

CULTURE VULTURE

Sunbury On Thames singer Mike Crawshaw will be bringing the Christmas party spirit to Surrey this month when he swings by G Live with his band, The Overtones. Simone Hellyer finds out what's on the festive playlist

What can people expect from your Christmas Party shows?

We always say that if you want to get into the party spirit, there's no better place than at one of our shows. We really get the party started with the best Christmas classics and all the classy songs that The Overtones are known and loved for. It's going to be an up close and personal show; there could be 2,000 people in the theatre, but everyone is going to feel like they are getting their own private show.

Will there be lots of festive songs?

Yes there will be lots of Christmas songs in the show. Actually, we're currently in the studio recording some new festive songs that people won't have heard us perform before, so there will be lots of new stuff for the fans to enjoy.

Do you find they are a bit livelier at this time of year?

Oh yeah! Our audiences do always tend to get involved, which is always really touching for us. But, never more so than at Christmas – people put their glad rags on, get off their seats and dance and forget their troubles and the fact that they might have work the next day.

This is your first tour with your new member Jay James – how has he been settling into the group?

Next year is our 10-year anniversary, so joining the group at this stage is a pretty tall order. For him, looking at our history must have seemed like an absolute mountain to climb. But he has settled in like a duck to water. He has loved getting to know our fans and getting involved and the whole process of becoming an Overtone. He is well known enough for his solo work and his time on *X Factor*, so he has had to go through a bit of a transition from being a solo performer to becoming part of a team. Bearing in mind that he has only been in the group since July, it feels like he has always



Mike Crawshaw



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The Overtones: Darren Everest, Mike Crawshaw, Jay James Picton, Mark Franks

been in the group. Even behind the scenes in the studio, we've all been having a laugh and lots of banter with the producers. He's a great lad and full of positivity for what he does, which certainly shows on stage.

Are you going to be recording any new music soon?

There is going to be a new album next year, which is going to be really special as it will celebrate our 10 year anniversary. But for this year, we're going to be releasing a special tour EP with some Christmas classics and a few surprise tracks on.

Do you still enjoy touring and playing live?

I always say that standing on stage in front of your fans is

the frontline of what I do. All the work that we do behind the scenes is for those moments and I think that you feel that from us when we're on stage.

What have been some of your favourite gigs as an audience member?

I saw The Drifters a few weeks ago – obviously there have been a few incarnations of the band over the years, but I still feel like I learn a lot from going to see live music.

What music do you like listening to at home?

Literally anything you can think of from Jess Glynne and Ed Sheeran to Stevie Wonder, The Temptations, The Beach Boys and even, Boyz II Men. You can never anticipate what's going to come

up next on my Apple Music playlist, that's for sure.

Where are some of your favourite places to go in Surrey when you have a day off?

I'm such a Surrey fan! I've always wanted to live in Surrey, so when my wife and I moved here a few years ago, I just thought 'that's it, I'm a Surrey boy'. We love going to the Surrey Hills, especially Box Hill and the areas around Guildford. We also recently went to Shere, the village where The Holiday was filmed. We love living here and hopefully will for many years to come. ♦

Good to know: The Overtones will be at G Live, Guildford on Tuesday, December 17. gigsandtours.com/tour/the-overtones