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### HOLIDAY ARTS GUIDE STAGE

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WHAT'S DECEMBER WITHOUT CAROLS, GELT AND ... OF COURSE, KLINGONS? YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR ALL OF THAT AND MORE AS THIS YEAR'S HOLIDAY THEATER SEASON SWINGS INTO FULL GEAR. HERE'S A SAMPLING OF WHAT'S HANGING ON THE TREE.

#### GUTHRIE THEATER} A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Now playing: Did you hear they're doing an all-nude "Christmas Carol" this year? Not! After 34 years and two theaters, the Guthrie knows better than to mess with success.

Through Dec. 31; Guthrie Theater; 818 S. Second St., Mpls.; \$70-\$29; 612-377-2224.

#### BRAVE NEW WORKSHOP} ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS 700 BILLION DOLLARS: OUR 50TH NOEL

Now playing: Sort of the photographic opposite of the Guthrie's "Christmas Carol," the folks at the Brave New Workshop tend to take a snarkier view of the holidays. But over the years, the company has built a few holiday traditions of its own, most notably the Shrieking Mothers Chorus version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." If you're looking for something sweet and heartwarming ... this ain't it. It's more like holidays on the rocks.

Through Jan. 10; Brave New Workshop, 2605 Hennepin Ave., Mpls; \$27-\$24; 612- 332-6620.

#### HISTORY THEATRE} A SERVANTS' CHRISTMAS

Now playing: You don't find a lot of Hannukah plays around these parts, but at least this musical acknowledges that non-Christian faiths have holidays this time of year, as well. The History Theatre brings back the popular musical version of John Fenn's play with songs by Drew Jansen.

Through Dec. 28; History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul; \$32-\$25; 651-292-4323.

#### MARTINI AND OLIVE} SILENT NIGHT FEVER

Now playing: Perhaps the most goofball of the holiday stage offerings, Grant Richey, Judy Heneghan and friends put together a classic retro-'70s revue that combines musical medleys with the terpsichorean terror of the "amazingly adequate" Swizzle Stick Dancers. And let us not forget the immortal tap-dance number performed to C.W. McCall's "Convoy." Keep a straight face if you can.

Through Dec. 30; Bryant-Lake Bowl, 810 W. Lake St., Mpls.; \$25-\$23; 612-825-8949.

#### PENUMBRA THEATRE} BLACK NATIVITY -- HEAR AGAIN THE CHRISTMAS STORY!

Now playing: It no longer bears much resemblance to the Langston Hughes story that first bowed on Broadway in 1961 and has, in various incarnations, been part of Penumbra's season for two decades. T. Mychael Rambo and Lou Bellamy have, instead, given a contemporary twist to the tale. With handfuls of Twin Cities powerhouse performers doing the singing, it generally delivers the promised mighty day.

Through Dec. 28; Penumbra Theatre Company, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul; \$38-\$18; 651-224-3180.

#### PARK SQUARE THEATRE} JACOB MARLEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

Now playing: Last year during the holidays, Park Square Theatre staged "Of Mice and Men," which is not exactly what you'd call a holiday treat. But for years, that was the way the theater rolled, assiduously avoiding programming a holiday-themed show. This year, the company has fallen in with the crowd, staging the local premiere of a tale telling the Scrooge story from the perspective of Scrooge's business partner. Jim Lichtscheidl plays all 18 roles in this one-man opus.

Through Dec. 21; Park Square Theatre, 20 W. Seventh Place, St. Paul; \$39-\$15; 651-291-7005.

#### MISS RICHFIELD 1981} IT'S A COO COO CHRISTMAS

Now playing: Just for fun, I looked up Miss Richfield on Wikipedia, and I was astonished to find there was no entry for her. That the doyenne of the double-wide has escaped the attention of the digital encyclopedia seems incredible, since the drag-queen alter ego of Russ King has carved out a tidy niche in the world of alternative theater. When she's not wintering in Mexico or summering in Provincetown, the divine Miss R deigns to bring her holiday ho-ho-hos to the Illusion Theater. If you've never been, it's worth the trip. And if it has been awhile, maybe it's time to return.

Through Dec. 14; Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. \$30-\$25; 612-339-4944.

#### THEATRE LATTE DA} A CHRISTMAS CAROLE PETERSEN

Now playing: Tod Petersen doesn't like Christmas very much. So, it's an irony of the season that the little show he and Theatre Latte Da artistic director Peter Rothstein cooked up some years ago has become a holiday tradition around these parts. The play pokes loving and sometimes poignant fun at the family traditions of Petersen's growing-up years in Mankato, and the singing "Carolettes" provide some tunes of the season.

Through Dec. 21; Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington St., St. Paul; \$35-\$29; 651-224-4222.

#### THEATRE LIMINA} SANTALAND DIARIES

Opens today: It's a dark night of the troll for Crumpet, an elf who sees the seamy underbelly of Christmas -- mostly in the form of racist, manipulative or abusive parents -- and finally decides it's no accident that "Santa" is an anagram for "Satan." Join Theatre Limina for its annual staging of David Sedaris' chronicle of life as an elf at Macy's Santaland.

Through Dec. 21; Bryant-Lake Bowl, 810 W. Lake St., Mpls.; \$15-\$13; 612-825-8949.

#### ORDWAY CENTER} IRVING BERLIN'S WHITE CHRISTMAS

Opens Dec. 2: When this musical-based-on-the-movie played St. Paul two years ago, the folks at the Ordway had a bona fide hit on their hands. With a cast of zillions, a monstrous pit orchestra, grand sets and costumes and a little visit from Old Man Winter at the end, this is musical theater the way it used to be. The play itself? It's only so-so. But as a holiday bonbon, it's hard to beat.

Through Jan. 3; Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington St., St. Paul; \$75-\$54; 651-224-4222

#### MINNESOTA JEWISH THEATRE} HERSHEL AND THE HANUKKAH GOBLINS

Opens Dec. 4: Tired and hungry, Hershel imagines the smell of latkes and the bright lights of the menorah. But when he arrives in Helmsbergville, Hershel discovers a silent village. Goblins have been preventing Hanukkah there for years. Can Hershel -- helped by the townsfolk -- bring back the Festival of Lights? Minnesota Jewish Theatre tries something new this season, offering an interactive play with puppets based on the book by Eric A. Kimmel.

Through Dec. 19; Hillcrest Center, 1978 Ford Parkway, St. Paul; \$16; 651-647-4315.

#### SABES JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER} ANSHEL AND THE MISSING CHANUKAH GELT

Opens Dec. 4: Local actor/playwright Mark Rosenwinkel has a new play for Hanukkah, and the Sabes Jewish Community Center has the world premiere: Tormented by his father's disappearance, young Anshel toils as a tailor's assistant to help his mother support the family. During the holiday, the boy is given a mysterious key; with his friends Yasha and Magda, he sets off on an exciting odyssey in search of a secret Sephardic treasure.

Through Dec. 21; 4330 S. Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park; \$14-\$12; 952-381-3499.

#### STEPPINGSTONE THEATRE} THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

Opens Dec. 5: The folks at SteppingStone Theatre for Youth Development call it "St. Paul's longest-running holiday tradition," and I'm willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. This is year 17 for the story about how the incorrigible Herdman children wind up in the Christmas pageant and miraculously turn what should be the worst show into ... well, just look at the title.

Through Dec. 23; 55 N. Victoria St., St. Paul; \$12-\$10; 651-225-9265.

**IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST PUPPET AND MASK THEATRE} LA NAVIDAD**

Opens Dec. 13: This is the third and final year of In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre's unique holiday production. A combination of street theater, puppetry and an outdoor candlelit procession, the show is based on the Mexican tradition of Las Posadas and has the audience moving outside the theater and becoming part of the action. Beginning at the theater, the audience follows Maria and Jose through the streets as they look for refuge. The procession ends at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, with the Nativity and a fiesta, complete with music and food.  
Through Dec. 21; 1500 E. Lake St., Mpls.; \$25-\$18; 612-721-2535.

**COMMEDIA BEAUREGARD} A KLINGON CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Dec. 13: The second annual staging of the Dickens classic translated into the fully functional (!) **Klingon** language, the production is a fundraiser for Commedia Beauregard. For non-native speakers, English supertitles will be provided. If this is the kind of thing you like, you'll like this kind of thing. Paul & Sheila Wellstone Center, 179 E. Robie St., St. Paul; \$20; 800-838-3006.

**OPEN EYE FIGURE THEATRE} THE HOLIDAY PAGEANT**

Dec. 15: Michael Sommers combines "The Second Shepherd's Play" with the Nativity story, both told from Lucifer's point of view. Sommers' buddies and longtime conspirators -- including Kevin Kling, Sarah Agnew and Luverne Seifert -- join in for this one-night-only production that launches from the exquisitely idiosyncratic vision of Open Eye Figure Theatre. Pantages Theatre, 710 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.; \$25-\$18; 612-874-6338.

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