

# Carrying on the legacy

**Martin Hutchinson** talks to Jimmy Osmond, ahead of his appearance at Guildford's G Live on 20 December

**F**OLLOWING the success of last years' tour, The Andy Williams Christmas Extravaganza is returning to the UK in December.

The show has been a staple at The Moon River Theatre in Missouri for many years and, following the passing of Andy Williams, The Osmonds wanted to carry the tradition on and continue Andy's legacy. The season ends early in Missouri, and last year Jimmy Osmond thought it would be a good idea to bring the show over to the UK where both Andy and The Osmonds have many fans. So they did, and including The Moon River

Singers and Dancers, screens showing Andy Williams performing his songs, and special guests, the show sold out and garnered great reviews.

The special guests make the show more of a variety show with something for all ages.

And Jimmy himself has had an eventful year, as he was a contestant in *Celebrity Masterchef*, getting to the semi-finals.

"It was cool," Jimmy tells me. "I'm willing to try anything and I like to cook anyway."

"It was an amazing experience." He adds. "To be honest, I like simple food, I'm a meat and potatoes kind of a guy, but under John and Greg I was 'on turbo'."

And he does actually cook at home.

"That's right, I do cook at home, though my wife is a much better cook, and my daughter Bella loves cooking shows."

So, moving on to the show, which is coming back after the huge success of last years' inaugural UK tour.

"It was huge," Jimmy says. "It had a really warm and fuzzy vibe. The audiences were really great and they're all songs that they knew, plus we have some fast paced variety."

"We have changed around some of the elements a bit and we have a great selection of songs."

And Jimmy doesn't find it strange singing along to a film of Andy Williams.

"Y'know, it isn't. The songs we sing are ones we grew up singing, more my brothers than me

as I wasn't involved with the Andy Williams show that much because I was much younger."

"But it's our legacy as much as his

and before he died, Andy asked me to keep the tradition going."

"It was daunting, but I'm grateful to be able to bring it back."

Joining Jimmy on stage will be his brothers Merrill and Jay and they'll be performing all their hits such as *The Proud One*, *Love Me For A Reason* and *Crazy Horses*.

Also, they'll be singing seasonal songs and hits.

"Yes, we'll be doing *The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year*, *Merry Christmas Everybody*, *Sleighride*, as well as more traditional songs."

"Honestly, when you're on stage doing *The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year* it's amazing, and I sing *Hallelujah*."

"The songs are for everyone, we don't alienate anybody – we're Christians after all."

This is a sentiment shared by Jimmy's brother Jay, who chips in.

"The show is simple in that it goes back to the real purpose of Christmas and sometimes people forget that."

He continues. "We remember the Saviour and sing traditional Christmas songs. It's all about bringing families together."

Part of the usual Osmonds' show is a drum solo from Jay, and the good news is that he'll be performing one in the show.

"Yes, I've changed it around a bit, but I always go back where I started. One of my heroes was Buddy Rich and I tried really hard to learn from a guy called Jimmy Gordon and he always told me to 'have your own style'."

He laughs, "Drumming has been a part of me since I was eight years old – I was always being told to 'beat it'."

Special guests for this year include singer Charlie Green and ventriloquist Steve Hewlett, both from *Britain's Got Talent*.

"Charlie has an amazing voice at just 19 years old," says Jimmy. "And Steve is brilliant."

Steve sometimes makes puppets of famous people – he had one of Simon Cowell when he appeared on 'Britain's Got Talent'. We might see an Osmond puppet during the show.

"Yes," says Steve. "I have been known to have dummies made up at certain shows and I think it would be a great idea."

"I'm pleased to say though that there will be a moment that Jimmy and I will do a piece together."

There is a gap in the tour schedule from 23 to 28 December while the stars get to go home for Christmas, and Jimmy shares with me his ideal Christmas.

"I can be happy anywhere as long as I'm with my family. We always give each other new pyjamas on Christmas Eve – it's bizarre but fun."

"It's all about remembering." He concludes simply.

The Andy Williams Christmas Extravaganza, starring The Osmonds with special guests Steve Hewlett and Charlie Green, plus The Moon River Singers and Dancers will be appearing at Guildford's G Live on Tuesday 20 December.

Tickets are available from the Box Office on 01483 369350 and at [www.GLive.co.uk](http://www.GLive.co.uk).