LEO HIGH SCHOOL



CENTENNIAL BENEFIT CONCERT

OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER | AUDITORIUM

RED CARPET & VIP RECEPTION 6 PM - 7:15 PM

CONCERT 7:30 PM - 9PM

CENTENNIAL VIP AFTER-PARTY 9 PM -11 PM

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tonight, we celebrate extraordinary young men whose talent, discipline, and commitment to excellence represent the very best of Leo High School. Each time our Choir takes the stage, they help change the narrative surrounding Black and Brown boys from Chicago, showing the world that they are talented, intelligent, and capable of greatness.

As Leo celebrates 100 years of educating young men on Chicago's South Side, we remain committed to serving as a safe haven and beacon of opportunity for the next 100 years. We thank our devoted alumni and the new donors and friends who believe in our mission. Your support makes experiences like tonight and our future trips to Botswana, South Africa, and Vatican City to meet Pope Leo possible.

Thank you for standing with our kings and believing in the promise of Leo High School.

One Century. One Brotherhood. One Leo.

Dr. Shaka A. Rawls '93
President and Principal
Leo Catholic High School

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

OFFICIAL RUN OF SHOW

PRE-SHOW

VIP Red Carpet / Reception

6:00 - 7:15 PM

Guest Arrival & Seating

6:30 PM - 7:15 PM

Concert Begins 7:30 PM

ACT I

1. **Barry Brewer Jr. - Opening Welcome & Host**
2. **Leo High School Choir - "Hall of Fame"**
3. **J. Ivy - Performance featuring Leo High School Choir**
4. **Brett Gray & Leo High School Choir - Collaboration "Beat It"**
5. **Leo High School Choir - Featured Choir Selection**
6. **J. Ivy - Performance featuring Leo High School Choir**
7. **VIP Honorees: Dr. Pierre Johnson and Dr. Ta'Rhonda Jones**
8. **AGT Alumni Choir Recognition**

AUCTION & PADDLE RAISE

8. **Live Auction / Paddle Raise / Fund-a-Need**

ACT II

9. **Leo High School Choir - Performs "Won't Stop Us" by Fred Hammond Featuring Leo High Schhol Choir**
10. **Leo High School Choir - Additional Choir Selection**

GRAND FINALE

11. **Special Announcement By Corey Jacobs**
12. **Sir the Baptist - Newly Released Single "Outside" Featuring Leo High School Choir**

CENTENNIAL VIP AFTER PARTY

9:00–11:00 PM • Immediately following the concert



VOICES THAT ARE CHANGING THE WORLD

From Chicago's South Side to one of the biggest stages in America, the Leo Catholic High School Choir - affectionately known as the Leo Choir Boys - has become a testament to what happens when talent meets discipline, brotherhood, faith and opportunity. During Leo's historic Centennial year, these young men have grown from a school choir into a nationally recognized performing ensemble whose story has inspired millions.

A NATIONAL STAGE. A CHICAGO LEGACY.

Their remarkable journey reached a national audience on Season 20 of NBC's America's Got Talent, where the Leo Choir Boys advanced to the Finals and earned fourth place. Since then, the Choir has received more than 80 performance invitations and appeared at celebrated civic, corporate, philanthropic, faith-based, educational and cultural events. Their performance history includes a private performance and meeting with President Barack Obama, a Chicago Bears halftime appearance at Soldier Field, the UNCF Gala and major Chicago traditions.



THE NEXT CHAPTER

The Choir is now carrying its sound into professionally recorded music. It recorded with GRAMMY-winning Chicago artist and Leo alumnus Sir the Baptist on his new song “Outside,” and recorded vocals for “Won't Stop Us” with legendary gospel artist Fred Hammond. Academic achievement remains central: choir members average approximately a 3.5 to 3.6 GPA with a 100% college acceptance rate. Tonight is both a celebration of 100 years of Leo and an investment in the next generation of young men who will carry its legacy forward.



2026-27

CHOIR MEMBERS

01 Lloyd Eric Amos III

02 Kriston Sury Bell

03 Ra'sun James Britten

04 Jaylen Tyree Curry

05 Dontae O'Brien Felder

06 Christian Chauncey Gaines

07 Maverick Elias Gamble

08 Tyler Cornelius Greenlee

09 Rexsell Hardy III

10 Anthony M. Harper

11 Royce Bernard Holmes

12 Jaren Zyaire Johnson

13 Avion Marshawn King

14 Blake E. Moore

15 Nehemiah Levonte Reese

16 Emanuel J. Smith

17 Tyrion Keontay Smith

18 Camren Maurice Speights

19 Brylian J. Tate

20 Keon Malachi Thomas

21 Raivon Jeremiah Thornton

22 Messiah Williams

23 Kevin Marcus Wilson

24 Kendel Lamont Woods

THE TEAM BEHIND THE MUSIC

MEET THE LEADERSHIP



Dr. Shaka Rawls

PRESIDENT & PRINCIPAL

Dr. Shaka A. Rawls, a 1993 Leo High School graduate, has served as principal since 2016. Under his leadership, enrollment has increased by 50 percent, with major advancements in academics, technology, and campus facilities. A nationally recognized leader in urban education, Dr. Rawls remains committed to preparing Leo students to overcome adversity and lead with purpose.



YOLANDA SANDIFER-HORTON

CHOIR MANAGER

Yolanda Sandifer-Horton serves as Executive Assistant to the President and Principal, Director of Student Engagement & Community Partnerships, and Choir Manager at Leo Catholic High School. She also serves as a Community Organizer for the Infinite Scholars Foundation Chicago, connecting students with higher education opportunities and contributing to more than $27.3 million in scholarship offers since 2024.

THE TEAM BEHIND THE MUSIC

MEET THE LEADERSHIP



DARIOUS LYLES

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Darious Lyles, known as D. Lylez, is a Chicago-born R&B singer, songwriter, producer, and performer blending gospel roots, classic soul, and contemporary R&B. A Top 24 contestant on Season 18 of NBC's The Voice under coach John Legend, he is also a Grammy-nominated songwriter who has performed at House of Blues Chicago and Lollapalooza. In 2026, he released Hidden Gems, continuing his commitment to authentic, soul-driven music.



NATHAN PALMER

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Nathan "NaPalm" Palmer is a former NFL wide receiver turned R&B recording artist, entrepreneur, and marketing professional. After playing with three Super Bowl-contending teams, he transitioned into music and media, earning commercial radio success and appearing on American Idol and America's Got Talent. He has also performed at the ESPYs and shared stages with major artists.

HEADLINER • LEO ALUMNUS
3X Grammy Award Winning Artist



DR. SIR WILLIAM JAMES THE BAPTIST

DR. SIR WILLIAM JAMES THE BAPTIST

Three-Time GRAMMY® Award Winner
Artist • Composer • Producer • Cultural Innovator

Dr. Sir William James the Baptist, professionally known as Sir the Baptist, is a multi-genre American artist, writer, composer, producer, entrepreneur, and cultural innovator whose catalog has generated more than 500 million streams.

A proud Chicago native and Leo Catholic High School alumnus, Sir is a three-time GRAMMY® Award winner, two-time GMA Dove Award winner, Stellar Award winner, BET Award nominee, BMI 2021 Songwriter of the Year, and 2026 BMI Award recipient for his work with Yolanda Adams. His GRAMMY®-winning contributions include Tennessee State University's *The Urban Hymnal* and J. Ivy's *The Poet Who Sat by the Door* and *The Light Inside*.

Sir's groundbreaking debut album, *Saint or Sinner*, became a blueprint for a new generation of urban Christian believers. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with celebrated artists including Yolanda Adams, J. Ivy, Bootsy Collins, Dallas Austin, Anthony Hamilton, Donald Lawrence, Pharrell Williams, Chance the Rapper, Brandy, Fred Hammond, PJ Morton, Tori Kelly, and many others.

His work extends into film and television, with credits connected to *The Birth of a Nation*, *Dysfunctional Friends*, *Due Season*, *Greenleaf*, and *Saints & Sinners*. He has performed throughout Europe and appeared at major festivals, including Lollapalooza, Bonnaroo, Essence, SXSW, AFROPUNK, and Made in America. He has also shared major stages with Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige, Nelly, Herbie Hancock, Lauryn Hill, Alicia Keys, J. Cole, and other international stars.

Through every song, production, and performance, Sir the Baptist uses faith, culture, and creativity to honor the past while building new possibilities for generations to come.

FAITH • FAMILY • EDUCATION • LEGACY

Sir the Baptist's impact extends far beyond entertainment. His work helped Tennessee State University earn the 2023 GRAMMY® Award for *The Urban Hymnal*—the first GRAMMY® associated with a collegiate marching band in the history of the awards. In recognition of his contributions and his work revitalizing Negro Spirituals for a new generation, Sir received Tennessee State University's President's Award, an honorary doctorate alongside co-producer Dallas Austin, and honorary membership in Kappa Kappa Psi.

Committed to investing in future generations, Sir founded the HBCU SYMPHONY, a professional recording ensemble representing 12 historically Black colleges and universities. The initiative revitalizes historic musical catalogs through the talents of HBCU bands and choirs. Its work has produced two No. 1 Billboard-charting songs with Yolanda Adams and earned a 2025 GRAMMY® nomination. Through a collaboration with McDonald's, $150,000 has been donated to HBCUs.

Sir has also developed relationships with leading colleges and universities across the country, using music, entrepreneurship, intellectual property, and innovation to connect faith with education and human development. His creative and business partnerships have included Apple, Google, Facebook, Lexus, Samsung, McDonald's, T-Mobile, the Chicago Bears, the Chicago Bulls, the WNBA, and other global brands. Today, he serves as Chaplain of Innovation, majority shareholder, and architect of tymple, an organization connecting faith and human development.

Faith and family remain central to Sir's purpose. Alongside his wife, Megan Baptist, he created *Sunday School*, a digital series for Christian families that combines puppetry, music, and storytelling. Created in collaboration with Dr. Walt Whitman and the legendary Soul Children of Chicago, the series has generated more than eight million views and nearly one million likes.

Sir now returns home with his alma mater, Leo Catholic High School, to perform at the Obama Presidential Center. He shares this historic moment with his children, His and Her Royal Highness Heir Baptist, Prince Baptist, and Lorde Baptist—a son of Chicago honoring his roots, embracing his family, and inspiring the next generation through faith, culture, leadership, and possibility.

3X GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING POET



J. IVY

Poet • Recording Artist • Author • Songwriter

J. IVY

3x GRAMMY® Award–Winning Poet • Recording Artist • Author • Songwriter

J. Ivy is a 3x GRAMMY® Award–winning poet, recording artist, author, and songwriter from the South Side of Chicago. When the Recording Academy created the category of Best Spoken Word Poetry Album, it was J. Ivy who made history as its first-ever winner — then returned the next year and won it again. The world first heard his voice on HBO's *Def Poetry* and on Kanye West's *The College Dropout*, where his verse on "Never Let Me Down" alongside JAY-Z announced a poet who could stand anywhere music stood.

In the years since, he has carried the word from Madison Square Garden to the United Nations to the stages of the Blue Note Jazz Club in New York and Los Angeles, authored books including *Dear Father: Breaking the Cycle of Pain*, and served as president of the Recording Academy's Chicago Chapter — opening doors so the poets coming after him find them already unlocked.

SCREEN • STAGE • MUSIC



BRETT GRAY

SCREEN • STAGE • MUSIC

BRETT GRAY

Brett Gray is a dynamic actor and musician whose talent has captivated audiences across television, theater, and music. A Philadelphia native and graduate of the Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts, Gray rose to international prominence as the quick-witted and beloved Jamal Turner in Netflix's hit series *On My Block*.

His television credits also include Ava DuVernay's Emmy Award-winning limited series *When They See Us*, Boots Riley's visionary series *I'm a Virgo*, and Showtime's acclaimed drama *The Chi*. An accomplished vocalist with a soulful R&B sound, Gray brings heartfelt storytelling and versatility to his music. He has also performed on Broadway as Michael Jackson in *MJ The Musical*, showcasing his exceptional voice, movement, and commanding stage presence.

Whether performing on screen, on stage, or through music, Brett Gray continues to distinguish himself as an exciting and versatile talent whose influence across entertainment continues to grow.

COMEDIAN • ACTOR • MUSICIAN



BARRY BREWER

COMEDIAN • ACTOR • MUSICIAN

BARRY BREWER

Actor • Comedian • Singer • Songwriter • Musician • Producer

Barry Brewer is a dynamic Chicago-born entertainer whose talents span comedy, television, film, music, writing, producing, and directing. His professional journey began after an impromptu church performance earned a standing ovation and inspired him to pursue comedy.

Brewer built his career on Chicago's comedy scene before expanding nationally. Television audiences recognize him for his leading role in Tyler Perry's *Bruh*, along with appearances in BET's *Games People Play* and Netflix's *Kevin Hart's Guide to Black History*.

Returning to his hometown, Brewer wrote, produced, and directed his debut one-hour comedy special, *Chicago I'm Home*, before a sold-out audience at the historic Studebaker Theatre. He later produced and hosted a sold-out national tour inspired by his viral series *When the Whole Crew Is Stupid*, which generated more than 25 million social media views.

Brewer is also an accomplished singer, songwriter, pianist, organist, and music producer. Deeply influenced by his church roots, he has written, composed, and produced two studio albums, *Dive In* and *Conquer Goliath*. Whether performing on stage, appearing on screen, or creating music, Barry Brewer continues to showcase the talent, versatility, and unmistakable spirit of Chicago.

The Fibroid Slayer



Dr. Pierre Johnson

VIP Honoree

The Fibroid Slayer

Dr. Pierre Johnson

The Fibroid Slayer

Dr. Pierre Johnson aka The Fibroid Slayer is a minimally invasive gynecologic guru born and raised on the south side of Chicago. As a child, he declared his destiny as an Ob-Gyn and worked through insurmountable odds to achieve his dreams. He graduated from Xavier University of LA with a BS in biology, his medical degree from the University of IL College of Medicine, a General surgery internship at Washington Hospital Center, and completed his Ob-Gyn residency training from Southern IL Univ. School of Medicine. As the oldest child of a single African American woman of 5 children, Dr. Johnson has witnessed the negative impact that implicit bias has on the health and well-being of underserved communities.

Through extensive training and vast experience, Dr. Johnson developed the niche to surgically manage the most difficult gynecologic cases. He has vowed to dedicate his life to fighting to end healthcare disparities through education. Dr. Johnson is also the co-author of Pulse of Perseverance(P3): Three Black Doctors on Their Journey to Success. P3 evolved into a nonprofit organization that seeks to support youth through mentorship, exposure, and scholarships. The mission is to empower and inspire young black youth to work towards their goals by giving them a blueprint and resources for success.

He professes that no fibroid is too big to manage, every woman should have the option to preserve her uterus. He has vowed to dedicate his life to fighting to end healthcare disparities.

ACTRESS • PRODUCER • DIRECTOR



Dr. Ta'Rhonda Jones

VIP Honoree

ACTRESS • PRODUCER • DIRECTOR

Dr. Ta'Rhonda Jones

Dr. Ta'Rhonda Jones is a Chicago-born actress, recording artist, director, television host, and philanthropist best known for her breakout role as Porsha Taylor on FOX's hit series Empire. A multifaceted entertainer, she has built a career spanning television, film, music, directing, and entrepreneurship while remaining connected to her Chicago roots.

Most recently, Jones has expanded her presence in music, with her work submitted for GRAMMY® consideration in categories including Best New Artist, Record of the Year for "Villian," and Album of the Year. She continues to use her creativity and platform to inspire, entertain, and uplift communities.

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Dr. Shaka Rawls • President & Principal

Darious Lyles & Nathan Palmer • Choir Directors

Yolanda Sandifer-Horton • Director of Community Partnership & Choir Manager

CELEBRITY ARTISTS

Dr. Sir William James the Baptist • J. Ivy • Barry Brewer • Brett Gray

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To our faculty, students, alumni, families, artists, sponsors, donors, community partners and friends, thank you for continuing to believe in the young men of Leo High School and the legacy we are building together.

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