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THEater BY ARIA SELIGMANN

Review

Scrooge Redeemed

Lord Leebrick offers up some Christmas spirit.

Forget the bad kids' movies now showing — *Cat in the Hat* and *Elf* — and take the kids to see something worthwhile: *A Christmas Carol* at Lord Leebrick. I had two 7-year-old companions with me and they both said, "That was a really good play!"

Douglas Jones' one-hour adaptation of Dickens' classic is just long enough and simply delightful, with wonderful direction by Lynda Czajkowska-Thompson and an innovative set design by Michael Lane. The set is based on illustrations from the original publication of the story. Czajkowska-Thompson does a masterful job of keeping the action flowing, as all of the actors remain onstage throughout the performance and switch characters through simple costume changes.

The pacing is perfect for children; it's slow enough for them to keep up with the story and fast enough for them to remain engaged.

In this version, a young girl, played by Helene Morse (*Happy Birthday Wanda June, Annie*), reads the story of Scrooge's transformation in her bed at night. The characters come to life and even speak to her directly about how to stage certain scenes.

All of the actors do a great job and include Bill Reid, Susan Mason, Kevin Kelley, Adam Leonard, Tish Maskell and Gavin Cunningham, in addition to Morse.

The show is humorous, touching, scary (the Ghost of Christmas Future in the misty graveyard scene might stick with your kid) and is clear and obvious with its message of hope, redemption and charity.

The only downsides to the production are the 8 pm start time — even though it's only an hour long, that's still too late for some kids — and the ticket price: \$12 for adults and \$8 for kids seems high. A more reasonable deal is offered: \$30 for a group of four.



A Christmas Carol continues Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 20 at 8 pm, with one 2 pm Sunday matinee remaining on Dec. 14. **EW**

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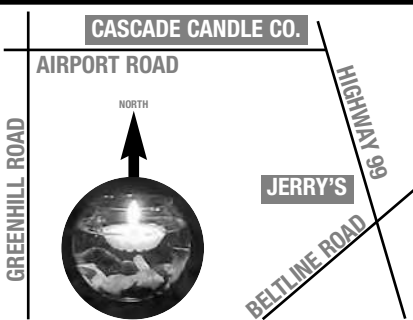
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