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## Largest Christmas Choral Festival

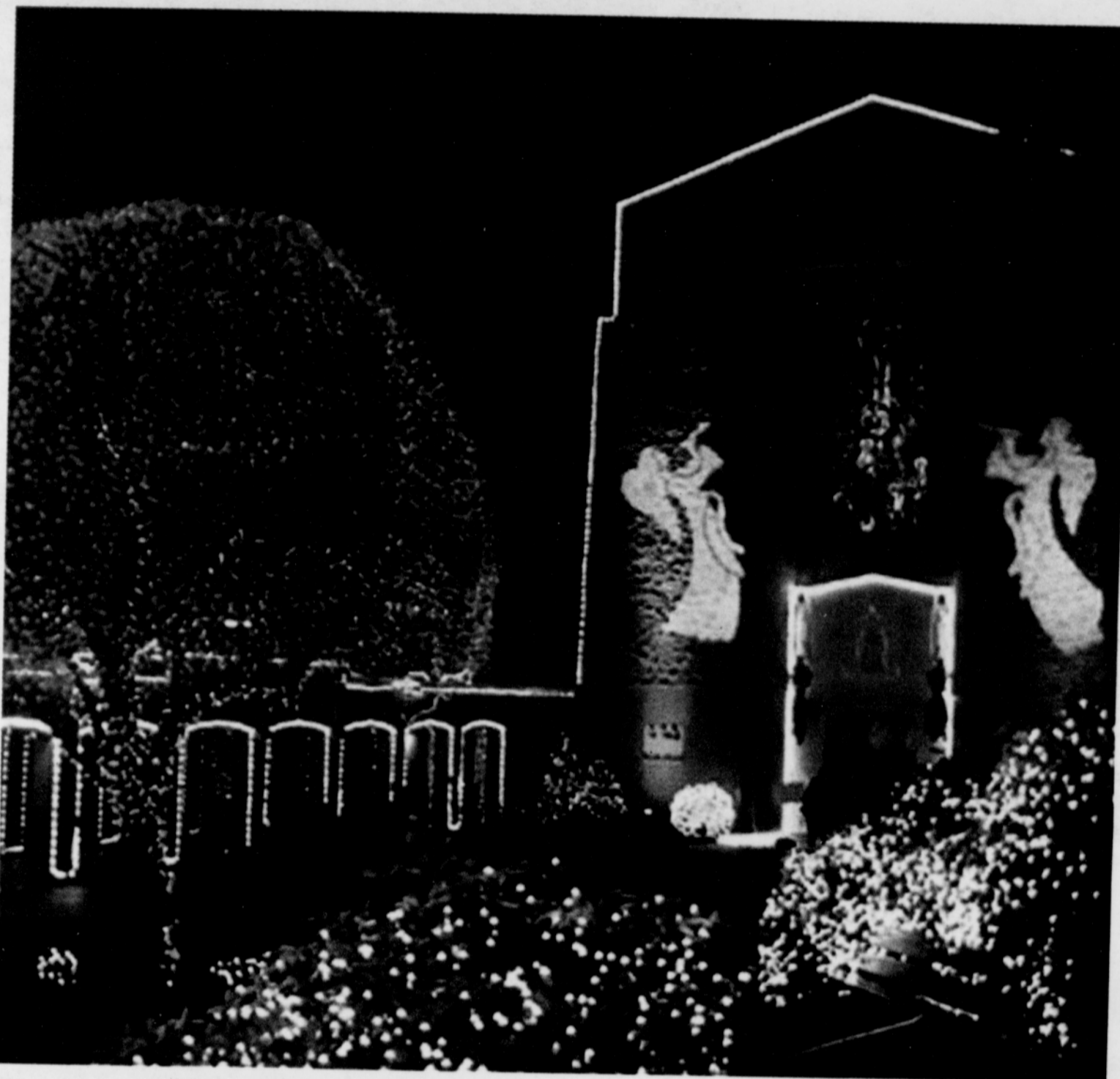
Heaven and earth sing with nightly concerts

The world's largest Christmas choral festival, the Grotto's Christmas Festival of Lights features five indoor concerts each evening in the Grotto's 600-seat chapel, known for its cathedral quality acoustics and full two second echo.

The Grotto is located at Northeast 85th Avenue and Sandy Boulevard. The festival runs nightly, except for Christmas Day, through Dec. 30. Hours are 5 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. with festival grounds closing at 10 p.m. Festival general admission is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children (3 to 12 years of age).

Festival visitors are also asked to bring a gift of canned or dry food benefiting SnowCap, the east county's Church Community Action Program, an affiliate of the Oregon Food Bank.

The theme for this year's festival is "Joy to the World." This and other carols reverberate with a fullness of richly textured sound in The Grotto's chapel highlighting the excitement and wonderment the Christmas celebration brings to the world as heaven and earth sing.



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Traveling from locations around the region and Canada, choirs love to perform in this vibrant chapel setting, and many schedule their annual performance six to ten months in advance.

Nearly one million lights are spectacularly presented around The Grotto's pristine gardens. Additional continuous nightly family entertainment in The Grotto central plaza includes outdoor caroling, Christmas-themed puppet shows, and a live animal petting zoo.

Holiday shopping opportunities as well as hot food and beverages are available.

When first presented in 1988, the festival featured 23 concert performances over 10 nights. Attendance that first year was just over 10,000 people. This year's concerts will be performed by approximately 7,000 volunteer singers and musicians. Annual attendance now regularly exceeds 50,000 visitors.

The festival is a walk-through event and visitors wishing to hear a specific concert in The Grotto's chapel should arrive at least 30 to 45 minutes prior to the scheduled concert time. While all entertainment areas are fully tented and concerts are performed indoors, visitors should dress for the weather, including warm rubber-soled shoes.

## Central Library Hosts Pride & Passion

Exhibit brings history of African-American baseball

Pride & Passion: The African-American Baseball Experience, a traveling exhibition at the Central Library downtown, examines the challenges faced by African-American baseball players as they sought equal opportunities in their sport beginning in the post-Civil War era.

In the 1880s, more than 30 African-Americans were on teams in baseball's major and minor leagues. But opportunities diminished as Reconstruction after the Civil War ended, and segregation became entrenched as part of American culture.

During the 1887 season, league owners agreed to make no new contracts with African-American players. From that time on, until Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947, baseball was a segregated sport.

In response, more than 200 independent all-black teams organized and barnstormed around the country, developing a reputation for a fast-running, power-hitting game. By the 1920s, black baseball had its own successful professional leagues. Negro league baseball grew into a multimillion-dollar enterprise and a focus of great pride in the African-American community.

Legendary figures such as Rube Foster, Buck Leonard,

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The Pittsburgh Crawfords were the champions of the Negro National League in 1935. A new traveling exhibition at the Central Library, downtown, tells the story of African Americans in baseball.