Bio – Peter Orullian

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Description automatically generatedThe idea to write and record a Holiday rock and theater experience occurred to Peter Orullian the year he graduated High School. In fact, from the beginning, a driving constant in his life has been Christmas. Orullian's love and enthusiasm for the holiday season is genuine. He adores everything about it, from the tinsel to the reverential, to the gentle message of selflessness. His passion for Christmas nearly had him writing his Christmas record that first year after high school. But then life happened.

By the time Orullian began college, he'd started with his first serious band, and begun writing original fiction, too. He then graduated college with an Honors English degree, and soon thereafter relocated to the Pacific Northwest to train with famed vocal instructor David Kyle, "The Maestro," known for training such vocalists at Geoff Tate (Queensryche), Ann Wilson (Heart), and Layne Staley (Alice in Chains), among many others.

While training and performing in the Pacific Northwest, Orullian landed a book contract with Tor Books in New York, and began an original scifi series, *The Vault of Heaven*. He has published dozens of books, novellas, and short works, including Christmas stories, most of which factor music heavily into the plot. In fact, Orullian was recently chosen by the Grammy-winning band Dream Theater to write the companion novel to their recent concept album, *The Astonishing*. He was also recently chosen by #1 New York Times bestselling writer Brandon Sanderson to collaborate on a new series in which music and musicianship are at the center of the narrative. These various efforts continually honed Orullian’s ability to artfully and impactfully merge music and story.

During this time, Orullian worked in Microsoft’s Entertainment Division—music, gaming, video, and personal devices—where he built several major global IP franchises that have earned the company hundreds of millions in net revenue.

It was while working with the music industry on new music experience delivery explorations that Orullian met Chip Davis, the founder and composer of multi-platinum Mannheim Steamroller, which is arguably the most important and successful modern Christmas act. Peter spent time sharing with Davis his own music vision and presentational ideas for that music, and received strong encouragement from Davis to realize his unique vision.

In parallel to his work at Microsoft, Orullian’s original band in Seattle became the go-to group for many national acts touring through Seattle. Earning attention for his clear powerful vocals, Orullian has also often been asked to front international touring bands such as rock and theater favorites Heir Apparent and Fifth Angel, and traveled the world performing at major festivals and venues.

Then, not many years ago, while attending a Trans-Siberian Orchestra concert, Orullian had the opportunity to meet the band in the after-party. TSO is a multi-platinum selling group, and stands with Mannheim Steamroller as perhaps the only other modern Christmas act doing original music, as written by Paul O’Neill. On the occasion of Orullian’s attendance at a TSO concert, It was one of those rare shows where TSO founder and composer Paul O'Neill was actually on site. O'Neill had long been one of Orullian's inspirations. As O'Neill was passing in the hall, Orullian quickly let him know how important his music was to him.

Typical of O'Neill, he took Orullian to his private greenroom where they spoke at length for nearly an hour. That meeting changed Orullian's life. He shared with O'Neill his vision for a series of Christmas albums and shows, but how life had taken a series of left turns. O'Neill told Orullian it would disappoint him if he didn't follow through on his own unique vision. He went on to encourage him, telling Orullian that the world needs more great Christmas stories and inspiring Christmas music. O’Neill gave him a roadie jacket, a hug, and a firm word to get his record written.

Then, in July of 2017, O'Neill unfortunately had passed away. A month later, with O’Neill’s gentle reproof in his mind, Orullian left his work at Microsoft building entertainment franchises to finally start building his own.

From a lifetime of music study and performance--including rock, Broadway, jazz, classical, big band, and more--Orullian finally brought his love of Christmas and his unique vision to life. Combining his unique storytelling voice and background in building major entertainment franchises, Orullian founded the group Symphony North and wrote his debut album The Bell Ringer. From the beginning, his intent has been to thrill, as most groups do, but also to inspire and edify, touching hearts with stories of selflessness and kindness. To that end, the Bell Ringer was developed with a large vision in mind: the album, a touring production, the novel, a feature film, traditional stage executions, and new engagement platforms Orullian is working with via his work with Microsoft.

Orullian reflected that he’d finally learned to believe what O’Neill and Davis had told him. It took a number of tragedies to get there, but then, those tragedies have also managed to inform the music and larger vision, helping it strike that much closer to the heart. Which is where Christmas lives.