

Sounds of the Season

A SLEIGHFUL OF TRADITIONAL (AND NOT SO TRADITIONAL)

OPTIONS FOR HOLIDAY MUSIC By Brett Campbell

There are plenty of traditional holiday sounds available this month, but happily, Eugene music organizations are also providing worthwhile alternatives when the wassail grows stale.

The seasonal fare starts with the ever-popular University of Oregon holiday choral and gospel concerts Dec. 6-7 at Beall Concert Hall, featuring youthfully exuberant energy and traditional faves.

The biggest holiday extravaganza happens Dec. 7 at the Hult Center's Silva Hall, when the Eugene Concert Choir, Oregon Mozart Players and Eugene Vocal Arts Ensemble team up with guests Mason "Classical Gas" Williams, Shedd regular Bill Hulings, Darline Jackson, South Eugene H.S. Concert Choir, Oregon Tuba Ensemble and a cappella singers Evynne and Peter Hollens, Rezonate and Synergy. Be prepared to carol along.

For sounds on a smaller scale, Chamber Music Amici's Dec. 8 performance at Springfield's Wildish Community Theater features some of the city's top musicians in a Mozart Piano Quartet and Boccherini's famous "fandango" guitar quintet, featuring the excellent Portland guitarist Scott Kritzer and those clacky castanets.

Explore nontraditional holiday music at The Shedd on Dec. 8, when José Hernández and Sol De México celebrate Mexico's Christmas with seasonal mariachi music from Veracruz, Yucatan and Jalisco, and on Dec. 11 and 14 with the Emerald City Jazz Kings Christmas show.

One of my favorite traditions, Oregon Mozart Players' Candlelight Baroque concert on Dec. 19-20, features music by J.S. Bach (a Brandenburg concerto and an orchestral suite), his brilliant son Carl Philip Emanuel and Vivaldi.

Finally, let's hope Eugene Opera's New Year's Eve



celebration becomes a tradition — and not just here: It's such a treat to celebrate music instead of going out, getting hammered and endangering others on the road. Instead, make a special night of it by checking out Donizetti's bubbly comedy, *The Elixir of Love*. There's

also a matinee performance Jan. 4, giving you time to recuperate from the hangover if you took the former alternative instead. ♦

For addresses and contact information for the events and venues, please see our listings.

Holiday Drama

FAMILY-FRIENDLY THEATER TO BEAT THE WINTER BLUES By Anna Grace

Wanna catch a show? Holiday theater abounds in our suddenly festive town. This year local theaters are offering fun, family-friendly shows that aren't necessarily Christmas-focused. Your options are as follows:

SHE LOVES ME

Cottage Theatre is producing this sweet musical. *She Loves Me* is taken from the same story as the 1993 classic, *Sleepless in Seattle*. Fun music and dancing accompany the tale of corresponding sweethearts. The Cottage Theatre builds on a string of strong musicals, making this play a good bet. Dec. 5-21.

ANNIE

Michael P. Watkins directs this classic at Actors Cabaret of Eugene. It's guaranteed to be chockfull of cute kids and good humor. No one minds if you sing along, and

dinner with dessert at intermission makes this a popular family outing. Nov. 21-Dec. 20.

BABES IN ARMS

Babes in Arms is a fun, 1930s Rodgers & Hart musical about a group of kids trying to get out of a summer on the work farm by putting on a show. "It's a pleasure to listen to and work on the music of Rodgers and Hart," says the show's director Peg Major. "Some of the most memorable of their songs are in this show. I think everyone will recognize a lot of the music." This Shedd production boasts a full orchestra, with musical direction by Robert Ashens. Major says, "I've been very inspired by watching Maestro Robert Ashens work his magic. He is a fountain of knowledge and is so wonderfully gifted as a vocal and orchestral director." Dec. 5-21.

AN AMERICAN CHRISTMAS CAROL

Ballet Fantastique is taking Charles Dickens' tale and setting it in a stylized, post-WWII America. To set the

mood, Eugene's own Halie Loren, an internationally recognized jazz singer, will perform new arrangements of standards by Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole. This mash-up of jazz, ballet and classic literature sounds like a fascinating dramatic experiment. Hult Center, Dec. 12-19.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Oregon Contemporary Theatre presents the world premiere of Elizabeth Helman's new adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic. OCT is hoping to usher families through their doors with this production. According to artistic director Craig Willis, "We want to make sure that each year we're including programming that is family friendly, so that we reach new patrons and so that our current patrons have opportunities to introduce their kids and/or grandkids to the magic of live theatre. Also, it really is a fun story to tell and it's great having three generations of performers on the stage telling this story." Dec. 5-20.

These shows are just what's new this year. If you are really sold on tradition, it's hard to beat Radio Redux's *It's a Wonderful Life*, Rose Children's Theatre's *Glee Xmas Review* and, of course, the Eugene Ballet Company will present *The Nutcracker*. ♦

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