

Arts

WSU's Madrigal Dinner rings in medieval X-mas

Burt Saidel



I hope that each of you had a very merry Christmas. We all look forward to a healthy and more prosperous New Year. The events surrounding Christmas teem with the joys we wish each other. I must play a bit of "catch up" to share some of these festive events.

Christmas began in the year 1529; at least we all pretended we were medieval wassailers at

Wright State's annual Madrigal dinner. Always fun, these dinners capture the spirit and some of the facts about life in the storied 16th century.

Authenticity wavers a bit as knives, forks and spoons abound. The food, really delicious, reflects the typical bounty of that time with meat pies, brannbrede, bûche Noël, and, of course, plum pudding.

The entertainment, continuous and full of joy, was led by Drew Collins as Master of his Lordship's Chapel and the lord and lady themselves, Bill Rickert and Amy Vaubel. They commanded a cast of nearly 100 singers, dancers, boar's head carriers,

and serving wenches. All was to the delight of the capacity crowd.

Next year, I will wear a lace ruff and carry a sword or mace. Well, maybe the year after that.

A Christmas Carol

We moved, after our experience in the lord's ancient castle, to England in the early 19th century. What else could it be but another telling of the ever-popular *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

A Christmas Carol, in its many permutations, emanates from every media form at this season. Occasionally, I vow to avoid these flights into sentimentality. I can even be heard saying "bah humbug!"

For the past several seasons, I have attended the Human Race Theatre Company's version and I find it to be fun and very entertaining. Perhaps the fact that I know three quarters of the cast has something to do with my broken resolve.

This fun and "feel good" show is delivered by excellent actors with a wry twist to each character. The cast carries family theater to a new level. Darling children, siblings Jacob and Maria Boyd, returned as a very hale and healthy Tiny Tim, and Tim's sister. Claire Kennedy and Aaron Vega are very much husband and

wife as they continue their dual careers. Lovely Jennifer Johansen and brought her husband Rob who played the loveable Bob Cratchit.

You have heard that a star can be born on stage. In this production, a new family of stars was born. WSU super-star and new graduate J. J. Tiemeyer surprised everyone and popped the question to beautiful WSU dancer/actress Hannah Grizz. This will be remembered as the best curtain call ever for the Loft Theatre.

Alan Bomar Jones, the most hilarious Christmas ghost imaginable, must talk to director Kevin Moore. Next season, he can add another family link to the cast by including his lovely wife Becky Barrett-Jones.

Kay Bosse wins the prize as her loveable busybody character and Mark Douglas-Jones is a Scrooge you want to love. And that's no humbug!

Musica!

One of the highlights of the Christmas season was Musica's holiday concert. Artistic Director Robert Jones uses the most imaginative programming. There were plenty of traditional carols and a few very different ones - *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, for example.

The performance began with a stunning collection of music

from a brass quartet. Alan Parr, Andy Randall, Tyler Castrucci and Jared Webster were hidden in the choir loft of Oakwood's Lutheran Church of our Savior. Hidden but very well heard.

Harpist Leah Estes and WSU opera student Stefani Dodge joined the *a cappella* singers of Musica! These lovely ladies were fine additions to an exciting program

The concert ended with Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. Assisting Musica! and the soloists were the handsome young persons of the Kettering Children's Choir. Britten took us full circle by including several medieval songs harkening back to where this all started - at the Madrigal dinner.

We look forward with expectation to 2010. The years fly by but we remain, hopeful, steadfast in our love of life and the arts which make life so worth living.

I send you all my own best wishes for 2010. May it be a year full of happiness and joy. To start it off royally, we have the Philharmonic's New Year's Eve Gala Concert. Maestro Neal has added a pair of talented lovelies, soprano Laura Portune and violinist Kirstin Greenlaw to make the Gala more gala. I hope to see you there!

Burt Saidel
Bringing you the world of the arts

Music Theatre Dance

Every week in *The Oakwood Register*

PURCHASE OR REFINANCE YOUR HOME

FOR ONLY \$299* ★Conventional Loans only

NO POINTS!

Competitive Rates and Programs on Purchases and Refinances

Including Application Fees
FREE PRE-APPROVALS

*Additional restrictions apply. Recording fees not included.

US Union Savings Bank
A Subsidiary of U.S. Bancorp

Financial strength begins with US.

KETTERING 3131 Wilmington Pike 643-2700	CENTERVILLE 5651 Far Hills Avenue 434-1254	BEAVERCREEK 2794 Colonel Glenn Hwy. 431-3663
ENGLEWOOD 525 W. National Rd. 832-8200	TROY 14 S. Westin Road 335-4199	FRANKLIN 1040 E. Second Street 748-0844

Celebrate New Year's Eve in Vienna without leaving Dayton!

Book now and spend New Year's Eve with your own Dayton Philharmonic.

Presented by Kettering Health Network

8:00 - 10:00, December 31, Schuster Center
Neal Gittleman conducts a sparkling program entitled "Viennese Homecoming"

Tickets 228-3630 or daytonphilharmonic.com

DAYTON PHILHARMONIC