

dec 19, 20

Clay Aiken—Christmas in the Heartland

Clay Aiken with the Minnesota Orchestra

Clay Aiken, vocals

Jesse Vargas, conductor

Christmas in the Heartland

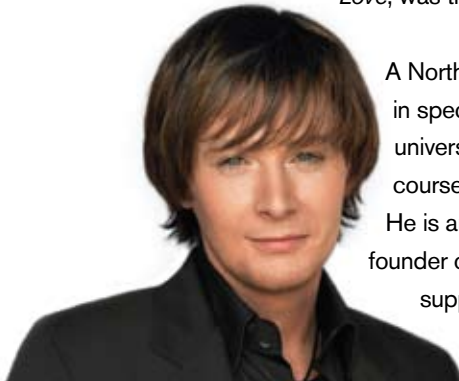
Holiday Concerts

Wednesday, December 19, 2007, 7:30 pm | Orchestra Hall
Thursday, December 20, 2007, 7:30 pm | Orchestra Hall

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage.
There will be one intermission.

Clay Aiken sang his way to fame on TV's *American Idol* in 2003 and hasn't slowed down since. During the last four years he has released four hit albums, co-authored a memoir that made the *New York Times* best-seller list, embarked on eight nationwide concert tours and appeared on TV shows as varied as *Good Morning America* and *Saturday Night Live*. Next month he makes his Broadway debut as Sir Robin in the musical *Monty Python's Spamalot*.

Aiken was first runner-up on the second season of *American Idol* and has since become the show's most successful male artist. His first album, *Measure of a Man*, debuted at Number One on the Billboard chart and hit triple platinum status; his follow-up, *Merry Christmas with Love*, was the top-selling Christmas album of 2004.



A North Carolina native, Aiken earned a degree in special education from his home state's university in Charlotte, completing his coursework while on tour with *American Idol*. He is an ambassador for UNICEF and a co-founder of the Bubel/Aiken Foundation, which supports children with disabilities. For more information, visit clayaiken.com.

New Jersey native **Jesse Vargas** has been music director and arranger for several of Clay Aiken's performance tours. He is also active in musical theater and has been music director for productions ranging from *Dreamgirls* to *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*. He has worked as an arranger for *Pippin*, *Hair* and other musicals; as a pianist, he has performed with many top Broadway talents. Vargas' upcoming engagements include directing and arranging music for a February 2008 Kennedy Center staging of the musical *Up in the Air*.

thank you

Thursday's concert is supported by the **Deluxe Corporation Foundation**.