

Silver Stars present A Tribute to Christmas: A Review



Magic! Pure Magic!

Actually, a little 'Christmas Magic!'

That's the feeling one gets when they take in the Aurora Seniors' Centre theatre troupe, The Silver Stars, and its annual Christmas-themed show, planned for this year on Saturday, December 2 and Sunday, December 3 with shows both days at 2 p.m.

This seasoned reviewer sat in on one of The Silver Stars last rehearsals for A Tribute to Christmas and was so impressed, he went to the Front Desk and bought tickets for his family!

Tickets are now on sale at a mere \$5 (making even Scrooge cringe) and available at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

But, this somewhat magical show, featuring many veteran actors now in their senior years, but still spry as spring chickens, is way different from the traditional usual Christmas fare! A Tribute to Christmas actually looks at it from a different angle - a totally different viewpoint - for example, what is Christmas Eve like for Mrs Claus? What is it like for those who are all alone?

You'll have to see it to find out, but talented director Paul Wells did explain why he chose the upbeat Christmas songs, some positive audience inter-action, and mainly the themed skits that he did, all in this vein of a unique perspective of the holiday season:

'I didn't want to do a traditional Christmas show, such as the Grinch or Scrooge! I was able to find some short skits that people could relate to. And I wanted to tell people about Mrs. Claus and how it connects with our own mothers and all the work they put in at Christmas,' said Mr. Wells.

And he continued, 'With what is going on in our world at the moment, our goal is to make the audience feel good and leave with the thought that Christmas is not lost, but rejuvenated!'

And succeed with 'A Tribute to Christmas', indeed Mr. Wells has - a Christmas wish will be granted on December 2 and 3 at the Aurora Seniors' Centre's main auditorium!

Now, this rollicking show features eight very well-known Christmas songs/jingles that not only will be sung by the cast, but the entire audience will be asked to join in. All these happy, seasonal Christmas ditties were selected by long-time and very talented Silver Stars Musical Director Joy Gannicott. Stage Manager is Ruth Love - a necessary ingredient to every production.

A Tribute to Christmas has not only a lot of audience interaction with director Wells, and also welcomed to sing along, but they will

be treated to five kind of short-acted-out stories, as opposed to just skits, and also one reading of 'Twas The Night ...' that is very twisted, and done brilliantly by Joan Brownlow and Ed Webster.

The short story to really pay attention to, and a kind of highlight of the show, if I can indeed say that, is a number called simply 'Mrs. Claus' and stars all by her lonesome (which is quite hard to do on stage) Zara Stuart-Jones, a stage veteran and well-known on the stages of Aurora for some time! She does a real masterful job of some tough dialogue that will certainly open the eyes of some in the audience! Nuff said about that!

And 'Say Cheese' which stars the well-known Lise Boily, who will soon be on stage with Theatre Aurora, and also director Wells, will certainly make people think about 'others' on Christmas Eve.

These two theatre veterans bring it totally to life and are quite believable!

You won't want to miss 'Mrs. Claus/Menopause', which stars appropriately-named Starr Bayer and John Gillan, which is just a hilarious addition to these very unusual Christmas mini-productions!

Starr Bayer simply does a splendid job and Mr. Gillan is perfect as her foil! A real treat!

There are two other short stories that feature the rest of this excellent theatre ensemble and they are most notably: Lori Bell; Geraldine Smith; Jane Kennedy; and again, Joan Brownlow (starring in 'Home Tour?'); and the final skit, Merry Christmas Dinner, has a mixture of eight cast members already mentioned.

Man-about-town John Dowson is the production's 'Cheerleader' and will be beside Joy Gannicott on her piano, helping to get everyone not only singing and singing 'loudly?', but actually get into the Christmas spirit!

The Silver Stars would like to thank Aurora Senior Centre Management Karie Papillon and Andrew Baily for their help and support, as well as Bill Hawke and his staff for rehearsal and show set-up and teardown; and special thanks to the Priestmans and Teirrah Webster for looking after the ticket buyers.

And the last word from A Tribute to Christmas' director Paul Wells, a long-time and proud Aurora resident: 'Our Christmas wish is that everyone really enjoys our show!'

By Rod Urquhart