

Oregon Symphony Presents Gospel Christmas Dec. 9-11



Northwest Community Gospel Choir performing Gospel Christmas at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

The Oregon Symphony, with Guest Conductors Charles Floyd and Gary Hemenway, and the Northwest Community Gospel Choir, will present Gospel Christmas at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 9 and 10 and at 4 p.m. Dec. 11 at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

For the past 18 seasons, Gospel Christmas concerts have been the Oregon Symphony's most popular holiday performances. Some of this year's selections include "Sacrifice



Charles Floyd

work, the Northwest Community Gospel Choir features a number of talented soloists who take turns leading the group with stellar vocal interpretations of

classic holiday songs.

Conductor, pianist, and composer Charles Floyd has been heard in concert with more than 500 orchestras since 1991 — including every Oregon Symphony Gospel Christmas concert since our annual performances began in 1999. He is a regular conductor of the Boston Pops.

Tickets begin at \$35 and can be purchased online at OrSymphony.org; in person at the Oregon Symphony Ticket Office located at 909 SW Washington St., in downtown Portland (M-Sat, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.); by phone at (503) 228-1353 (M-Fri, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.); and at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall starting two hours before every performance.

“The Northwest Community Gospel Choir features the very best of the local gospel talent

of Praise,” “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” “Celebrate the King,” “Carol of the Bells,” and a rousing medley of Christmas worship songs.

The Northwest Community Gospel Choir features the very best of the local gospel talent from local and regional churches and music ministries. In addition to their first-rate choral

Black Nativity: A “Balm” for the Season and a Musical Tour de Force!

If you walk by a certain church in North Portland the first three weekends in December, the music coming from the sanctuary will stop you in your tracks. You will want to be inside, but unless you have a ticket to “Black Nativity,” Langston Hughes’ gorgeous gospel song play, you will be out of luck.



Performers Tasha Williams and Shelley B Shelley on stage at PassinArt’s ‘Black Nativity’

Case in point: at a recent rehearsal of this cultural retelling of the Nativity Story, a passerby walked into the sanctuary, and said, “I just couldn’t walk past. I had to know what was inside. Are tickets available?” The church is Greater St. Stephens Missionary Baptist Church, the company once again bringing this “joyful noise” to Portland is PassinArt: A Theatre Company, and director Jerry Foster stopped rehearsal and made the reservation then and there.

The Church as Community Space

PassinArt describes itself as being equally about great theatre, community and culture, so it is not surprising they would choose to present what has been called “the Black community’s gift to the world” in a local church in North Portland for the second year. Co-founder and Board Member, Connie Carley acknowledges the historic role of the Black church that not only “sustained

African Americans’ faith, but also provided a refuge free from racism and oppression.” Carley added, “We invite everyone, no matter what faith or background, to join us for this celebration of hope and healing.”

Pastor Kimberly Black, whose children have performed with PassinArt in the past, shares the role of Narrator in this year’s production. Pastor Black says Black Nativity brings hope, which “we need this Christmas more than ever.” She remembers the last Sunday of last year’s performance where there was standing room only, so she urges people to get tickets now. “If you love music and you love the season,” she says. “Come bring joy to your soul.”

The Music Makes You Feel Good

The uber-talented cast, which in-

See BLACK NATIVITY on page 8

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 as
IRVING BERLIN
 DIRECTED BY TREVOR HAY

Tickets start at \$25!

NOV. 26 - DEC. 24
DAVID SEDARIS
THE SANTALAND DIARIES
 DIRECTED BY WENDY KNOX
 ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY JOE MANTELLO

TOP: HERSHEY FELDER IN HERSHEY FELDER AS IRVING BERLIN. PHOTO BY EIGHTY-EIGHT ENTERTAINMENT.
 BOTTOM: DARIUS PIERCE IN THE SANTALAND DIARIES. PHOTO BY KATE SZROM.

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