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**Indianapolis Symphony Announces Renowned Opera Star Angela Brown and Broadway's Ben Crawford as Co-Hosts of Duke Energy Yuletide Celebration Nov. 30-Dec. 23**

*Brown becomes first Indianapolis native to host ISO's popular holiday show*

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra announced today that renowned opera star and Indianapolis native Angela Brown will co-host this year's annual holiday production of Duke Energy *Yuletide Celebration* with noted Broadway actor Ben Crawford, who starred on the Great White Way in *Shrek the Musical*. Brown will become the first host of *Yuletide Celebration* who was born and raised in this city.

"Having the opportunity to be home for the holiday season with family and friends is always a special treat for me," Brown said. "Not only will I get to be a part of *Yuletide Celebration*, Indianapolis' great Christmas tradition, I also get to share the experience with my husband and my stepchildren who will be making their very first visit to America. What a great way to show them some Hoosier hospitality with a little Santa on the side! Needless to say...I am thrilled!"

Angela Brown personifies the ideal American dramatic soprano: sheer vocal power; luxurious finesse; shimmering, high pianissimos; and a charming personality larger than life. Her highly successful Metropolitan Opera debut in 2004 sparked a media excitement that landed her on the front page of *The New York Times* and on the *CBS Evening News*. Her *New York Times* review exclaimed: "At last an Aida." and the *CBS Evening News* declared: "the future of opera has arrived!" She has been featured in *Oprah Magazine*, *Essence Magazine*, *Ebony Magazine*, *Classical Singer*, *Reader's Digest* and on CNN worldwide for her one-woman show, "Opera...from a Sistah's Point of View." Combining pops, Gospel and opera in one spectacular voice, Brown has collaborated with pops legend Marvin Hamlisch, Gospel icon Richard Smallwood, as well as guest starred on the national radio show *A Prairie Home Companion*, a live Disney celebration at Lincoln Center and other national award events and television shows.

She has performed with the ISO on numerous occasions in classical, pops and *Opening Night Gala* programs and made her ISO debut in February 1996 in a pops weekend conducted by former ISO Pops Music Director Erich Kunzel, with whom she also recorded. She graduated from Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis and attended the Indiana University School of Music as a student in the studio of Virginia Zeani. Brown received the Indiana University African American Arts Institute's inaugural Herman C. Hudson Alumni Award in 2006, given annually to recognize outstanding contributions made in the arts by former members of the Institute. She is featured in "Nineteen Stars of Indiana," a book by Michael S. Maurer about 19 living Hoosier women with successful and inspirational life stories, released by Indiana University Press in December 2008. In the fall of 2009, Angela received the Governor's Arts Award from the Governor of Indiana, a Spirit of the Prairie Award from Conner Prairie and was inducted into the Indianapolis Public Schools Hall of Fame.

**Ben Crawford** has Broadway credits that include the starring role in *Shrek the Musical* and as Jalvert in *Les Misérables*. Regionally he has been seen in as John Wilkes Booth in *Assassin*, plus *Guys & Dolls*, *Titanic*, *Soul Doctor*, *Oklahoma!*, *White Christmas*, *A New Brain*, *Oliver!* and *Next to Normal*. Last December, he performed in Duke Energy *Yuletide Celebration*, in which he was showcased as a soloist in the popular song "Believe," and was in the *Pops Series* concert stage production of *Hello Dolly!* with Sandi Patty and Gary Beach in January. He has also appeared in concerts with the Naples Florida Philharmonic and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa.

Conducted by ISO Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly, the Duke Energy *Yuletide Celebration* tradition will continue by featuring popular carols, superb orchestral arrangements of holiday classics and familiar favorites such as the re-enactment of "Twas The Night Before Christmas" with Santa Claus and his flying reindeer puppets and the Tap Dancing Santas. The Orchestra will present 28 performances beginning Friday, November 30, through Sunday, December 23, with evening and matinee times available. Duke Energy is the Title Sponsor of the ISO's presentation of Duke Energy *Yuletide Celebration*.

Tickets will go on sale Monday, October 1 to the general public and will remain the same as last year's prices with most performance ranging from \$39 to \$65 for adults and \$24 to \$49 for children ages 4-12. "Super Saver" prices for select performances range from \$33 to \$49 for adults and \$18 to \$34 for children. For more information, call the Hilbert Circle Theatre Box Office at (317) 639-4300. Outside Indianapolis call toll free 1-800-366-8457, or visit the Orchestra's website at [www.IndianapolisSymphony.org](http://www.IndianapolisSymphony.org)

Groups of 20 or more can enjoy a 10 percent discount on tickets to any Duke Energy *Yuletide Celebration* performance, subject to availability. For more information on this program, contact ISO Group Sales Manager Jeff Johnson by calling (317) 231-6788 or via e-mail to [jjohnson@IndianapolisSymphony.org](mailto:jjohnson@IndianapolisSymphony.org)

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