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2026 Holiday Prelude Concert

Tina Johns Heidrich

Music Director & Conductor

November 22, 2026

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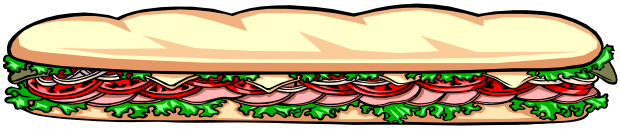

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Connecticut Master Chorale

Tina Johns Heidrich, Music Director and Conductor
Joseph Jacovino, Jr., Accompanist
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Sunday, April 4, 2027 - 3:00 pm

First Congregational Church of Danbury
$20 in advance – $25 at the door.
203-740-9533
www.cmchorale.org

Connecticut Master Chorale
P.O. Box 3302
Danbury, CT 06813

About the Connecticut Master Chorale

The Connecticut Master Chorale, founded and directed by Tina Johns Heidrich in 1999, is a premiere ensemble of professional caliber vocalists in Western Connecticut. As we continue into our third decade, we are especially grateful for the enthusiastic audiences who have contributed to our success, and we look forward to continuing our tradition of bringing dynamic and exciting music to the area.

As we look back at our achievements, we have had many special experiences in addition to our regularly scheduled concerts each year.

One of our most exciting honors was being invited to perform at the **White House** in December 2002. We were selected through a recorded audition and sang in the Grand Foyer for thousands of White House guests, including workers for Air-Force One and Marine-One, the Marine Corps, the Secret Service, and their families. We are extremely proud to have been granted this distinction!

We were invited to sing in the U.S. premiere of Karl Jenkins' ***Stabat Mater*** at **Lincoln Center** in New York City in January 2009. Meeting the composer, hearing his comments, and singing the piece in his presence added insight and inspiration to our performance in March 2009 in Connecticut.

On Easter Sunday 2002, we performed by invitation at **Carnegie Hall**, singing John Rutter's ***Magnificat*** under his direction. We returned to Carnegie Hall in January 2003 to sing Mozart's ***Coronation Mass***, and again in November 2005, when Rutter conducted us in a performance of his ***Mass of the Children.***

Another accomplishment was winning the annual McDonald's Gospelfest Competition for three consecutive years. In June 2004, we performed as a Regional Representative in Gospelfest 2004 at **Madison Square Garden**. Our 2001 Gospelfest performance was televised on ABC in July 2001.

We have also sung as invited guests at West Point Military Academy, and with the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra. Our concert recordings have been featured on WMNR Fine Arts Radio, and WJMJ in Hartford.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to our performance, and we thank you for your support. We are especially grateful to the First Congregational Church of Danbury, our advertisers, our contributing members, our audience, and to the many individuals who help support us. For more information about the Chorale, please call 203-775-2602 or visit www.cmchorale.org.

Connecticut Master Chorale

on the web

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About Our Director



Tina Johns Heidrich is the Founder and Music Director of the Connecticut Master Chorale. A dynamic leader with her own distinct vision and style, she consistently produces memorable performances filled with sensitivity, emotion and passion, engaging both singers and audience. Her unique approach of "work hard but have fun" and her immense energy ensure an exciting and educational experience for her singers, while eliciting their very highest performance quality.

Ms. Heidrich has led the Chorale to artistic acclaim and recognition - including the great honor of being invited to sing at the White House in December 2002. The Chorale sang by invitation in January 2009 at Lincoln Center in the U.S. premiere of Karl Jenkins' "Stabat Mater". The Chorale has also performed at Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall (three times), West Point Military Academy, and with the Ridgefield Symphony as their guest chorus – all by invitation. They won the annual McDonald's Gospelfest Competition for three consecutive years and appeared on ABC TV.

Born and raised in Danbury, Ms. Heidrich earned her Bachelor and Master of Science Degrees in Music Education with a major in voice, from Western Connecticut State University.

With an extensive background and over 50 years of experience in choral and orchestral conducting, she has directed numerous school, church, and community choirs and orchestras, as well as musical theatre. She has directed choruses on tour in Eastern Europe, Canada, and Washington, DC, and on ABC's "Good Morning America", and has served as Guest Conductor for several groups, including the Danbury Music Centre's annual "Messiah" performance, and Guest Clinician for the Western Connecticut State University Chamber Choir Festival.

For 28 years, Ms. Heidrich was the Director of Music of the First Congregational Church of Bethel, where she served as organist and directed the Sanctuary and Handbell Choirs.

"As the Chorale continues into our third decade, I remain as excited as I was when the group began. We have performed over 600 unique pieces by nearly 500 composers in many venues, and worked with today's leading composers. And what pleases me most both personally and professionally, is the music we create, the outstanding sound of the group, the satisfaction after each performance, and the enthusiasm and loyalty of our audiences."

Connecticut Master Chorale
Memorable Moments

- Founded in 1999
- White House Christmas performance
- Guests of West Point Military Academy
- Carnegie Hall with John Rutter
  1st time: 2002 Rutter's "Magnificat"
- Carnegie Hall with Terre Johnson
  2nd time: 2003 Mozart's "Coronation Mass"
- Carnegie Hall with John Rutter
  3rd time: 2005 Rutter's "Mass of the Children"
- Lincoln Center – U.S. Premiere of Karl Jenkins' "Stabat Mater"
- Madison Square Garden performance
- McDonald's Gospelfest winner
  1st time: 2001
- McDonald's Gospelfest winner
  2nd time: 2002
- McDonald's Gospelfest winner
  3rd time: 2003
- ABC7 TV appearance
- Guests of Nutmeg Opera Company
  Puccini's "La Traviata"
- Guests of Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra
  "Viva Verdi" concert

About Our Accompanist



Joseph J. Jacovino, Jr. graduated from the Hartt College of Music with a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance and from the Manhattan School of Music with a Master's Degree in Music Education. He retired in 2014 as the Music Director at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, where he directed the concert band, jazz band, guitar ensemble, handbell choir, piano keyboard class, and taught music theory for 35 years.

Since 2000, Mr. Jacovino has been the organist/cantor/choir director at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, where he has conducted numerous concerts involving the St. Rose Festival Chorus and Orchestra. In 2005 the choir traveled to Italy performing concerts in Rome, Florence, and at the Vatican.

In addition to being the Chorale's extraordinarily talented accompanist since our inception in 1999, he has also been the accompanist for the choirs at the Waterbury Arts Magnet School, and an occasional staff pianist for the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra. This is also his 20th season as the Music Director of the Waterbury Chorale. He also directs the Heritage Singers at Heritage Village in Southbury.

As a composer, Mr. Jacovino has written several sacred choral pieces and masses, including "Christmas at the Palace" (a tribute to the Waterbury Palace Theater), "Enshrined in the Grace of God", dedicated to Waterbury's Shrine of St. Anne, and "Something Beautiful for God", based upon a prayer by Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

Mr. Jacovino has been an active piano soloist, having appeared with the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, Naugatuck Valley Community College Orchestra, the Connecticut Master Chorale and Orchestra, and the St. Rose Festival Chorus and Orchestra. He has appeared in recital on numerous occasions as a classical organist and pianist. Joe currently lives in Middlebury with his wife Roberta, and two dogs, Jackson & Bella. His daughter Sara is a professional trombonist/pianist/composer/arranger, living in New York City.



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Joseph Jacovino, Director

Susan Anthony-Klein, Accompanist

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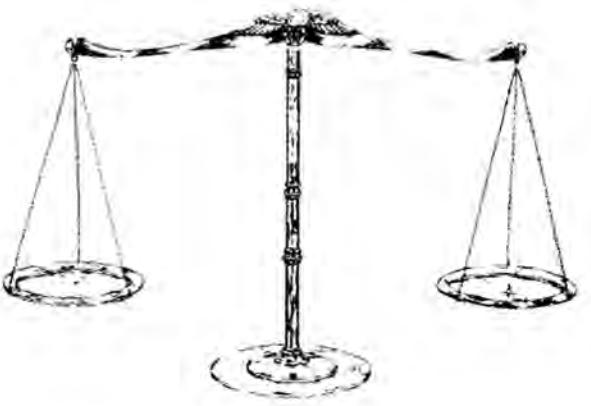

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Special Acknowledgements

First Congregational Church of Danbury, CT
We are delighted to have our concert today in this beautiful sanctuary! Our most gracious thanks to Music Director Jim Moriarty, Moderator Heidi Palmer, Caretaker Ramon Howell, Digital Outreach Coordinator Gregory Pings, the staff, and the entire Congregation.

South Britain Congregational Church, South Britain, CT
We are pleased to continue to have our rehearsal home at the South Britain Congregational Church. A very special thank you to Pastor Jeff Lukens, the SBCC staff, committees, and the entire church family for their wonderful hospitality.

Auxiliary parking lots
We'd like to acknowledge and thank area establishments for use of their parking areas for today's concert: Danbury City Hall, United Jewish Center, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Cohen and Wolf Law Office, Collins Hannafin Law Office, Talarico, Frizzell & Olivo Law Office, Bernadette Kallas of Deer Hill West, LLC., and Clay Pierce Enterprises.

David Jurman
Our sincerest gratitude to David for the design and construction of the conductor's podium. Also, for our CD duplication and disc printing.

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Connecticut Master Chorale

Tina Johns Heidrich, Music Director and Conductor
Joseph Jacovino, Jr., Accompanist
Connecticut Master Chorale Holiday Brass

2026 Holiday Prelude Concert ~ Rejoice!

Rejoice! Christ Is Born! — Larry Shackley

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers — Laurentius Laurentii; arr. K. Lee Scott

A Babe Is Born in Bethlehem — Justin Thomas Fields

Seasons — Ola Gjielo; words by Charles Anthony Silvestri
May Steinberg, flute

Pastores á Belén — arr. Emily Crocker

Auld Lang Syne — words by Robert Burns; arr. Dan Forrest
May Steinberg, flute

Mi Y'malel — arr. Jill Gallina
Paul Giammatteo, clarinet

Rejoice! (A Festive Carol Celebration) — arr. Douglas E. Wagner

15-minute intermission

Look Who Just Checked In — Stephen Hill and Daryl Williams
arr. Mary McDonald

AN EASTERN EUROPEAN HOLIDAY

Kolyadá (Russia) — arr. Mark Burrows

Slovak Carol (Slovakia) — arr. Godfrey Tomanek

Chindia (Romania) — Alexandru Paşcanu

Carol of the Bells (Ukraine) — Mykola Leontovychin
words by Peter J. Wilhousky; arr. James W. Knox

December in My Hometown — Pinkzebra

A One-Horse Open Sleigh — Greg Gilpin; words by James Pierpont

Santa Will Find You — Mindy Smith and Chely Wright; arr. Mark Hayes

Mistletoe and Holly — Frank Sinatra, Dok Stanford
and Henry Sanicola; arr. Mark Hayes

Something to Shout About! — Sheri Easter; arr. Mike Speck, Lari Goss
and Danny Zaloudik

Connecticut Master Chorale

Tina Johns Heidrich, Music Director and Conductor
Joseph Jacovino, Jr., Accompanist

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Ginnie Carey
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Sandy Chadwick
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Teresa DeCarlo
Anna DeVeau-Jalbert
Heidi Flower
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Robert Boncoddo
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Steve Gardner
David Nicholson
Brad Peterson
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Daria Verelley
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BASS

James P. Alworth III
Chris Blake
Mike Carbonneau
Paul Giammatteo
Eric Hudson
Jack Kelly
Tim Koch
David Morey
Steve Peterson
Gary Sander

The Connecticut Master Chorale thanks you for your support and we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and joyous Holiday Season!



Connecticut Master Chorale Holiday Brass

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Steven Perrett
Richard Shaw

Trombones
Topher Logan
Jackie Harris-Stone

Tuba
Walter Gibson

Fender Bass
John Mobilio

Percussion
Robert Nolte
Peter Coutsouridis

Piano
Joseph Jacovino, Jr.

Personnel Manager
Walter Gibson

Program Notes
by Ginnie Carey



Rejoice! Christ Is Born! – Larry Shackley (b. 1956). Our program opens with a festive Christmas medley from composer, arranger and editor Larry Shackley. His lovely brass fanfare introduces *Good Christian Friends Rejoice*, with an 1853 translation by John M. Neale (1818 - 1866) of a text from a manuscript written in Leipzig in 1400. The hymn tune is IN DULCI JUBILO, originally a folk dance first published in 1535 in a German songbook. *The Snow Lay on the Ground*, is an Anglo-Irish carol from the 19th century, with a refrain in Latin that is also the hymn tune, VENITE ADOREMUS. *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, with music and Latin lyrics by John Frances Wade (1711 - 1786), was first printed in his 1751 collection **Cantus Diversi**. The hymn tune is ADESTE FIDELES, and the English translation was made in 1841 by Frederick Oakeley (1802 - 1880).

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers – Laurentius Laurentii (1660 - 1722); arr. K. Lee Scott (b. 1950). Considered to be one of the finest hymn writers of his time, Laurentius Laurentii was the cantor and music director of the cathedral at Bremen, Germany. This 1700 hymn, like all of his works, is based on the Gospels, in this case the parable of the wise and foolish maidens waiting for the bridegroom with their lamps. The 1854 English translation is by Sarah B. Findlater (1823 - 1907). The hymn tune is a traditional Swedish folk melody, HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, which translates as "keep your trimmed lamps ready". K. Lee Scott's triumphant arrangement features his impressive brass accompaniment.

A Babe Is Born in Bethlehem – Justin Thomas Fields (b. 1981). *Puer Natus in Bethlehem* is a traditional thirteenth century Latin Carol, translated in 1886 by Hamilton Montgomerie MacGill (1807 - 1880). A new composer for the Chorale, his a cappella arrangement takes us back in time, creating a deep sense of authenticity. Fields graduated summa cum laude from the Aaron Copland School of Music, and is a skilled pianist, organist, vocalist and director, in addition to his work as a composer.

Seasons – Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978); words by Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965). Norwegian composer and pianist Ola Gjeilo writes that he "was looking for a text that was timeless and could be performed any time of the year, and Tony created a beautiful poem about the unfoldment of each of the four seasons". This lovely, gentle and evocative work explores the unique qualities of the seasons with the deep sensitivity that we have come to expect from his compositions. He began his music education in Norway, has a Master's degree from the Julliard School and also studied at the Royal College of Music in London. He currently lives in Manhattan working as a freelance composer, as well as composer-in-residence with DCINY and Albany Pro Musica, and frequently performs his own works on piano.

Pastores á Belén – (Shepherds to Bethlehem) – arr. Emily Crocker (b. 1949). This traditional Spanish carol, or villancico, describes the journey of the shepherds to Bethlehem to see the newborn baby Jesus and the gifts that they bring Him. The original text is from 1612 and it has spread throughout the Spanish speaking world. This arrangement by Emily Crocker is based on a version from Puerto Rico and combines Jaime Peres's adaptation of the Spanish lyrics with her own English translation.

Auld Lang Syne – words by Robert Burns (1759 - 1796); arr. Dan Forrest (b. 1978). In 1788 the poet Robert Burns sent the poem *Auld Lang Syne* to the Scots Musical Museum, indicating that it was an ancient song and he was the first to record it on paper. He adapted the old text and set it to this traditional Scottish tune. Dan Forrest's gorgeous arrangement brings new

attention to the source of this song about looking back and preserving old friendships. *Auld Lang Syne* literally translates to "for old time's sake".

Mi Y'malel – arr. Jill Gallina (b. 1950). Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, celebrates Judas Maccabeus' victories and the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem in 164 BCE. *Mi Y'malel*, or *Who Can Retell?* is based on Psalm 106:2 and is often sung as a round and performed as a circle dance. Jill Gallina's joyous arrangement celebrates the holiday in Hebrew and English.

Rejoice! (A Festive Carol Celebration) – arr. Douglas E. Wagner (b. 1952). An internationally recognized composer and arranger with graduate and undergraduate degrees in music, Douglas Wagner spent 30 years as a high school music educator and administrator. He now spends his time and energy composing and editing with great success. This brilliant medley features nine carols both individually and combined in clever counterpoint:

- *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, music and lyrics John Frances Wade (1711 - 1786), translated by Frederick Oakeley (1802 - 1880)
- *O Come, Little Children*, music by Johann Abraham Peter Schutz (1747 - 1800); words by Christoph von Schmid (1768 - 1854), translated by Herman H. Brueckner (1866 - 1942)
- *Angels We Have Heard on High*; a traditional French carol, English words by James Chadwick (1813 - 1882)
- *Good King Wenceslas*, music from the 1582 Latin song book *Piae Cantiones*, words by Jason Mason Neale (1818 - 1866)
- *I Saw Three Ships*, music is a traditional English folk song, 1833 words by William Sandys (1792 - 1874)
- *Ukrainian Bell Carol*, Mykola Leontovychin (1877 - 1921); words by Peter J. Wilhousky (1902 - 1978)
- *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, a traditional English carol dating from the 1650s, 1833 words by William Sandys (1792 - 1874)
- *Joy to the World*; music by Lowell Mason, (1792 - 1872), 1719 words by Isaac Watts (1674 - 1748)
- *The First Nowell*, a traditional English carol with Cornish origins, first published in *Carols Ancient and Modern*, 1823

Look Who Just Checked In – Stephen Hill (1956 - 2012) and Daryl Williams; arr. Mary McDonald (b. 1956). Composer and arranger Mary McDonald's unique arrangement opens with lines from the spiritual *Mary Had a Baby* and cleverly weaves it into Gospel singer-songwriters Daryl Williams and Stephen Hill's high-energy favorite, proclaiming the news that the long-awaited baby has been born. We find out who just checked in with a memorable refrain "into the barn, into the world, into the hearts of the boys and girls. Never knew a baby quite like this, look who just checked in".

AN EASTERN EUROPEAN HOLIDAY



Oradea, Romania

• **Kolyadá** – (Russia) – arr. Mark Burrows (b. 1971). *Kolyadá* is an ancient Slavic holiday the merges with Christmas and New Year, creating a unique atmosphere of celebration, joy and unity. The roots of the holiday go back to paganism and there are many theories about its precise origins. The word "Kolyadá" is associated with the Greek language and can mean "wheel", symbolizing the cycle of life, the change of seasons and the continuation of family. Originally celebrated on the winter solstice, it was a point of renewal and change, symbolizing the new cycle of life. There are many rituals and traditions, but the main element is caroling, when small groups of people or whole families go around to the houses of neighbors, singing songs of greeting, sometimes in costumes or traditional dress. Different Slavic countries and regions have their own unique customs, but the central aspect remains the same everywhere. Burrows' uplifting a cappella arrangement adds his own words in English.

• **Slovak Carol** – (Slovakia) – arr. Godfrey Tomanek (1925 - 2015). Tomanek was born in Chicago, but his family returned to "the old country", Wallachia, during the Depression. Slovakia was within walking distance of his home, and both peoples shared many things in common, including dialects, songs, folk art and religious customs, all of which had a profound influence on him. Musically talented from a young age, he became a church organist at 16. When he returned to America in 1949, he was already an established musician. Tomanek was a noted conductor, composer, organist, teacher, and piano technician, and served as organist/choir master in numerous churches in the Midwest and Connecticut. He also led choirs in over 500 concerts in the Northeast and gave recitals in many parts of the world. He arranged and translated this lovely traditional carol.

• **Chindia** – (Romania) – Alexandru Paşcanu (1920 - 1989). Pronounced "keen-DEE-ah", this is perhaps Pascanu's most famous composition. Based on an instrumental Romanian folk dance of the same name, it refers both to the time of day just before the sun sets and to the place in the sky where the sun goes down. The dance is performed by both men and women in a closed circle, with the dancers' arms on each other's shoulders. There are no words in this song, only Pascanu's imaginative use of descriptive monosyllables. A member of the faculty of the Music Conservatory in Bucharest., he composed choral, orchestral and chamber music.

• **Carol of the Bells** (Bountiful Evening) – (Ukraine) – Mykola Leontovychin (1877 - 1921); words by Peter J. Wilhousky (1902 - 1978); arr. James Knox (b. 1970). *Shchedryk* (*Bountiful Evening*) is a Ukrainian song of celebration, sung on New Year's Eve, which tells of a swallow flying into a house at New Year to sing of the wealth that will come with the following spring. The folk song was composed and arranged by the Ukrainian Priest and composer Mykola Leontovychin between 1901 and 1919. American composer and educator Peter J. Wilhousky, who was deeply involved in the Ukrainian culture and music of

his parents, transformed it into a Christmas carol. With a BA degree from what is now the Julliard School, he worked as a high school music teacher in Brooklyn with great success, and his student choirs performed yearly at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. He was also a music arranger for the NBC Radio Symphony Orchestra. Following a performance in October 1922, Wilhousky wrote his own new lyrics for the melody and created *Carol of the Bells*. James Knox's arrangement combines Wilhousky's carol with *Bountiful Evening* to complete the creative cycle.

December in My Hometown – Pinkzebra. This nostalgic ballad is a sentimental tribute to everyone who looks back with fond memories at the beauty and the special kind of spirit found only at Christmastime in their hometown. Pinkzebra is the pseudonym of a successful music producer and composer. In his career he has been signed by a major record label, composed and produced music for television and film, had his music performed by major symphony orchestras, and written music for hundreds of award-winning commercials. He loves listening to other people perform his music and appreciates that others are bringing his music to life in a way that connects and inspires.

A One-Horse Open Sleigh (In a Jingly Minor Way) – Greg Gilpin (b. 1969); words by James Lord Pierpont (1822 - 1893). Composer Greg Gilpin has created a new vision of the classic *Jingle Bells,* setting the lyrics to a jingly minor version of the familiar melody. In 1832, at the age of ten, lyricist James Lord Pierpont left his Boston home for a boarding school in New Hampshire. The son of a strict Unitarian minister, James wrote to his mother about how much he enjoyed a sleigh ride through the beautiful countryside. That vision, and his fondness for the sleigh races in Medford, Massachusetts, where he lived as a young man, are credited as the inspiration for *Jingle Bells*. Sleighing songs were a popular genre at the time, and it was first printed as *The One Horse Open Sleigh* in 1857. Republished two years later as *Jingle Bells*, it only became a Christmas holiday favorite in the early 1900s. It was the first song broadcast from space during the

Gemini 6 mission in 1965 and has become one of the most performed holiday songs in the world.

Santa Will Find You – Mindy Smith (b. 1972) and Chely Wright (b. 1970); arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953). Filled with memories of childhood innocence and Christmas wonder, and intended to comfort families who can't be together for Christmas, this song is a tribute to the many people who are alone for the holidays. The emotions include loneliness, hope, and comfort. Offering a promise of being found and remembered, even when physically apart, the lyrics "You'll never be lost if you truly believe in your heart" express the central message that belief in love and connection can overcome distance and "Santa can find you wherever you are".

Mistletoe and Holly – Frank Sinatra (1915 - 1998), Dok Stanford (1917 - 1967), and Henry Sanicola (1914 - 1974); arr. Mark Hayes (b. 1953). This Christmas song was written by Frank Sinatra with his longtime associates Hank Sanicola and Dok Stanford in 1957 for his holiday album "A Jolly Christmas from Frank Sinatra", released by Capitol Records. Recorded by Sinatra with The Ralph Brewster Singers and an orchestra conducted by Gordon Jenkins, the album became one of the best-selling Christmas albums in American history, and *Mistletoe and Holly* remains one of its most enduring tracks. Billboard magazine commented "Sinatra gives this one a crisp and polished vocal to a tasteful backing". The album reached the top of the Billboard charts and has remained a holiday staple for decades, cementing Sinatra's status as a definitive voice of the American Christmas tradition. Mark Hayes has written a great nostalgic swing arrangement for chorus and big band.

Something to Shout About! – Sheri Easter (b. 1963); arr. Mike Speck (b. 1954), Lari Goss (1945 - 2015) and Danny Zaloudik (b. 1956). The title says it all! Incorporating "Go Tell it on the Mountain", this inspiring and exhilarating gospel finale from the musical *Christmas is Jesus* will have everyone clapping and dancing in the aisles!

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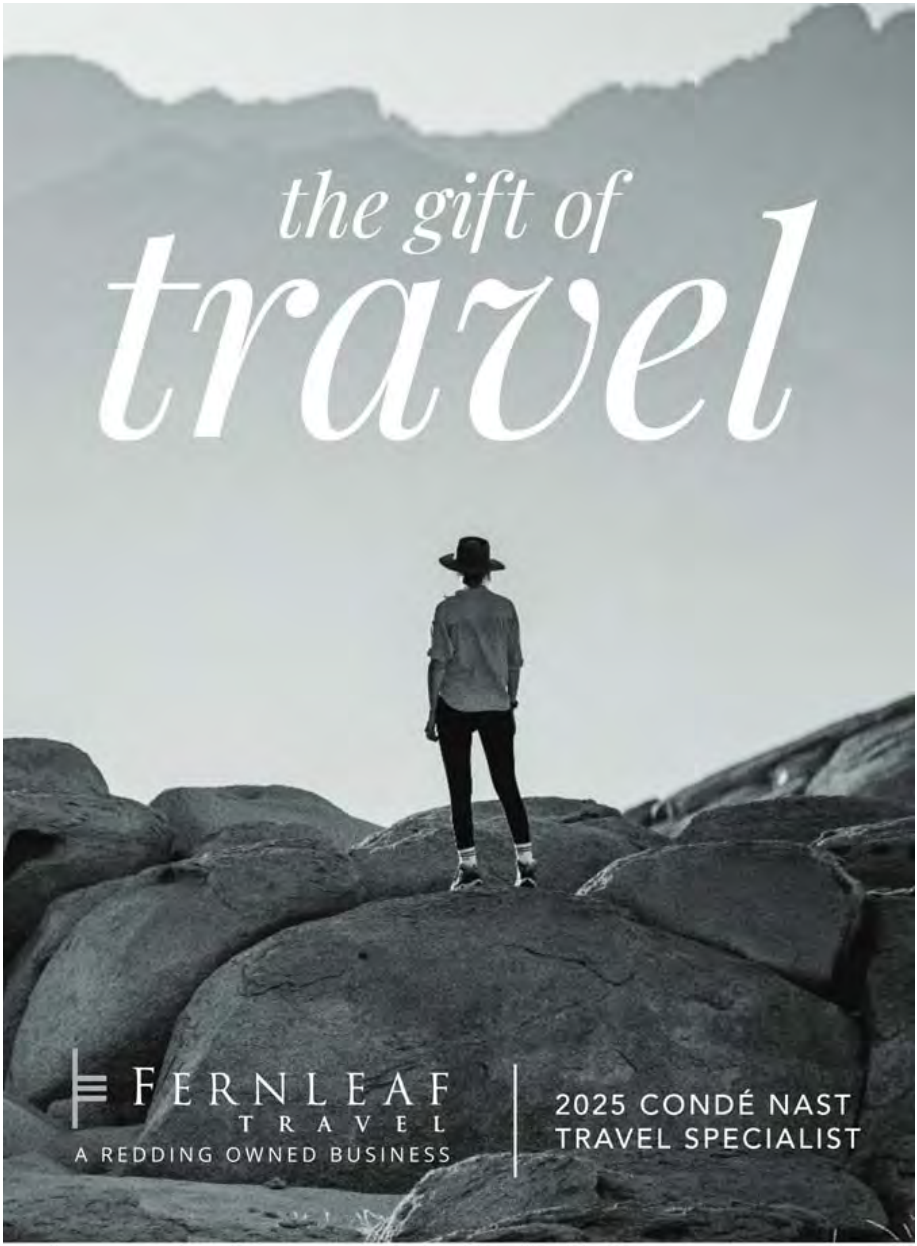

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