids and a large and carefully selected range of musical offerings.

What’s more, this year will bring a surprise: a blanket of snow will cover Plaza de Matadero every day, creating a magical atmosphere. As usual, the classic 600-square-metre ice rink will also be a key meeting place this year. In addition to skating on it ourselves, we’ll be able to watch free figure skating shows organised by the Madrid Winter Sports Federation.

Another option for skaters or people visiting the city centre or El Retiro Park is Amazon & Cibeles on Ice, the ice-skating rink in Cibeles Palace (No. 1 Calle Montalbán). Since 2012, the 400 m2 rink has been set up every Christmas in the Glass Gallery of Cibeles Palace, which will also host an immersive space this year which will include a Christmas market, among other activities.

**Traditional markets and offerings in Madrid’s districts**

Markets—like the one set up in Plaza Mayor, the most-visited in the city—are a traditional Christmas fixture in Madrid. This year they will be held in multiple squares. From Arganzuela to Carabanchel, and all over the city in places like Chamberí, Fuencarral, Moncloa and Puente de Vallecas, every one of the markets will have stalls devoted entirely to Christmas. Theatres, municipal centres and the city’s different districts will also offer special Christmas programmes with a varied range of offerings for everyone to enjoy.

This year, Madrid’s official Christmas poster was created by architect and illustrator Pablo García Conde, aka Polinho Trapalleiro, who took his inspiration from the essence of Madrid: its neighbourhoods and people.

**Accessibility**

Once again, this year everyone will be able to enjoy Christmas in Madrid, as the city council has put together a set of measures to make culture accessible, inclusive and safe. Touch tours and audio description, hearing induction loops and amplified sound, sign language interpretation and haptic backpacks will be available to the public—both adults and children—in venues like CentroCentro, Matadero Madrid and Teatro Circo Price as well as in workshops, concerts, storytelling sessions and other activities.

Accessible communication by means of cognitive accessibility will continue to be a focus this year, in partnership with the association Ventea for the first time. The programme of activities will be easy to understand for people with reading comprehension difficulties. In the accessibility section of the website and at scheduled events, there will be clear language explanations supported by visual aids, photographs and pictograms. All information regarding these measures can be found in the accessibility section of [www.navidadmadrid.com](http://www.navidadmadrid.com).

In partnership with the Department of Social Policies, Families and Equality, Christmas offerings will be made known to and facilitated for some vulnerable groups and people with difficulties accessing culture, in order to ensure access to the programmes in different municipal venues.

**Sponsors**

This year, the Christmas programme organised by Madrid City Council is sponsored by: Amazon, El Corte Inglés, Disney, Productores de Sonrisas and Urbaser. San Pablo CEU University Foundation is also taking part as an institutional partner.

All information regarding activities and tickets can be found at [www.navidadmadrid.com](http://www.navidadmadrid.com)

Press materials are available in the press area: [www.navidadmadrid.com/prensa](http://www.navidadmadrid.com/prensa)