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The Grotto's Christmas Festival

Gift of music makes Festival of Lights shine

From a humble beginning, The Grotto's Christmas Festival of Lights has grown over the last 25 years to become the world's largest Christmas choral festival. Five indoor concerts highlight each evening's festival presentation during its 37-night run.

For the Grotto's 25th annual celebration, a record number of 179 concerts were scheduled over the course of the festival which runs through Sunday, Dec. 30, excluding Christmas day.

Major concert events are featured in The Grotto's 600-seat chapel, known for its cathedral-quality acoustics. While many think of The Grotto's festival as primarily a beautiful garden lighting display filled with heartwarming family entertainment, its reputation as a wonderful place to perform traditional Christmas carols has spread within the choral community across the Pacific Northwest.

Choir directors from around the region have regularly praised the exceptional acoustics present in The Grotto's chapel. As the festival's reputation has grown, choirs have traveled from Seattle, Roseburg, and Idaho to perform at The Grotto's Christmas Festival of Lights. In recent years choirs have also come from British Columbia and even southern California to perform.

The Grotto's Executive Director, Father Jack Topper, said, "Our intent was to blend the traditional sights and the sounds of the season with the hope, peace and love that it heralds. Over the years, the festival often has taken on a life of its own and The Grotto has been blessed to receive so much support from all of these choirs. It really is

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A lighted path captures the tranquility of the Christmas season at The Grotto.

PHOTOS BY LARRY KIRBY OF THE GROTTA