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## AND THEN **TINY KLINGON** EXCLAIMED, 'GOD BLESS US, HOCH!'

*DOMINIC P. PAPTOLA*

Revenge, the Klingons tell us, is a dish best served cold. Their philosophers had less to say on the subject of redemption, but that's not stopping a local theater company from staging a translation of a Charles Dickens classic in the tongue of the fictional warrior race from the "Star Trek" TV series and films.

You read that right. Commedia Beauregard is doing a one-night-only staging of "A **Klingon** Christmas Carol" as a fundraiser Saturday at the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota.

There's enough material here to write several goofy feature stories, but we'll just touch on the highlights:

One: Yes, the work will be staged almost entirely in **Klingon** with English supertitles helpfully provided "for the benefit of audience members who don't speak the language of the play." In this version, Scrooge is presented as a **Klingon** who has neither courage nor honor, the twin pillars of **Klingon** society. The visiting spirits endeavor to help Scrooge find his inner warrior.

Two: Yes, there is a functioning version of **Klingon** (and any jokes I could make about that pale in comparison to what you will find if you type "**Klingon** language" into Wikipedia) spoken by enough people to justify the published translations of "Hamlet" and "Much Ado About Nothing." A four-person team from the theater is adapting the play and doing the translation.

Three: The guy playing Scrooge is Michael Ooms, son of Richard Ooms, who played the same role for years in the English-language version of "A Christmas Carol" at the Guthrie Theater. As a child, the younger Ooms appeared as one of the children in the G's long-running version of the holiday standard.

Four: Commedia Beauregard ends 2007 very differently from the way the company started it. In January, the company staged "The Jeweler's Shop," a play written by a young priest who would grow up to be Pope John Paul II. Now that's what I call range.

"A **Klingon** Christmas Carol" will be staged at 7:30 p.m. at the Student Center theater, 2017 Buford Ave. Tickets are \$20. Trekkie attire is, presumably, optional. A silent auction, also benefiting the theater, begins an hour beforehand. For more information, call 651-209-6689.

### SANTA THE SOT?

If "A **Klingon** Christmas Carol" isn't your cup of tea, how about a holiday play that depicts Jolly Ol' St. Nick being sentenced to rehab after -- shall we say? -- a minor traffic violation?

That's the premise of "Seven Santas," a play-with-dinner that inaugurates the "Theater in the Loft" space at Spill the Wine, running now through Dec. 22. Ensemble Productions provides the dark comedy in which the Jolly Old Elf finds himself in a detox program run by the estranged Mrs. Claus while he struggles to conceal a sordid secret that could mean the end of Christmas as we know it.

The Washington Avenue boite offers a three-course menu with the holiday stage happenings. Dinner-theater packages are \$40 or \$75 for a couple. Call 612-245-8466 or visit

[www.SpillTheWineRestaurant.com](http://www.SpillTheWineRestaurant.com) for more information.

AND, ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE ...

Pillsbury House Theatre, either oblivious to or undaunted by the holiday theater crush, has picked this festive time of year to announce a 2008 season addressing themes of race, class and other such heavyweight topics.

As reported a couple of weeks back, Pillsbury House and Illusion Theater will join forces to present "Same Difference," a compelling new work that looks at the relationship between two African-American college roommates with very different approaches to school, work, life and social class.

First staged at this year's Minnesota Fringe Festival, the script by Samuel G. Roberson Jr. will play Pillsbury House Feb. 20 through March 1 after an engagement at Illusion.

Breaking Ice, Pillsbury House's multiracial, socio-political improvisational performance troupe, will bring a company-created performance to the stage March 28-April 5. "Other" will use music, movement and scenes to examine how people construct and adapt their cultural identities in an increasingly diverse world.

In May, director Marion McClinton returns to Pillsbury House to stage "Bulrusher," a runner-up in this year's Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The coming-of-age tale is set in a rural California community of the 1950s in which residents have developed their own language to address subjects not considered socially acceptable and tells the story of a young foundling with the power to tell the future.

Pillsbury House's season concludes in October with a play yet to be named.

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Photo: Scott Pakudaitis

Laura Thurston, left, and Sasha Wallock work out one of the fight scenes from "A **Klingon** Christmas Carol."