

Q&A: Lindsey Stirling bringing festive 'Snow Waltz' to Shea's

Buffalo's holiday season to shine brighter with Dec. 12 performance

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

Santa Claus.
Harry Potter.
Lindsey Stirling.

Three of the world's great performers and most magical gift-givers are teaming up to bring Buffalo a Christmas show unlike anything that's ever decked the halls of the Queen City.

OK, technically, the first two will only be there in spirit – but they won't be missed, as Stirling brings her "Snow Waltz" tour to Shea's Performing Arts Center on Dec. 12. The concert will be a celebration of the season – from Halloween through Christmas – stocking-stuffed with timeless musical classics, innovative originals, dancing, elaborate costumes, and a production element rivaling the top stage shows in Las Vegas.

Plus, there's a better-than-average chance Stirling will play the violin upside down and hanging from some sort of trapeze at some point in the evening.

Already well-known across a number of musical genres – classical, pop, dance, gaming and rock, among them – Stirling's songs successfully entered into the holiday canon with 2017's "Warmer in the Winter" (plus a 2018 deluxe version) and her more recent release, 2022's "Snow Waltz."

A hit-making musician, wildly popular YouTube creator, author, philanthropist, friend of Buffalo – Stirling has raised money for the Ronald McDonald House – and a former star on "America's Got Talent" and "Dancing with the Stars" – there's little Stirling hasn't already achieved in her young career. Ahead of Thanksgiving Bingo Night, she shared more about her tour in this edited Q&A.

Q: You're about five dates into the tour. How has it been going so far?

Lindsey Stirling: It's been so good. I love doing the Christmas tour. It gets me in the Christmas spirit. I feel like it's just so magical to get to sprinkle Christmas spirit all over the country.

So far, so good.

Q: You know, Buffalo is not exactly warmer in the winter. You've been kind enough to come and include us on many of your holiday tours. You've raised money for the Ronald McDonald House, which you've also been to and visited. What is it about this area – what is it about the fans here – that make this a worthwhile stop for you?

Lindsey Stirling: They always come out and show up, and the audiences are always great. So, I love coming back to Buffalo.

Q: I find myself fascinated with your fascination with the period between Halloween and Christmas. I'm wondering how that sort of tied into the creation of this tour – what it looks like, what it sounds like.

Lindsey Stirling: Yeah, it was kind of fun to really lean into that gray area a little bit. We have one song that specifically talks about starting celebrating Christmas way too early, for the Christmas fanatics. We also have "Snow Waltz," which melds kind of the Halloween aesthetics and sounds into the magical Christmas – which I think finds that sweet spot that "Harry Potter" hits, where it kind of hits both feelings of spooky but also festive.

So, it was really fun to lean into that a little bit on some of the music videos. And yeah, we do bring a little bit of the "Snow Waltz" feeling to life on stage with a little bit of a creepy moment in the show, which is kind of fun.

Subtly creepy – don't worry, kids won't be creeped out.

Q: I think I was at a writing seminar when someone said that fear and excitement are basically the same emotion. It just sort of depends on how you balance into them. In creating

this show – and in performing these amazing feats on stage – what is the balance between fear and excitement for you?

Lindsey Stirling: You know, I think you're so right. I've heard that before, and performers talk about nerves, and it's kind of the same thing. Nervous energy is the same thing: It's your body telling you, "I'm really excited about this." But then you kind of process it in a different way. It becomes nerves rather than joy.

I think that, as just a performer, I've really worked hard to learn to, I guess, understand my emotions, and what they mean, and then how to deal with them when they come in. And I do a lot of meditation, and I do breath work before every show, and my dancers and band do it with me now. So that we can all kind of, one, connect together and feel that team effort before we walk onto the stage. But also, so we can all actually take our nervous systems, which sometimes get out of control, and you can balance it by using your breath correctly.

And sometimes even mid-show, I'll start to do a few little breath patterns in the moments when the lights go out. And I have a moment – just liter-

ally a moment – to myself to be like (breaths in). If you do three of those in a row, it resets your nervous system.

I now have some tools that kind of help me process all these different feelings in real time, so that I can be as on and as efficient as possible when I am on stage.

It will never be perfect, but I'm taking steps towards that direction.

Q: In Western New York, we have a lot of great music venues. We get a lot of classic rockers, and these guys, bless their soul, they're like 75 years old. Maybe the moment has passed them by? It's not for me to say. But, a lot of times with their production – with their bells and whistles – it's because they can't really do it musically anymore.

Lindsey Stirling: That's a great question. I try to be very artistic and theatrical in the way I approach a show. And so, I don't ever tell my lighting guy, "And then just, like, strobe – use the strobes!" Everything is very intentional, and also it helps to have a team of people I've worked with over and over and over again on these tours. As I'm elevating my skills over here in this area, they're also learning new things, and they're bringing their craft to the next level to match what they've seen me do for years. And they're like, "Oh, she's now doing it this way. How can we highlight that better?"

And so, it really is kind of a team effort between all the different entities of the band, the dancers, the lighting, the production, all the things – they all have to kind of play together. And when we do approach it in a theatrical aspect, it's like all these things are just meant to heighten the music, and make it more of a visual and sensory experience, rather than

to distract from said music.

Q: At this point, you've got quite a Christmas collection. You've got quite a catalog that you've built up. How do you decide which songs make the cut? Maybe all of them do? And then how do you also decide what other songs or what other hits you might sprinkle in throughout the course of the night?

Lindsey Stirling: In the past, I've usually just picked my favorites. You know, the ones I'm the most excited about. I feel like some songs raise their hand to say, "That song was meant to be played live. I think people will enjoy this one more live than they will on the album."

And then there's other songs that are different than them. You're like, "This actually is more of an album track; it's meant to be listened to; it doesn't translate well on stage for some reason."

Through the years of performing, I feel like my team and I, we've gotten better at kind of knowing, "This one's a storytelling piece. This is going to fill that moment really well. This one's just a 'wow factor.'"

So, it's finding those different beats in the show that you want people to feel, and then filling in the gaps so that it creates kind of an emotional arc for people as they sit in the audience.

I like to take them on some kind of an emotional journey with the music.

Q: I was in my car today, and I was thinking about the questions I might ask you – and, of course, there's Christmas music playing on all the different stations.

Lindsey Stirling: (Laughs) You know, we actually haven't been playing Christmas music backstage. Maybe I need to change that?

We do watch a lot of Christmas movies, I would say. Maybe it's because we get so sensory overloaded with the amount of Christmas music we're ingesting every day, so we play other music when we're getting ready for the show? But we do watch a lot of Christmas movies.

We had Hallmark on the other night, and there's something so fun about watching Hallmark movies – especially with a group of people – because you can all lean into it together.

Q: And, of course, you've been in a Hallmark movie, as well.

Lindsey Stirling: I have. I have been in a Hallmark movie.

And how funny is this? One of my dancers, the other night, we had a day off. We all got to our hotels. And she was like, "I just want to tune out for a second, and kind of leave all the Lindsey Stirling music aside." We've been in rehearsals for weeks. I don't blame her. And she just turned on the Hallmark Channel and laid in her bed – and immediately heard my song playing.

She was like, "What's happening?" It happened to be the one Hallmark movie that I'm in, and she laughed so hard. She's like, "I can't escape her. I can't escape it."

"Lindsey Stirling – Snow Waltz Tour" visits Shea's Performing Arts Center in Buffalo for a 7:30 p.m. show on Tuesday, Dec. 12.



Singer, dancer, violinist extraordinaire – and occasional Hallmark Channel cameo – Lindsey Stirling returns to Buffalo on Dec. 12 with her "Snow Waltz" tour. (Image by Cara Robbins // courtesy of Shore Fire Media)

Have Computer Problems?

Get **\$20 OFF** Any Service

Use Coupon Code **42513**

24/7 Emergency Service
Data Recovery
Virus Removal
Regular Maintenance

Call Now Get a Free Diagnosis
866-848-0045

Friendly Certified Computer Repair Experts

Geeks OnSite

NEW YORK HOMEOWNERS:

NEED HELP WITH EXPENSIVE REPAIRS? WE MATCH YOU WITH FUNDING YOU CAN AFFORD.

888-254-6006
or visit **NYProgramFunding.net**

ROOFING | SIDING | WINDOWS | DOORS & MORE!

HELP IS AVAILABLE EVEN IF YOU COULD PAY CASH ...but it won't last! Enrollment is only open during a limited time. Programs, appointments, and installations are first come, first serve.

ACT NOW!

Approved applications will have the work completed by a quality repair crew provided by: HOMEOWNER FUNDING. Not affiliated with State or Gov Programs. Contractor License: NY: #2719-h14

WXRL CLASSIC COUNTRY
1300 AM & 95.5 FM

The Ramblin' Lou Family Band
"WNY's First Family of Country Music"

WXRL's 54th Annual CHRISTMAS SHOW & RADIO BROADCAST - December 9
Classics V Banquet Center Amherst, NY
2-hour Christmas show from 11am-1pm, followed by meal at 1pm
Sponsored by MILK FOR HEALTH & the Dairy Farmers of WNY
The guys & Gals with the cows!
Tickets are \$43.00 pp on sale now!
Send a check or money-order to:
WXRL Radio, PO Box 170,
Lancaster, NY 14086

WXRL ALASKA CRUISE - June 8-16, 2024
Norwegian Cruise Lines "ENCORE" ship
Seattle - Juneau - Skagway - Glacier Bay
Ketchikan - Victoria, BC Canada Book by 12/24/23
Call for a FREE brochure & details. to guarantee space

2024 Tours - more coming soon!
Apr 12-14 Polka Weekend at Villa Roma-Catskills
May 21-27 Memphis/Graceland/Nashville/Grand Ole Opry
June 24-27 Frankenmuth/Mackinac Island

"Buffalo's Home for Country Classics"
WXRL 1300 AM / 95.5 FM
& Streaming LIVE @ WXRL.com
For a FREE brochure, call 716-681-1313