

https://www.wfmz.com/features/out-and-about/out-and-about-time-to-celebrate-winter-solstice/article_bca43324-227f-11ea-a934-e3c3930aa266.html

Out and About: Time to celebrate winter solstice

Kathy Lauer-Williams

Dec 19, 2019



KATJA KRUPPE

The winter solstice – the shortest day of the year (with the longest night) – arrives Dec. 21 and marks the official start of winter.

On the solstice, the sun appears at its lowest in the sky, and daylight, which has gotten less and less through the fall, is at its minimum, with sunset occurring just after 4:30 p.m. After the solstice, the sun starts to get higher in the sky and daylight starts to increase, marking what many cultures believe to be a "rebirth" of the sun. Celebrate the pivotal moment in the sun's year with solstice events in Northampton and Berks counties.

The **Karl Stirner Arts Trail** will host its second annual Winter Solstice Walk at 5 p.m. on Dec. 21.

Gather in the 13th Street parking lot, at the entrance of the trail, for a moonlight stroll, a few winter songs to take the chill off, and a candlelight celebration of "Site Lines," Rachel Hayes's vibrant and colorful banners. The artwork by the Oklahoma sculptor was installed in 2018 and consists of 1,000 yards of construction mesh and nylon flag fabric.

Walk a short distance down the trail, where the evening festivities, "Cold Moon, Warm Colors, Still Hearts," begins immediately at 5:23 p.m., when the solstice arrives.

After a few seasonal songs and readings, everyone is invited for complimentary hot chocolate at Tucker in the Silk Mill, where people can then do some holiday shopping.

The Karl Stirner Arts Trail, named for German-born sculptor Karl Stirner, who moved to Easton, is a 2.4-mile long trail connecting Easton's downtown, College Hill and West Ward neighborhoods.

The trail is at 500 Bushkill Drive. There is no admission for the trail.

For information, go to karlstirnerartstrail.org.

Berks County Parks and Recreation presents a solstice celebration with King Winter from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 21 at Bingaman Nature Center in Lower Alsace Township.

Participants are invited to hike along lantern-lit trails to discover whether King Winter has made his return. After a hike, everyone can warm up next to a campfire and hear stories about the shortest day of the year. Participants should dress warmly and take a flashlight.

Bingaman Nature Center is at 2843 Hill Road. There is no admission charge, but registration is required. Call 484-509-2667, ext. 3, or email jbrooks@countyofberks.com.



Learn about the science behind the solstice when **Nurture Nature Center** of Easton presents "Science on a Sphere: Winter Solstice and the Seasons" at 1 p.m. on Dec. 21.

The images on the center's six-foot sphere will help everyone understand the Earth's movement around the sun and the changing length of days. Learn why there are seasons and how life has adapted to the changing seasons. A donation is suggested.

The centerpiece of Nurture Nature Center is the Science on a Sphere program, one of a hundred in the world. The center occupies the second and third floors of a building that was one of Easton's first movie theaters, located at 518 Northampton Street.

Every Saturday, the community can see a general sphere demonstration on the globe, described as a "reverse planetarium," which creates a 360-degree image of natural phenomena like the tsunami, earthquakes, solar flares and the path of the Gulf stream.

The center also will present "Science on a Sphere: Frozen Earth, the Cold's Far-Reaching Influence" at 7 p.m. on Dec. 19. Discover how influential the Earth's poles and snow and ice-covered areas are, and their effects on the atmosphere, climate, weather, and even the balance of life on Earth. Learn how these regions are changing and what that means for the future.

For information, call 610-253-4432 or go to nurturenaturecenter.org.

Holiday singalong in Reading

Join renowned pianist Robin Spielberg for "Spirit of the Holidays Singalong" from 3 to 5 p.m. on Dec. 22 at **Miller Center for the Arts** in Reading's Entertainment Square.



Spielberg will be joined by members of the chorale from Berks Youth Chorus for a fun-filled show of holiday favorites. Chorale is treble choir of Berks Youth Chorus and is made up of fifth- through eighth-grade students and directed by James K. Wilson.

The show will feature traditional carols and popular songs, all led by the iconic "Follow the Bouncing Ball" singalong projected on the Miller Center's back screen for all to join in.

Spielberg is a pianist, composer, and recording artist well known for her expressive technique, melodic composition style and engaging live performances. Whether playing music that embraces the transitions of the seasons, celebrating the thrill of romance, or familiar holiday songs, Spielberg's concerts intertwine accomplished musical performance with humor and stories that inspire.

Tickets are \$23 in advance, \$27 at the door, and \$15 for students.

Miller Center for the Arts is at 4 North Second Street, Reading. For information, call 610-607-6270 or go to millercenter.racc.edu.

'Happy Days' actress to swing with Rob Stoneback Band

An actress and singer known for her roles on iconic television series "Happy Days" and "The Office" will join the Lehigh Valley's own Rob Stoneback Big Band for "Swinging the Holidays with Linda Purl and the Rob Stoneback Big Band" on Dec. 21 at **Miller Symphony**

Hall in Allentown.

Linda Purl joins Rob Stoneback and his band for a mix of Christmas music, great American standards, and swinging jazz, in their first collaboration.

Purl, who is best known as Fonzie's fiancée on "Happy Days;" Matlock's daughter, Charlene, on "Matlock;" and Pam's mom/Steve Carell's girlfriend on "The Office," returns to her singing roots for the concert, where she will sing holiday favorites like "Winter Wonderland" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," along with songs from the Great American Songbook like "S'wonderful" and "Pick Yourself Up."



Other songs in the concert include "Santa Baby," "White Christmas," and "Happy Holidays." Purl said there's "a lot of Christmas music."

Stoneback is a trombonist, composer and arranger who cut his teeth performing with nationally known big bands, including the Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Harry James, and Gene Krupa orchestras. He started the Rob Stoneback Big Band in 1979,

and since then, the band has recorded with Bill Watrous and has performed at Lincoln Center and all over the Mid-Atlantic region, including New York, Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Wilmington, Baltimore, and most of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The band includes 17 instrumentalists and two vocalists, who collectively have played with Frank Sinatra, Frank Sinatra, Jr., Natalie Cole, Johnny Mathis, Aretha Franklin, The Manhattan Transfer, Rosemary Clooney, Lou Rawls, Olivia Newton-John, The Temptations and The Four Tops.

The band specializes in the hits from the Big Band Era and add a twist with their own arrangements of standards and more contemporary music.

"Swinging the Holidays with Linda Purl and the Rob Stoneback Big Band," is at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 21 at Miller Symphony Hall, 23 North Sixth Street, Allentown.

Tickets are \$10 to \$50. For information, call 610-432-6715 or go to millersymphonyhall.org.

Cirque meets Christmas at the State Theatre



Renowned Broadway director Neil Goldberg has assembled a unique cast of cirque artists from around the world and joined them with Broadway performers and a spectacular holiday set to create "Cirque Dreams Holidayze," which comes to the **State Theatre** in Easton on Dec. 19.



Part Broadway musical and part modern circus, "Cirque Dreams Holidaze" features 20 amazing cirque acts and more than 300 colorful costumes as performers juggle unexpected items, display incredible acrobatic skills and fly overhead.

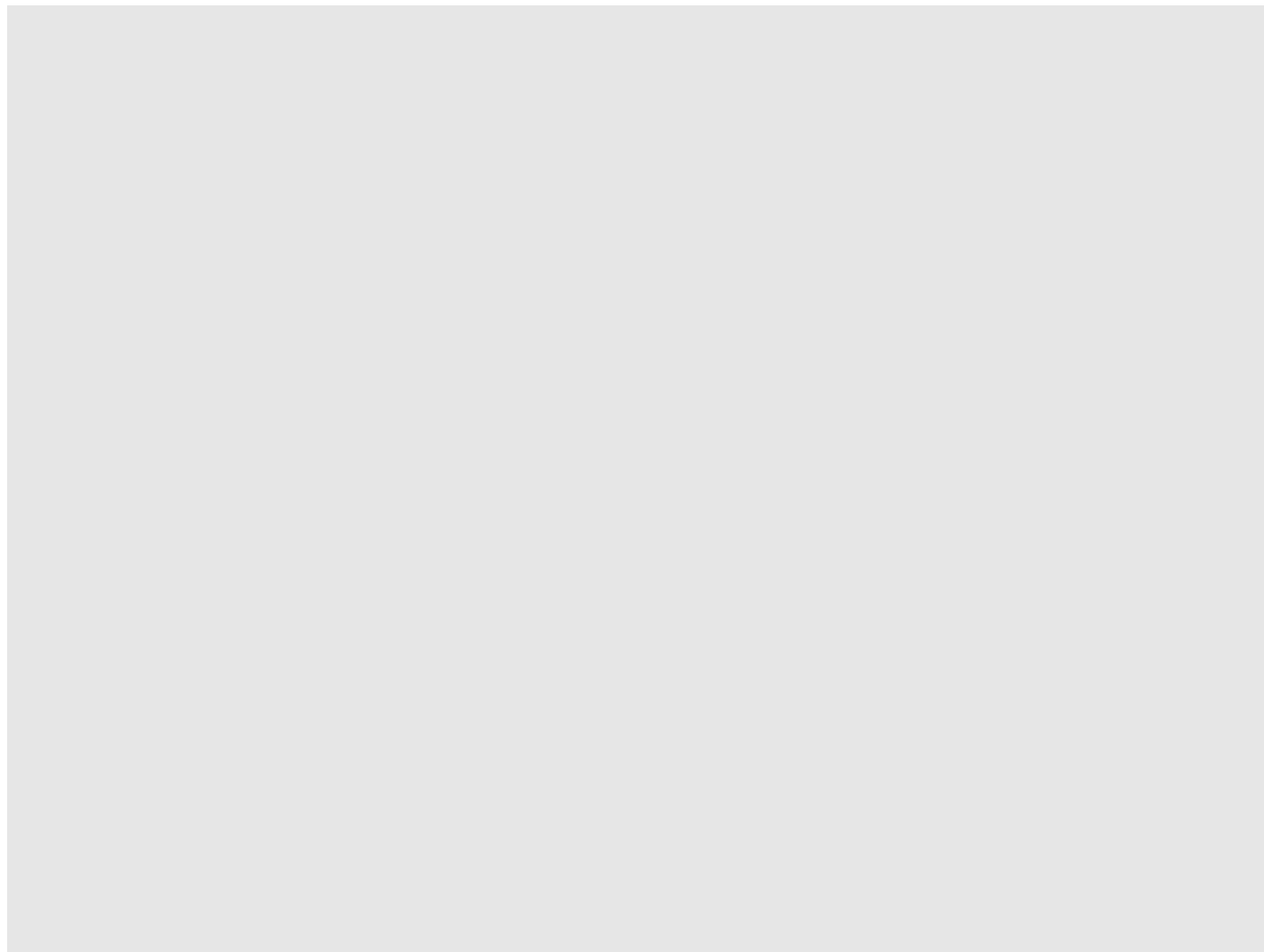
Set in a multi-million-dollar wonderland of elaborate scenes and dozens of original holiday production numbers, Broadway singers will perform original music along with new twists on seasonal favorites such as "Deck The Halls," "Winter Wonderland" and "Jingle Bell Rock." Astonishing feats are performed by toy soldiers, snowmen, penguins, candles, reindeer, gingerbread, carolers, Santa and colossal ornaments flying, balancing and stretching imaginations in this two-hour stage spectacular celebrating the holidays, including Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Since 1993, Goldberg's "Cirque Dreams" franchise hat has produced shows for Broadway, theaters, casinos, theme parks, resorts, governments, cruise lines and venues worldwide. More than 50 million people have seen one of the "Cirque Dreams" shows, which have been critically acclaimed by USA Today, Associated Press and the New York Times, CNN, Today Show and Fox & Friends.

"Cirque Dreams Holidaze" is at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 19 at State Theatre, 453 Northampton Street, Easton. Tickets are \$49, \$59 and \$69.

For information, call 610-252-3132 or go to statetheatre.org.

Straight No Chaser brings 'Open Bar Tour' to Easton



On Saturday, Straight No Chaser, the male acapella sensation, brings its "The Open Bar Tour" to the **State Theatre** in Easton for two shows. The tour is in support of its seventh album, the retrospective "One Shot."

The album takes listeners through the story of Straight No Chaser, whose members met in show choir at Indiana University in the 1980s. A cover of the Def Jam hit "This is How We Do It" and a cover of Toto's hit "Africa" were hits on campus, but it was a goofy version of "12 Days of Christmas" that would become the group's breakthrough song.

After college, the members all went their own ways, but in 1998, the Indiana University choir members reunited for a 10-year reunion. As part of the festivities, they made a video of themselves singing "The 12 Days of Christmas."

Eight years later, original member Randy Stine posted the video to YouTube, and to everyone's shock, it went viral, becoming the number one viewed video in 2007.

Atlantic Records called, and before long, 10 choir members were in the studio recording the group's debut album, "Holiday Spirits," which went gold and became the number one selling album on both the iTunes and [Amazon.com](#) charts.

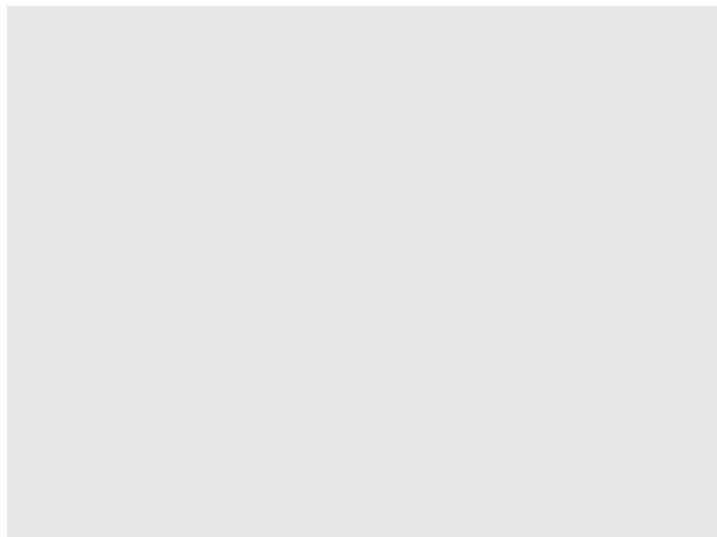
Straight No Chaser went on to sell out concert venues across the country and release six more top-selling albums and four EPs.

The current lineup features Allentown native Jerome Collins, Forks Township, Northampton County, native Walter Chase, Seggie Isho, Michael Luginbill, Charlie Mechling, Steve Morgan, and David Roberts.

Straight No Chaser performs at 3 and 7 p.m. on Dec. 22 at State Theatre, 453 Northampton Street, Easton. Tickets are \$49.50, \$59.50 and \$69.50.

For information, call 610-252-3132 or go to [statetheatre.org](#).

'Clash of the Carols' finale in Bethlehem



A new musical competition will have its finale in downtown Bethlehem on Saturday.

Heart of Bethlehem is hosting its first-ever holiday a cappella choral competition - "Clash of the Carols."

The competition, which had preliminary Dec. 7 and 14, will present the finals from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday in the

Sun Inn Courtyard, when the winners of all the different age groups and chorus sizes will compete to be named best choral group. There also will be a wild card "save" voted on by the public.

Competing groups include Northeast Singers of Northeast Middle School, Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts Touring Choir, Enchord of Nazareth Area High School, Cedar Crest College's Voices of Inclusion Choral Ensemble (VOICE), and soloist Rhys Williams. There also will be a performance by Seth Witcher.

For information, go to getdowntownbethlehem.com.

MORE INFORMATION



Out and About: Holiday theater continues with interactive Scrooge, naughty Cindy Lou Who

Out and About: Holidays usher in theater, music, festivals

Out and About: Holiday putz displays unique to region

Out and About: Holiday entertainment gets jump on Thanksgiving

Out and About: Explore arts in Berks with 'Fall into Winter' tour

Out and About: Get a jump on holidays with Christmas shows

Out and About: See opera live on big screen in Berks, Lehigh

Kathy Lauer-Williams

WFMZ.com Arts & Entertainment Reporter