

Cleveland Pops Orchestra: Season 28 begins with Broadway's Best

by Mike Telin



What do you do when you're programming a concert and you're curious to know what your audience wants to hear? "We sent a survey to our subscribers asking them to tell us their favorite Broadway show and favorite song," Carl Topilow said during a telephone conversation. "People were interested in participating. We had a nice return and came up with a lot of great possibilities."

On Friday, October 25 at 7:30 pm at Severance Music Center, the Cleveland Pops Orchestra will launch its 28th season when Topilow leads "Broadway's Best." The evening will feature music from hit musicals including *Hello Dolly*, *Wicked*, *Phantom of*

the Opera, *Hamilton*, and *Les Misérables*. Tickets are available [online](#).

Topilow said that he looks forward to having three wonderful guest vocalists join him and the orchestra onstage. Alli Mauzey most recently starred on Broadway in the critically acclaimed world premiere musical *Kimberly Akimbo*. Prior to that she starred as Ernestina in the Tony Award-winning revival of *Hello, Dolly!* Dee Roscioli is best known for her seven-year, record-breaking portrayal of Elphaba in the hit musical *Wicked*, where she led the Broadway, Chicago, San Francisco, and First National Touring companies. And Jeff Kready's most recent Broadway credit was *The Great Gatsby*, where he understudied and performed the role of Jay Gatsby.

Although Topilow didn't want to give any surprises away, audiences can rest assured that he has plenty of them up his sleeve.

He did say that he wanted to begin the show with something fun, upbeat, and more traditional. “There’s ‘Before the Parade Passes By’ from *Hello Dolly*, ‘I Could Have Danced All Night’ from *My Fair Lady*, ‘Don’t Rain On My Parade’ from *Funny Girl*, and ‘Oh What A Beautiful Morning’ from *Oklahoma*.”

Topilow said the program will then move to more recent Broadway hits with “I Believe” from *Book of Mormon*, “Defying Gravity” from *Wicked*, “All That Jazz” from *Chicago*, and “Being Alive” from *Company*.

“Many people wanted to hear ‘Music of the Night’ from *Phantom of the Opera*, ‘Memory’ from *Cats*, ‘You’ll be Back’ from *Hamilton*, and ‘I Dreamed a Dream’ from *Les Mis*. And our great Orchestra will also get to play on their own.”

The Pops season will continue on Saturday, November 16, at MGM Northfield Park with “The Music of Pink Floyd” featuring conductor Brent Havens and vocalist Randy Jackson.

Topilow noted that the key to the Pops’ success is always coming up with new ideas. “It’s that combination of what is traditional and what is new. For example, it’s coming up with something new for our holiday program, which I’ve done for 28 years.”

On Sunday, December 1 at 2:00 pm at the Connor Palace Theatre, Topilow will lead “A Jolly Holiday with the Pops.” The program will include a mash-up of Christmas tunes written by Shaker Heights native and award-winning journalist David Pogue. “We’re also doing some absolutely delightful music from *Elf*. ‘Sparklejollytwinklejingle’ is so much fun. There will also be the sing-along with songs like *White Christmas*. It’s a nice combination of traditional and new.”

Season 28 will continue on Saturday, February 1 with “Music of Motown.” “Connor Bogart O’Brien recommended them. They’ve never done an orchestra show, so they’re busy creating arrangements.

On Friday, March 14, the season continues with “The Envelope Please...” Topilow said the idea for a program featuring scores that won the Oscar came from a former Pops board member who is a movie buff. “I like hearing suggestions from people, and he said I should listen to the theme from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for example, and it’s a fabulous score. There are so many Oscar winning movie songs that are great, so that’ll be fun.

On April 11, “Cleveland Rocks” will bring the best that rock ‘n’ roll and Cleveland have to offer, including the works of Elvis, Michael Jackson, ABBA, Billy Joel, Tina Turner,

Adele and more. from the 50s through the 00s, performed by Connor Bogart O'Brien, Natalie Green and Lauren Berry.

“On May 2 we have ‘Simply Sinatra’ with Steve Lippia, and the season will conclude on May 31 with a program we’re calling ‘Decades of the Light,’ which features music by Burt Bacharach, Henry Mancini, Carole King — the Great American Songbook people.”

Unless indicated, all performances will be held at Severance Music Center. Click [here](#) to purchase tickets and to learn more about Cleveland Pops.

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