

Music Legend Thurlow Spurr Kicks Off Christmas Season in Orlando With Musical Extravaganza Called 'Christmas Is ...'

Christmas is a time of stories, song and celebration—and who better than Christian music legend Thurlow Spurr to combine all of those into an incredible music production?

I've known Thurlow since he was the cover story in the first issue of *Charisma* in 1975. Then it was about a musical extravaganza he produced honoring the American bicentennial. We've been friends ever since, and it was an honor to interview him in a podcast you can hear at [this link](#).

Thurlow and his wife, Kathey, will present two hours of music, dance, narrative, costumes and special effects in an astounding production titled *Christmas is ...*, a made-for-television special at Calvary Orlando in Orlando, Florida, on Saturday, Dec. 4, at 3 p.m. Eastern. I'll be there with my wife and friends! The program is available as a livestream at that time and on demand Dec. 17-25.

"We're in our 49th year of doing these kinds of productions," he told me. "We spread all over the country and have done them in New York, in Oklahoma, in Texas... —and even went to Hawaii."

Thurlow says he and his team were even able to perform in Russia years ago despite the political upheaval at that time. Various state departments weren't sending anyone, but he and his team went and even performed in the Kremlin. "We were able, incidentally, to place a Bible on every desk in the Kremlin," he says.

"The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation, whether you print it, whether you talk into a microphone, or you look into a camera or whatever you do, it's still the powerful gospel," Thurlow says. "And it's all because there was a Christmas way back there, 2,000 years ago. It happened in Bethlehem, and it changed the world.

"Jesus Christ changed the world," he adds. "And of course, He still changes people's lives. So I thought we would celebrate it in the best way that we could, because God gave the best He had. And even when Jesus died, He said, 'You were worth it.' ... We, you, Steve Strang and Thurlow Spurr were worth it, that Jesus paid that terrific price."

Thurlow says because of that price, he wanted to make his celebration as good as it could be, and there's no doubt that he has. "We've got so many elements that we call this Central Florida's premier holiday event," he says. The production features special guests including virtual appearances by the Gaither Vocal Band, Sandi Patty, Larnelle Harris (whom Thurlow discovered and brought to the Christian music world) and world-class pianist Dino Karsonakis.

But *Christmas is ...* includes more than superstars. "We take ordinary people who are willing to really put forth an effort, and who will use what talent that they have, and we surround them with professionals, with people who've got special gifts and special talents," Thurlow says. "For example, the orchestra is made up of the best people in Orlando, there are people from Disney Universal Studios, their symphony. So we surround these ordinary people with extraordinary people, people who've been given maybe a bit more gifts."

Thurlow says he believes people "listen with their eyes," so the production features all sorts of audiovisual treats. "When the show starts, the Salvation Army Band will be playing," he says. "So that music will fill the parking lot ... and the kids get to go to a petting zoo that we're going to have. And then

they go inside the foyer, and a man is playing the guitar. He's from Brazil and is probably one of the best players in the world—he's all over YouTube; his name is Walter Rodrigues Jr."

The production also includes photos with Santa as well as carolers dressed in Dickensian style who greet guests as they enter the auditorium—and the excitement only continues from there.

"God deserves the best," Thurlow says. "He said to Moses a long time ago, 'What's in your hand?' And Moses said, 'it's a stick.' And God said, 'Throw it down.' It became a serpent and he said, 'Pick it up,'" and it became a stick again.

"And He said, 'I'm going to use what's in your hand.' And you remember, he held the stick over the Red Sea, and it parted—stood up like a wall on both sides. And they passed through, the Bible says, on dry ground. ... So God says, 'What's in your hand?' And he gave us this gift of music—for me, it was a baton. Just a simple piece of wood. And so God has allowed us to go across the world."

For much more from Christian music icon Thurlow Spurr about his remarkable career and his 2021 holiday production, *Christmas is ...*, listen to the entire episode of the Strang Report at this link, and subscribe to the Strang Report on Apple Podcasts or your favorite podcast platform.

☒ Those who live in Central Florida as I do will want to purchase tickets for the event, but everyone else will want to be sure to livestream it Dec. 4 or watch it on demand Dec. 17-25. Visit for all the information you need. {eo}

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