

THE NEW YORK  
**POPS**  
A DIFFERENT KIND OF ORCHESTRA

## Notes on the Program

by John Morris Russell, Guest Conductor  
Friday and Saturday, December 18 and 19, 2009, 8:00PM, Carnegie Hall

The Holiday Season is all about tradition and memory. For me, the holidays conjure thoughts of Aunt Machie's bourbon fruit cake, the mega-dumping of snow along Lake Erie's southern shore, the smell of a hardwood fire in the hearth and the gentle crackling of the Goodyear or Firestone Holiday LP on the hi-fi. An eclectic blend of familiar standards, these albums featured an exceptionally diverse collection of the era's most esteemed performers framed in brilliant orchestral arrangements that echoed the angels' proclamations a couple millennia ago: "peace on earth, good will to ALL people!"

There was George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra performing along side Mahalia Jackson; the Korean Orphan Choir intoning music written a thousand years ago, followed by Dean Martin singing "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer;" and, lest we forget, the mighty Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Tennessee Ernie Ford, José Feliciano and the Beach Boys. As a kid it seemed this was the ultimate representation of the rich panoply of the American musical experience, and everyone in the Russell family savored every soulful, playful, groovy, and crystalline note. Dad would pick up the annual installment when getting the snow tires mounted on our Plymouth Satellite; his arrival home, with record in hand, would herald the true beginning of the Christmas season. The newest album and its dozen or so counterparts from years past would play while we set up our tree, decorated cookies, entertained friends and neighbors, ripped open presents and sipped eggnog on New Year's Eve. They were the soundtrack to our holiday celebrations and are the essence our concerts this weekend.

At the heart of our program is the incomparable Sandi Patty, whose angelic voice is exceeded only by the spirit with which she shares her remarkable gift. She is one of those rare performers who can sing in every style and connects as strongly with all of us on stage as she does with everyone in the audience. The Young People's Chorus of New York City join us with holiday classics for kids "from one to ninety-two," as well as Broadway, Africa and Hawaii; and your New York Pops orchestra is featured in music celebrating Hanukkah, selections by composers from Poland, France and Russia and a little Liberace to boot!

When you think about it, our musical celebration of the holidays is essentially a celebration of ourselves—our splendid diversity and our united belief in peace and brotherhood.

Best wishes for a glorious holiday season!



--John Morris Russell