

Gospel Christmas' to feature local gospel singers with symphony

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

More than 100 voices culled from 19 gospel choirs throughout the region will come together to form the northwest Community Gospel Chorus for the Oregon Symphony's "A Gospel Christmas," Saturday, Dec. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in the Portland Center for the Performing Arts. Charles Floyd will conduct this exhilarating evening of gospel and spiritual Christmas music. Media support is provided by KINK fm 102.

Since 1993, Floyd has conducted the annual "Gospel night at Pops" at Boston's Symphony Hall and Esplanade Pavilion and has recently conducted his "Gospel Christmas" with the Atlanta and Houston Symphonies. Also a pianist and

composer, Floyd is perhaps best known for his work as Natalie Cole's arranger and conductor. Their eleven-year partnership includes such projects as the multiple Grammy Award-winning tribute to Nat King Cole entitled "Unforgettable, with Love" and the Emmy Award-winning PBS "Great Performances" concert video. Floyd's program will feature the gospel choir singing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" and "Hallelujah" from "Soulful Messiah"; Floyd's own composition, "For Unto Us"; Donald Lawrence's "Heaven" featuring soprano Rene Woods; Fred Hammond's "Let the Praise Begin" featuring tenor John Gainer; Thomas Whitfield's "With My Whole Heart"

featuring tenor Terry Davis; and "Go tell it on the Mountain." Other selections to be performed include Bach's "Little Fugue in G minor" and Grieg's "Shepherd Boy" from "Lyric Pieces" (orchestra only); "The first Noel" featuring alto Marilyn Keller;

and "Away in a manger" featuring soprano Latish McFarland. Additional vocalists scheduled to appear include The Jackson Sisters and alto Pamela Baker. Tickets range in price from \$18.75 to \$50 and may be purchased at the

Oregon Symphony Tickets office Monday-Saturday 9am to 5pm or charged by phone at (503) 228-1353 or (800) 228-7343. Tickets also may be purchased at all Ticketmaster outlets (790-ARTS).



Charles Floyd

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the time around the Winter Solstice is celebrated as the Feast of Lights. **Returning to the Darkness**
We are living in a time when individuals are taking more responsibility for their spiritual lives, planning and conducting ceremonies for themselves instead of being a member of a congregation. There is no monopoly on this season, it is a sacred time celebrated by many traditions world wide and no one is excluded from this time of light. So amongst the bustle of

shopping and preparation for Christmas as we know it, set aside a time on the eve of December 21 and either light a candle or a fire. Think of the deep of winter and know that although it is the darkest time of the year, the sun will return to renew the land in the Spring. Gaze into the flame and think of what you would like to manifest in the New Year and in doing so, you will be sharing an experience that is as old as time.

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