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Joy to the World! Celebrate Christmas with Louise Mandrell

Variety show to feature troop tribute

by Michele Vowell, Courier Assistant Editor

Country
singer
Louise
Mandrell
started
celebrating
the
holiday
season
early this
year
singing
Christmas
carols in
her own



show at Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tenn.

Mandrell presents her "Joy to the World Christmas Show & Dinner"





as part of Gaylord Opryland's 25th annual "A Country Christmas" celebration.

"The show was titled 'Joy to the World' because we're joyful Christians. It's a celebration," Mandrell said in a phone interview Nov. 19, as she decorated a Christmas tree at her parents' home in Hendersonville, Tenn.

"'Joy to the World' describes my show perfectly - celebrating the birth of Jesus with traditional Christmas music and a trip around the world..." Mandrell noted on her personal Web site.

Mandrell's show features traditional songs for the Yuletide season and highlights music originating from other nations. Show times are scheduled through Christmas Day.

"I brought my sister Barbara out of retirement to help me put the show together," Mandrell said, crediting older sister and Grammy-winning country artist Barbara Mandrell. "I have so much fun doing this show."

Being on stage comes naturally for the blue-eyed brunette. Mandrell has been in the entertainment business most of her life.

Among the highlights in Mandrell's career include being part of the cast in 1981 on "Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters" variety show with Barbara and their younger sister, Irlene. The sister trio entertained millions with their song, dance and comedy sketches.

Mandrell hit the Top 10 in the mid-1980s with the singles "I'm Not



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Through Loving You Yet" and "Maybe My Baby," among others.

In the late 1990s, Mandrell opened her own theater at Pigeon Forge, Tenn., where she danced, sang and played 13 instruments for nine years. She closed the theater in 2005 and moved back to Nashville.

Mandrell continues to entertain audiences this holiday season at Opryland. Master of Ceremonies for "Joy to the World" is Mandrell's nephew Matt Dudney, Barbara's oldest son. The event also features Dudney's wife, gospel recording artist, Christy Sutherland, who will perform her new single, "A Cry in the Dark."

"It's very much a variety show," Mandrell said.

In addition to the traditional holiday songs, the show will include a special tribute to the military. The tribute will feature a video and the song, "Santa I'm Blue."

"The song is about missing loved ones who are not there because they are serving [their country]. It's one of my favorite songs to perform in the show," Mandrell said. "I respect and love and appreciate the military."

Mandrell has been entertaining Soldiers and their families since childhood.

"I come from a family that thought [Christmas] was not just a religious holiday, it's a patriotic holiday," Mandrell said. "One of my fondest memories as a child was when my dad told Irlene and I 'you're not old enough to be in the [Mandrell Family Band], but we need you to go to the military base and dance for the men and

women [stationed there].’ That was one of my favorite Christmases.”

The entertainer also recalled performing last December in Washington, D.C., with the National Army band.

“That was amazing to perform with the military not just for the military,” she said. “That was just a memory I will always cherish.”

While Mandrell sings, dances and plays a variety of musical instruments on stage in the Delta A Ballroom, the “Joy to the World” audience will dine on a meal fit for a king.

The menu, created by Executive Chef Michael Swann, includes main entrées of individual roasted sleigh bell chicken roulades with cranberry cornbread stuffing, as well as a beef tenderloin pot pie, with roasted potatoes, pearl onions, root vegetables and red wine glaze, all served under a flaky pastry crust. Dessert lovers may choose either bananas foster bread pudding with eggnog English cream or New York-style cheese cake with a graham cracker crust and a sweet cherry sauce.

“I am absolutely in awe of the chef. He’s amazing,” Mandrell said.

“He really has put together a wonderful Christmas meal.”

Military discounted tickets for “Joy to the World” are available through the Information, Ticketing & Reservations office for \$57 for adults and \$28.50 for children ages 4 to 11. Children ages 3 and under are free but must have a ticket for seat assignment. Call ITR at (270) 798-7436 or 798-0509.

“Louise is a multi-talented artist who incorporates singing, instruments, dancing and comedy into her show. It is extremely family-friendly and entertaining, and the food is divine!” said Ann Dee McClane-Bunn, manager, Marketing and Public Relations for Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center. “Louise has been a total joy to work with, and we are very excited to have her as a part of the 25th anniversary of ‘A Country Christmas.’”



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