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Arts & Entertainment

OFFICIAL MEDIA SPONSOR OF THE OAKVILLE CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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It's curtains for Mr. Scrooge

Popular Christmas play makes final appearance at Oakville Centre

By Carol Baldwin
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

A large room in St. Jude's Anglican Church is filled with people of all ages reciting lines, practising dance steps, chanting lyrics, and discussing the script for this year's 'Mr. Scrooge'.

It's the first day of a tight, 10-day rehearsal schedule, and the cast and crew aren't wasting a minute.

This year marks Fanfare Theatrical Production's fourth and final year for 'Mr. Scrooge', one of the best-known Christmas musicals, which is based on Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'.

The Oakville production is such a popular tradition, that Jonathan Tanner, who plays Scrooge, flies in from England every year for what he refers to as a paid vacation - kind of a busman's holiday.

But he isn't the only one who returns every year. Oakville's Town Crier, Betty Kading, who plays the Ghost of Christmas Past, has been in all four productions as has Lauren Busted, who has graduated to the head urchin this year from her beginnings as the wannabe urchin.

There is always a large Oakville contingent in this production, including all the urchins and borough girls.

But for Oakville resident Sandra Margoese, this is her first year with 'Mr. Scrooge', and she's looking forward to playing Mrs. Cratchit, whom she says "is wonderful. She is the heart of the household, but she's feisty. She's a loving character but gutsy as well."

Margoese was part of the



Photo by Barrie Erskine

Oakville actors Sandra Margoese and Jamie McRoberts, who play Mrs. Cratchit and Tiny Tim, respectively, go over the script during rehearsals for 'Mr. Scrooge', which opens at the Oakville Centre on Dec. 17th.

'Phantom of the Opera' chorus for the past five-and-a-half years. "I was also the understudy for Carlotta, the opera diva for the show, and I played that role often, sometimes twice a week," she says, adding that it was great to have a steady job for so long, a relative rarity in the theatre. "I knew the show was closing and I was ready to move on. It's exciting to work on a new show after doing 'Phantom' for so long. And it's a 10-minute drive from my house."

Margoese has also been busy recording a jazz CD, which is almost complete; and she hopes to continue pursuing her love of jazz when the final curtain falls on 'Mr. Scrooge'.

"I love all types of music, but I've always been interested in jazz," she says, admitting that singing, not acting, is her forte. "But I love acting as well. I still want to combine the two.

I'm planning on getting into performing in New York."

In the meantime though, the 31-year-old will do her performing in 'Mr. Scrooge', singing 'He's the Meanest Man Alive', dancing in the Fezziwig party scene, and playing mom to the Cratchit kids, including Tiny Tim.

And speaking of Tiny Tim, he is being played by up-an-coming Oakville ingenue, Jamie McRoberts

'Mr. Scrooge' will be on stage at the Performing Arts for five performances only - Friday, Dec. 17th at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 18th and Sunday, Dec. 19th at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Tickets are \$19.99 (\$15.99 for Big Ticket members and \$14.99 for Big Ticket Plus) and are available by visiting or calling the Oakville

Centre box office at 130 Navy St., 815-2021.

The prices are under \$20 because, says Frid, "Part of our mandate is to provide professional theatre at affordable prices. We want to ensure that this is a gift to the community."

Next year Fanfare will present 'Pickwick', a musical based on Dickens' 'Pickwick Papers'. But it will maintain the Oakville connections in its cast and crew as well as in its set. The lamposts in 'Mr. Scrooge' are designed to reflect those found in downtown Oakville, and they will remain part of the 'Pickwick Papers' set "to reflect Oakville's own Victorian past," says Frid. "Even if we do 'Hamlet', we will have to some way incorporate Oakville."

'Pickwick Papers', she says, is a Christmas story of sorts in that it takes place during Christmas and it features some Christmas songs, which fulfills Fanfare's mandate to provide a seasonal production. "It focuses on what family means. It speaks a lot about family and the importance of family," explains Frid. "We changed (from 'Mr. Scrooge') because the audience indicated they wanted a change... We're trying to listen to what the audience wants. And the sponsors like the idea of establishing a Christmas repertoire."

Fanfare did consider 'Oliver' for next year, but then the Toronto production opened. However, Frid's first choice was 'Amahl and the Night Visitors', a play that receives little attention in Canada but is popular in New York City. It's the story of a young boy and his gift for the Christ child - similar to the Little Drummer Boy tale. "It's operetta style, and very religious... But there's lots of dance and lots of danceable music. It was written by an Italian for television in the '70s," explains Frid. "People are nervous about trying something new... They think 'Pickwick' is a large leap into the unknown."

Artists holds open house

For the first time Oakville artist Leslie Cochrane is opening her studio to the public. After more than two decades of gallery shows in Toronto and the surrounding area, she'll be displaying her new works in her home.

The majority of the paintings in this show are smaller still lifes along with a few landscapes. Her oil paintings will be on display Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon to 4 p.m. at 2198 Constance Dr.

For more information call 845-7383.

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT NOTICE COMPLETION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT QUEEN ELIZABETH WAY, EASTBOUND LANES FROM TRAFALGAR ROAD TO HIGHWAY 403 TOWN OF OAKVILLE, G.W.P. 284-99-00

THE PROJECT:

In 1991, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) initiated a Preliminary Design Study, which examined potential ultimate improvements to the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) from Dorval Drive to Erin Mills Parkway. This study, which included consultation with affected municipalities, government ministries and agencies, local residents, business owners and the public, was completed in 1996.

MTO is currently proceeding with operational improvements on the section of the QEW between Highway 403 and Trafalgar Road in the Town of Oakville. Construction of QEW eastbound improvements, including a new auxiliary lane from Highway 403 to Trafalgar Road, pavement rehabilitation, the replacement of the Royal Windsor Drive structure and ramps, stormwater management, landscaping and other associated improvements, is now underway (MTO Contract 99-08). MTO has also retained McCormick Rankin Corporation to proceed with design of QEW eastbound improvements, including a new auxiliary lane from Trafalgar Road to Highway 403, median reconstruction including installation of concrete median barrier, final paving, realignment of the exit ramp to Royal Windsor Drive and upgrade to a two lane exit, installation of "rumble strips" on paved shoulders, installation of new high mast illumination and landscaping.

THE PROCESS:

This project has followed the Provincial Highways Class Environmental Assessment process for Group 'B' projects, which is approved for highway projects of this type. As mentioned at the Public Information Centre, this project was a candidate for "step down" to a Group 'C'. After careful consideration, it has been determined that there will be no significant environmental or property issues on this project. Therefore, the project has been "stepped down" to Group 'C', and formal documentation is not required.

A minimum 30 day review period is being provided to allow anyone with good reason to request MTO to reconsider this decision and leave the project in Group 'B'. If MTO and the objector cannot agree, then the objector may ask the Minister of the Environment (135 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario, M4V 1P5) to rule on the request. It is the responsibility of the objector to forward the request to the Minister of the Environment before the end of the review period on **January 18, 2000**. A copy of the objection should also be forwarded to McCormick Rankin Corporation at the address shown below.

COMMENTS:

If you have comments or concerns about this project, please direct them by **January 18, 2000** to:

Paul Turner, P. Eng.
McCormick Rankin Corporation
2655 North Sheridan Way
Mississauga, Ontario L5K 2P8
Phone: (905) 823-8500
Fax: (905) 823-8503

With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.



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