

Channel Surfing

SPOTLIGHT

Christmas at The Cathedral

Gospel artists gather for Christmas special on mainstream TV.

A holiday music event meant to showcase some of the most prominent gospel and inspirational music artists is scheduled to air on network TV this month.

MyNetworkTV, a television network owned by Fox Television, will broadcast an hour-long special dubbed Christmas at the Cathedral on Dec. 6, featuring guests Mary Mary, Tye Tribbett and G.A., Smokie Norful, J Moss, Martha Munizzi, Marvin Sapp, David Peaceton and Da' .

Hosted by comedian George Wallace, the show will be held at the 24,000-member West Angeles Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Los Angeles, one of the COGIC denomination's largest and most prominent congregations.

Bishop Charles E. Blake, the church's senior pastor and also head of the 6 million-member COGIC, says his church is delighted to welcome the event.

"Our holy days have been so secularized and twisted from their original meaning," he says. "This is an opportunity to have a focus on the Lord and the kindness of Jesus and His coming to

earth.”

Gospel singer Martha Munizzi says she hopes the Christmas special reaches new audiences and that viewers at home are compelled to consider “the real reason for the season—the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

According to Robert Coleman, the 46-year-old Fox producer who spearheaded the project, a Christmas-gospel extravaganza on network TV is a rarity. “May have been on cable before,” he says, “but this many gospel music artists in the mainstream on a major network is a first.”

Coleman, who was born in St. Louis and grew up in the Pentecostal-based COGIC denomination, notes that asking Blake to host the event at West Angeles was an obvious choice. “The \$60 million cathedral is a perfect match,” he says. “Bishop Blake [was] overjoyed” to do it.

Blake told Charisma that Coleman is a longtime member at West Angeles and has been involved in many things, but “this is one of his projects that I’m most proud of.”

Sony BMG Music will release a CD of the concert in December, says Coleman. He predicts the Christmas special will be “an evening filled with joy, love and laughter” as good cheer is spread through good music.

Paul Steven Ghiringhelli

The Hallmark Channel plans to air an original Christmas movie

Saturday, Dec. 8, titled The Note. The story is about newspaper columnist Peyton MacGruder (Genie Francis, General Hospital), who suddenly finds herself on a dramatic journey to locate, before Christmas, the intended recipient of a note scribbled by a father seated on a crashing airliner. Taking her column's readers along for the ride, Peyton also unexpectedly confronts her own personal demons while on her frantic cross-country search for the child.

Coinciding with a recent DVD release titled Christmas Memories, a 30-minute TV Christmas special by the same name will air this holiday season. Christmas Memories is a collection of vintage 8mm and 16mm home movies meant to evoke viewers' favorite Christmas memories. In addition to CW Network, it will air on Christian networks such as INSP, NRB Network, INI, The Miracle Channel and Sky Angel.

b>Leading up to New Year's Day, GOD TV will broadcast the One Thing conference live from Bartle Hall in Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 28-31. The annual worship-prayer event, led by Mike Bickle of the International House of Prayer, will feature worship artists Misty Edwards, the Merchant Band and Jason Upton. On Dec. 31, the conference will end with live GOD TV coverage of Lou Engle's TheCall Kansas City—a full day of worship, fasting and intercession for what organizers say is a “holy prescription” for a city or nation in need of hope.