

# CHRISTMAS MAGIC

ACE conjures up Christmas: The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

**R**bang through the heavy wooden doors of the Actors Cabaret of Eugene, ten minutes late and anxious to escape the rain and noise of Willamette Street. But two steps in the door and I am immobilized, dripping a small pool of water in the entrance. Actors Cabaret has been transformed for their upcoming, original production *Christmas: The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*. Every inch of space is adorned with Christmas decorations, the stage festooned, the hallway decked. I've entered a magical Christmas land and can feel my heart swelling up like the Grinch's at the sound of Whoville singing.

The architect of this Christmas-tasia, ACE director Joe Zingo, sits with a petite, smiling Lydia Lord, who may actually have a little elf blood. Their mismatched scripts lay open before them, a mess of notes, crossed out passages and inserted song breaks. Zingo and Lord are co-writing a play, and from the looks of it, working together really has been the most wonderful time.

The decision to work together was a bit unorthodox, with Zingo announcing the co-written play in press materials before actually confirming with Lord that she was in on the project. "Well she didn't say she wasn't going to do it!" Zingo defends himself with a smile. Lord rolls her eyes, but admits that she is delighted, "I'm really glad I said ... whatever it was I said that gave him the indication that I meant yes."

The idea to create their own show came out of the frustration of reading holiday scripts. A good Christmas play is hard to come by. "It's not a matter of having a hard time finding a good Christmas script," Zingo says. "There are no good



CAST OF ACE'S CHRISTMAS: THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

Christmas scripts." He's right. Yet there are always good Christmas audiences. People who want to celebrate the season in the community with others, who hope to provide holiday traditions that sit outside the buying-and-getting box. According to Lord, "Audiences are looking for that wonderful bubbling-up-inside feeling we felt when we were children." Zingo agrees, "People want to stop being Scrooges."

The play is structured within the format that ACE does so well; big musical numbers and moving vignettes. It includes bits from at least 70 songs, from traditional carols to modern pieces, silly songs, sing-a-longs, emotional pieces and two of Lord's original pieces including one entitled "Christmas in Eugene." Lord also crafted the medleys necessary to fit 70 songs into a 90-minute show. "No one is better at taking songs and weaving them together than Lydia," Zingo asserts. "She is a master."

The music is interspersed with Zingo's original monologues that run from humorous to heart-wrenching, as the play addresses more than just the delights of the season. "We recognize that Christmas is a very difficult time for some," Zingo says. The show looks at how

Christmas changes for us as we age, that for some parents the Christmas to-do list is so long they can barely enjoy the season, and other parents who do not even have the resources to provide their children with a home.

Zingo seems particularly concerned with commercialism, and how it has taken over the season. "For some people, Christmas starts with sales, and ends with sales. That's how they know it's Christmas."

But the play is by no means dark. "Joe is obsessed with it being entertaining!" Lord says. Coming in well under two hours, the play is completely child-friendly. You can bring your family for dinner or just order drinks and dessert at intermission.

Currently the play is being considered for publication. And while seeing her work live on would be exciting, it is not Lord's primary motivation. "I would like to send people out into the season with lots of warm, loving feelings."

I know that's how I felt upon leaving ACE that morning. ■

*Christmas: The Most Wonderful Time of the Year* runs Nov. 30-Dec. 22 at Actors Cabaret of Eugene, \$16-\$41.95.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

**December 9th**  
12 - 4 pm  
\$60 in advance  
\$75 at the door

**New Zone Gallery**  
164 W. Broadway  
Eugene

**A Workshop for Non-Artists**  
**The Creative Flow**  
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Laura Stockford  
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Maureen Campbell  
ARTIST

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Wednesdays: 1:30-4:30pm - Dec 5th, 12th & 19th  
Thursdays: 10:30am-1:30pm - Dec 13th & 20th  
Saturday: 1:30-4:30pm private lessons \$45 + materials

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LINE ADS: \$11/3 LINES  
ADDITIONAL LINES: \$4

### EVENTS

**A WORKSHOP FOR NON-ARTISTS** The Creative Flow Painting as a Personal Process. December 9th, 12-4 pm. New Zone Gallery 164 W. Broadway. Laura Stockford, Psychotherapist & Maureen Campbell, Artist. 541-554-7096. \$60 in advance, \$75 at the door.

### HOLIDAY BAZAAR!

Fairfield Church of the Nazarene  
1052 Fairfield Ave, Eugene, OR 97402  
Saturday, December 1st, 10am-3pm  
Unique gifts from local artisans.  
Many door prizes & fresh homemade breakfast/lunch available.

**LEARN TO MAKE CHEESE** A Series of classes at Wise Acres Farms. Please visit: herbal-transitions.com or 541-736-0164 for class information!

**PARENT PARTNERSHIP FUNDRAISER** Axe and Fiddle, Cottage Grove, Dec 2nd. 5-8pm  
SUDS, SONGS, AND SILENT AUCTION! LIVE MUSIC!

**POTTERY STUDIO HOLIDAY SALE** December 1st and 2nd, 10 am - 5 pm. Pottery on the Hill. 37036 Hwy 58, 1 mile east of Pleasant Hill, watch for the signs on the south side of the Hwy! Handcrafted gifts, stoneware, fiber and wood.

### BULLETIN BOARD

#### Announcements

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#### Classes

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### Opportunities

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**PLAY RUGBY! EUGENE REIGN IS RECRUITING PLAYERS & FANS!** Training Mon & Wed 5:30-7:30pm at SEHS soccer fields. No experience necessary! eugenewomensrugby.com

**UO'S CENTER FOR APPLIED 2ND LANGUAGE STUDIES** is looking for 5-month homestay accommodations for Chinese & Taiwanese college students interning in South Eugene area elementary schools 2/2013 - 6/2013. Students require private bedrooms, healthy food, access to public transportation, conversation, & inclusion. \$500/mo stipends for room & board provided. Please contact Linda Ellis at ellis3@uoregon.edu (541-346-5711).

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