



PRESS release

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Date: 6/30/2011

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**AKRON SYMPHONY POPS CONCERT, FIREWORKS ADD MUSIC AND SPECTACLE
TO DOWNTOWN'S FOURTH OF JULY FESTIVITIES**

The Akron Symphony Orchestra will bring Downtown Akron's Fourth of July weekend to a thrilling musical climax Monday, July 4 at 8:00 pm from the Lock 3 stage. The ASO, under the direction of Maestro Christopher Wilkins, will present a classic American pops concert with songs and orchestral selections from the greatest America has ever produced, including Gershwin, Copland, Berlin, and highlights from Richard Rodgers' *Oklahoma*. The concert will feature two of the region's leading vocalists, Helen Welch and Jared Leal.

Wilkins will have some fun with the orchestra when he asks the musical question, "What if Richard Rodgers had used the cannon as a musical instrument in *Oklahoma*, like Tchaikovsky did in his 1812 overture?"

A spectacular fireworks finale will close the concert at 9:45 pm.

About Helen Welch

Helen Welch is a critically-acclaimed vocalist whose live stage performances explore a diverse range of musical compositions, starting with the 1930s up through present-day. Whether she's singing Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee and Sarah Vaughan, or Elton John, Sting and Randy Newman, Helen's sophisticated vocals and humor leave audiences breezily enchanted. The "Helen Welch experience" is perhaps best described by a fan who wrote on her Amazon page, "If you have a chance to see Helen perform, do it! You are in for a special treat."

About Jared Leal

Jared Leal was born and raised in Lorain County and graduated from the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory of Music. He spent a year traveling the country in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, after which he moved to Chicago, where he joined the actors' union and performed professionally for many years. In Cleveland, Jared played the lead in Stephen Sondheim's *Passion* at The Beck Center. In concert, he was tenor soloist for Penderecki's *Te Deum* and the Mozart *Requiem*. Jared has performed many times in The Musical Theater Project's *Song Is You!* series, including "A Christmas Cabaret," "A Fine Romance: A Love Song Cabaret," and "Open a New Window: The Songs of Jerry Herman."

About the Akron Symphony Orchestra

For 60 years, the Akron Symphony Orchestra has been a driving musical force throughout the Greater Akron area. Operated by the Greater Akron Musical Association (GAMA), the Akron Symphony is committed to enhancing the quality of life of our community through education and musical excellence by providing quality symphonic and choral music, through performances and educational programs, to the largest number of people possible. For more about the Akron Symphony, visit akronsymphony.org.

Notes About The Concert

- The 4th of July Concert is at Lock 3, 200 S. Main Street.
- Parking is FREE at all city owned parking decks and lots and the Summit County deck on South High Street.
- Handicapped parking is available at the State Street deck, which has an elevator to the Lock 3 level, or at Cascade Plaza, where handicapped parking is available by entering at Mill Street and following the ramp up to Lock 4 (parking level 2, Orange)
- South Main Street will be closed Monday night between Exchange and Market for the fireworks show. Traffic should enter downtown via Route 59, Dart Avenue, Bowery or Mill Streets.

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