

Preview

Cleveland POPS Orchestra to ring in the New Year with the Nunziata Brothers at Severance Hall

by Mike Telin



“Whenever I talk about the [Cleveland POPS](#) season so many people tell me how much they love coming to the New Year's Eve concert,” says Cleveland POPS Orchestra co-founder and conductor Carl Topilow. “So the event really has become a tradition for so many.” On Tuesday, December 31 beginning at 9:00 pm in Severance Hall, The Cleveland POPS Orchestra and Topilow will welcome 2014 with their 18th annual concert and dance party.

The evening's special guest artists are up-and-coming musical theater headliners [Will and Anthony Nunziata](#), performing their own “Broadway Nites Revue.” The show includes songs from the best of Broadway's musicals, both past and recent, including *The Roar of the Greasepaint*, *the Smell of the Crowd*, *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off*, *City of Angels*, *Company*, *The Secret Garden*, *West Side Story*, and *Anyone Can Whistle*.

Following the star-studded concert, dancing begins at 11:00 pm. “There's a band that I will lead in the Grand Foyer which includes some of the finest jazz players in the area,” says Topilow, “and again this year my brother, Dr. Arthur, will be coming in from New Jersey. He's a very fine pianist but an even better oncologist-hematologist. There will also be another band in the Smith lobby.”

The dance portion of the evening includes cash bars, complimentary desserts and coffee. “Free deserts and free coffee along with a start-studded concert with live dance music and the balloon drop at midnight is always fabulous. I don't know, but I don't think there's a better place to go for New Year's Eve.”

Keeping an annual event new and fresh for eighteen years is indeed an accomplishment, but Topilow says that a few traditions have developed over the years. “We always begin with *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (aka *Theme from 2001 A Space Odyssey*) in the dark, and illuminate the balloons at the big chord.”

Another New Year's Eve Cleveland POPS tradition is Josef Strauss' *Feuerfest Polka*, during which people play along, honking their horns with the music. "Another piece we play a lot is Victor Herbert's *Festival March*, which includes *Auld Lang Syne*. I think it's a terrific piece." An off-and-on tradition, depending on the success of Ohio State's football team, is the playing of *Hang on, Sloopy*, the OSU fight song. "Usually Ohio State is in a Big Bowl game. So these are just a few of our traditions."



Topilow has some new things in store for audiences this year. "Right after the first of the year, the fourth season of *Downton Abbey* begins, so we'll pay tribute to that popular PBS show." (Topilow admits he's an avid fan.) "I recently heard Johann Strauss II's *Thunder and Lightning Polka* and I thought it would be great if we could flash the lights during the thunder part, so we have some new, fun ideas in store." Although he was not revealing any secrets, Topilow says that another audience surprise will happen during Leroy Anderson's classic, *The Syncopated Clock*.

Carl Topilow also looks forward to the opportunity of welcoming the twin brothers Will and Anthony Nunziata back to the Cleveland POPS stage. "They're very talented and interesting guys. So upbeat and positive and just so much fun to be with. And they're such fine singers and performers."

How did Topilow first encounter the brothers Nunziata? "I receive a lot of artists' publicity materials but theirs happened to catch my fancy. I found them very interesting right away – they sounded very nice and they looked like they were really enjoying themselves. So we invited them to sing with us a few years ago and since then they've only become more famous. So we're excited to bring them back."

Will and Anthony will be featured in classic Broadway tunes such as *This Could be the Start of Something Big*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Everybody Says Don't*, *Somewhere*, *Being Alive*, *You're Nothing without Me*, *Lily's Eyes*, *Who can I Turn to* and *What Kind of Fool am I?*

Anyone familiar with Cleveland POPS knows that one big question is always: what color clarinet will Topilow be playing? "Well for Vittorio Monti's *Czardas* with violinist Steven Greenman it will be black, but during the dance music you can expect the red clarinet to make an appearance."

After seventeen years does Carl Topilow have a favorite part of the evening? "I always have a great time pontificating over the countdown to the New Year and the Balloon Drop. It's always an exciting night and a really a great place to spend New Year's Eve. A lot of people arrive early and have dinner at Severance Hall before the concert. It's just a very festive night. And if you haven't been, this is a great year to start a new tradition."

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