

HOLIDAYS

AND

Harmonies

Darryl Lewis | vocalist

Orchestra & Chorale

December 14, 2025
2:30 p.m. // 6:30 p.m.

Sawmill Creek Convention Center



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ORCHESTRA

CARL TOPILOW, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

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WELCOME



Hello and welcome to Holidays and Harmonies with the Firelands Symphony Orchestra and Chorale!

We are grateful that you are spending a part of your holiday season with us this year. Our Music Director, Maestro Carl Topilow has created a wonderful program that includes music from many of your favorite holiday movies as well as some traditional tunes you would expect to hear from the FSO.

We welcome accomplished baritone Darryl Lewis to share the stage with us as well as our very own FSO Chorale, under the direction of Michael Shirtz. I hope that we will be able to get all of you in a happy holiday mood today.

Our next subscription concert will be on February 15, 2026, and will take you on a musical journey to Italy, with Tenor Jonathan Kaufman. It's the perfect ending for a Valentine's weekend.

Again, thank you for taking your valuable time and coming here to enjoy the Firelands Symphony Orchestra. Live music is so very vital to the health of any community, and your presence helps us do what we love to do. From all of us with the FSO, we wish you and your family the happiest of holidays.

Ron Brooker
Ron Brooker, FSO Executive Director

PODIUM NOTES



I'm delighted to once again serve as your conductor for our popular traditional holiday program, now presenting two performances! This joyful and festive concert will light up our stage with the music of the season.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome vocalist Darryl Lewis to perform with the FSO. This versatile and charismatic performer will be featured in a variety of selections, from the introspective *Mary, Did You Know* to the nasty *You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch!*

The Firelands Symphony Chorale with director Michael Shirtz will brighten our holiday with their fine vocalism in a mixture of captivating selections.

Our orchestra will have several opportunities to showcase its talents, and I'm planning to play several of my multicolored clarinets for *A Clarinet Christmas*.

On behalf of the musicians of the Firelands Symphony Orchestra, I'd like to wish you all a joyful holiday season and happy and healthy new year!

Carl Topilow, Music Director and Conductor

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CARL TOPILOW



During Carl Topilow's tenure as the Firelands Symphony Orchestra's Music Director and Conductor, the orchestra has seen a dramatic improvement in the orchestra's quality, a significant rise in subscriptions and the appearance of world class soloists to our stage.

In addition to his work with the FSO, Topilow is Founding Conductor of the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Conductor Laureate of the National Repertory Orchestra, a summer festival in Breckenridge, Colorado, and was named Faculty Emeritus at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has served as principal pops conductor of the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, the Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, and the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra.

Topilow has performed as guest conductor with 132 different orchestras in 37 states and 12 foreign countries. This year, he will be hosting his fifth conducting workshop in Cleveland.

Topilow's late wife Shirley was Founder, President, and CEO of the Cleveland Pops Orchestra. Their daughter Emily is a marketing associate with the Cleveland Clinic, and their daughter Jenny is a violinist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra.

Carl's book, *The Orchestral Conductor's Career Handbook* published by Rowman and Littlefield, is now available through www.carltopilow.com and www.rowman.com.

MICHAEL SHIRTZ



Michael Shirtz is a performer, educator, composer, and conductor, recognized for his versatility in jazz, contemporary, and classical music genres. He is an affiliated artist with the Prima Music Foundation NY, The Musical Theatre Project, and leads the Michael Shirtz Quartet. As a music director and producer, Shirtz has collaborated with such artists as Melissa Manchester, Elizabeth von Trapp, Evelyn Wright, Ellen Winters, and long-time association with Maureen McGovern. His album *Blue Skies*, along with other original works, is available through Shirtz Music and online platforms.

Shirtz's conducting and composing credits span festival choruses, musical theatre productions, masterworks, commercial projects, and pops concerts, including his extended works such as *Gift of Generation*, *The Solemn Blessings*, and *To Rise Above: The Journey of a Tuskegee Airman*. He has held faculty positions at Capital University, American Music Academy, Terra State Community College, Heidelberg University, and director-in-residence at Pellissippi State College-Knoxville. His leadership experience included roles as Associate Director for Tri-C JazzFest & Performing Arts Series at Playhouse Square and Associate Producer for the Jazz Network. He currently serves on the voice faculty at The Ohio State University School of Music where he teaches applied voice and jazz voice. Shirtz is the conductor of The Symphony Chorale with the Firelands Symphony Orchestra and serves as music director at Lakeside Chautauqua.

An advocate for mental health awareness and creative innovation, Shirtz is a member of ASCAP, African American Jazz Caucus, American Choral Directors Association, Jazz Education Network, National Association of Teachers of Singing, and partner with S&S Strategies. He holds degrees in jazz studies and conducting from Capital University Conservatory of Music and California State University, Los Angeles.



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CONCERT PROGRAM

Holidays and Harmonies | December 14, 2025

Firelands Symphony Orchestra

Carl Topilow, Music Director & Conductor
Douglas Droste, Conducting Assistant

Firelands Symphony Orchestra Chorale

Michael Shirtz, Chorale Director
Wendy Brown, Accompanist

Guest Artist: Darryl Lewis, vocalist

O Come, O Come Emmanuel.....Traditional
Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas.....John Williams
Hope.....Pamela Stewart, Greg Gilpin

FSO Chorale

Celebration of Light.....arr. J. Martin

FSO Chorale | Carl Topilow, clarinet

Thankful.....Sager, Foster, Page; arr Mark Hayes

FSO Chorale

Go Tell It on the Mountain.....John Wesley Work, Jr.; arr. Robert Sterling

FSO Chorale | Darryl Lewis, vocalist

Mary, Did You Know?.....Buddy Greene; arr. Jack Schrader

Darryl Lewis, vocalist

Wizards in Winter.....O'Neill & Kinkel; arr. Bob Phillips

Christmas at the Movies.....arr. Krogstad

The Night Before Christmas.....Randol Alan Bass

Darryl Lewis, narrator

INTERMISSION

Polonaise from *Christmas Eve Suite*.....Rimsky Korsakov

A Clarinet Christmas.....arr. Paul Ferguson

Carl Topilow, clarinet

Carol of the Bells.....Leontovich & Wilhousky; arr. Richard Hayman

The Christmas Song.....Mel Torme; arr. Paul Ferguson

You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch.....Dr. Seuss, Albert Hague; arr. Matthew Naughtin

Darryl Lewis, vocalist

Sleigh Ride.....Leroy Anderson

Feliz Navidad.....Jose Feliciano; Paul Hemmer

Theme from *Elf*.....John Debney; arr. Grassi, Hayden

Sparklejollytwinklejingley from *Elf*.....Matthew Sklar/Chad Beguelin

FSO Chorale

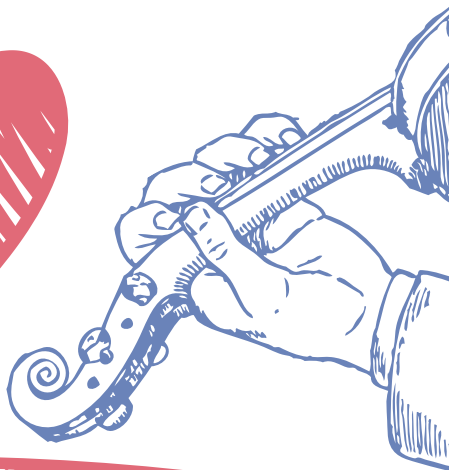
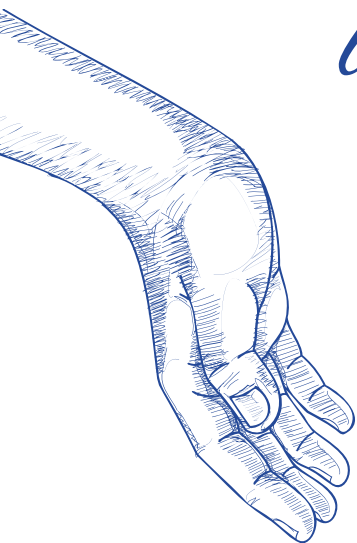
Holly Jolly Sing Along.....arr. James Stephenson

White Christmas.....Irving Berlin; arr. Bennett

Darryl Lewis, vocalist

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2025-2026

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SING ALONG

DECK THE HALL

Deck the hall with boughs of holly
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
'Tis the season to be jolly
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
Don we now our gay apparel
Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la
Troll the ancient Yule-tide carol
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
See the blazing Yule before us
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
Strike the harp and join the chorus
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
Follow me in merry measure
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
While I tell of Yule-tide treasure
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la

JINGLE BELLS

Dashing through the snow
In a one horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go
Laughing all the way
Bells on bob tail ring
Making spirits bright
What fun it is to laugh and sing
A sleighing song tonight

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh
Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh

FROSTY THE SNOWMAN

Frosty the Snowman
Was a jolly happy soul
With a corn-cob pipe
And a button nose
And two eyes made out of coal
Frosty the Snowman
Is a fairytale they say
He was made of snow
But the children know
How he came to life one day
There must have been some magic
In that old silk hat they found
For when they placed it on his head
He began to dance around
Oh, Frosty the Snowman
Had to hurry on his way
But he waved goodbye
Saying don't you cry
I'll be back again some day
Thumpety thump thump
Thumpety thump thump
Look at Frosty go
Thumpety thump thump
Thumpety thump thump
Over the hills of snow

RUDOLPH, THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer
Had a very shiny nose
And if you ever saw him
You would even say it glows
All of the other reindeer
Used to laugh and call him names
They never let poor Rudolph
Join in any reindeer games.
Then one foggy Christmas Eve
Santa came to say:
"Rudolph with your nose so bright,
won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"
Then all the reindeer loved him
As they shouted out with glee
Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer
You'll go down in history

JOY TO THE WORLD!

Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing
Joy to the Earth, the Saviour reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills,
and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

INTONATIONS



AND *Italia*

Jonathan Kaufman | vocalist

Orchestra & Chorale

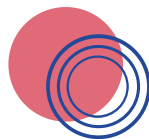
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GUEST ARTIST

DARRYL LEWIS, BARITONE



Darryl Lewis has built a dynamic and wide-ranging career as a performer, director, and arts educator, earning recognition for his powerful vocals, expressive stage presence, and versatility across musical theater, drama, and film. This past summer, he appeared in two major Northeast Ohio productions: the region's premiere of *Blind Injustice*, a compelling collaboration between Chagrin Arts and the Outcalt Theatre at Playhouse Square, and *The Full Monty* at Cassidy Theatre in Parma, where he portrayed

the beloved role of Horse. Most recently, he premiered the feature film *Beneath the Lights* at the Lorain Palace Theater in October.

A familiar face to audiences throughout Northeast Ohio, Lewis has performed with many of the region's leading arts organizations, including Great Lakes Theater, where his portrayal of the jovial Mr. Fezziwig in the annual production of *A Christmas Carol* has become an audience favorite, as well as Karamu House, Dobama Theatre, Beck Center for the Arts, Cain Park, Geauga Lyric Theater, Rabbit Run Theater, Cassidy Theatre, Willoughby School of the Arts, the Oberlin College Summer Festival, and Youngstown State University.

In addition to his work as a performer, Lewis serves as Artistic Director of the Willoughby Summer Theater Festival, an annual initiative presenting three fully staged productions with all tickets offered free to the public. Under his leadership, the festival emphasizes community engagement and expands access to high-quality theater for audiences who may not always have opportunities to experience live performance.

Lewis is also an instructor and director of theater and music at Andrews Osborne Academy in Willoughby, Ohio, where he is committed to nurturing creativity, confidence, and artistic excellence in young performers.



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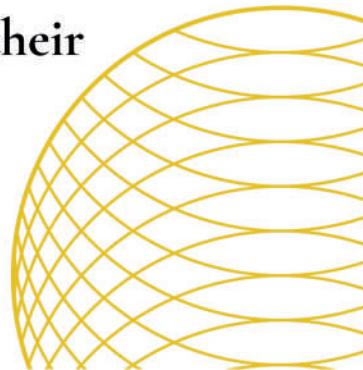
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as they embark on their

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Michael Shirtz, Chorale Director & Conductor | Wendy Brown, Accompanist

SOPRANO

Kaitlyn Bryant
Melissa Cullen
Samantha Davis
Stacey Depner
Betsy Dupler
Bev Hart
Virginia Mamere
Jo Pankow
Diane Stalling
Victoria Wheeler
Kelly Wonder

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Mindy Bahnsen
Connie Carnicom
Stephanie Dupler-Rhodes
Mary Foland
Susan Fritz
Lindsey Lemons
Cynthia Mira
Carol Phillips
Sally Ploger
Angela Young

ALTO

Deb Agee
Cathy Belfiore
Kathy Below
Pam Benedict
Deborah Billow
Sheryl Cawrse
Sarah Christophel
Linda Dickman
Karen Gerold
Sandy Giangrande
Alyna Hinsch
Judy Hoffman
Sari Kelley
Sandra Kimmel
Cynthia Klein
Brenda Knipp
Deb Lovins
Beverly Mendoza
Deborah Randall
Yvette Rash
Fonda Robinson
Mary Trout
Olga Trumpower
Carrie Jo Wahl
Terri Wilhelm

TENOR

Gary Jones
Larry McCormack
Robin Mygrant
Jim Obergfell
Pamela Sayre
William Shannon
Fritz Shepperd
Tom Thorbahn
Marianne Weaver

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Ron Blake
Mark Bogen
Jeff Cook
Tom Curry
Brian Dickman
Joey Fox
Ellen Hanck
Jack Hubbard
Dave Kocsis
Nathan Loudenslager
Rick Noderer
Chris Petersen
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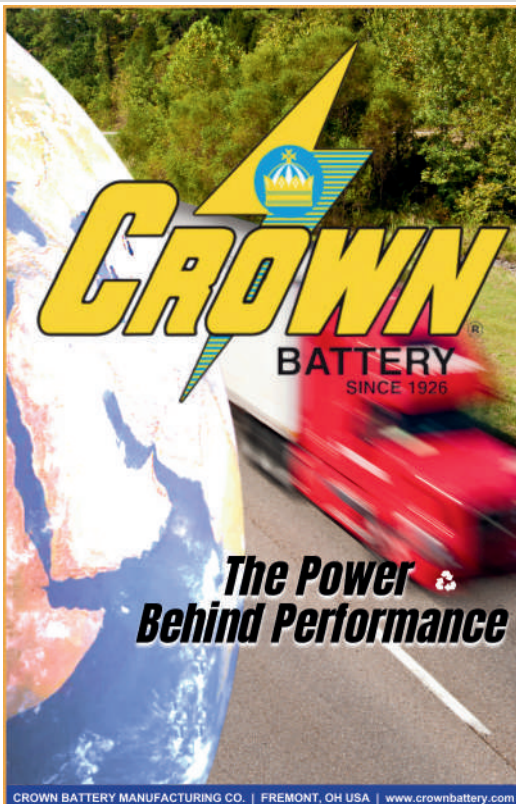
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