Bio – Peter Orullian

The idea to write and record a Holiday rock opera 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 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 area, Orullian landed a book contract with Tor Books in New York, and began an original fantasy series, *The Vault of Heaven*. He has published dozens of books, novellas, and short works, including Christmas stories, many of which factor music heavily into the plot. In fact, Orullian was recently chosen by the Grammy-nominated band Dream Theater to write the companion novel to their recent concept album, *The Astonishing*.

In parallel, Orullian’s original bands in Seattle and Salt Lake City became the go-to groups for many national acts touring through Seattle, sharing the bill with the likes of Dream Theater, Symphony X, Sonata Arctica, and countless others. Earning attention for his clear powerful vocals, Orullian has also often been asked to front international touring bands such as metal favorites Heir Apparent and Fifth Angel.

Then, not many years ago, while attending a TSO concert, Orullian had the opportunity to meet the band in the after-party. It was one of those rare occasions when TSO founder and composer Paul O'Neill was actually at the show. O'Neill had long been one of Orullian's heroes. As O'Neill was passing in the hall, Orullian quickly let Paul 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 better than half an hour. That meeting changed Orullian's life. Or would. He told O'Neill how he'd always wanted to write a record a Holiday rock opera, but 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 dream. He went on to encourage him, telling Orullian that the world needs more Christmas stories and Christmas music. O’Neill gave him a roadie jacket, a hug, and a firm word to get his record written.

Orullian went back to daily life, unsure how to do as Paul had urged him. Then, in July of 2017, Orullian was laid off from many years of work at Microsoft for Xbox. Unfortunately, O'Neill had passed away earlier that same year. But the thought of O'Neill's kind and insistent reproval to write his own Christmas story and album now haunted Orullian that much more.

So, Orullian began. And from a lifetime of music--including rock, metal, Broadway, jazz, classical, big band, and more--Orullian finally brought his love of Christmas, storytelling, and progressive music together to create Symphony North and its debut album *The Bell Ringer*.

Orullian finally learned to believe what Paul had told him. It took a number of tragedies to get there, but then, those tragedies have also managed to inform the music, helping it strike that much closer to the heart. Which is where Christmas lives.