

THE GILROY
DISPATCH

Theater Review: 'A Christmas Carol' is a scintillating adaptation

By Camille Bounds (editor@garlic.com)

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It's that time of the year where we get overdosed with "Miracle on 34th Street", "It's a Wonderful Life", the "Grinch", "Charlie Brown", "Nutcracker" and "Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" - and then there is always someone's version of that old chestnut "A Christmas Carol". This old chestnut has been polished to a new, distinctive glow that will delight and captivate by bringing the familiar Victorian tale into Rick Lombardo's dazzling musical adaptation.

Dickens first published "A Christmas Carol" in 1883. When you consider he took about six weeks to complete his adaptation and it has never been out of print, I guess you can call that an example of great writing and staying power.

His story of the gloomy, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge's transformation and the difficulty of society of the times (that we can, in some cases, parallel today) is a well known plot throughout the world and has been made into movies, television specials and stage plays. It is always there every Christmas - like the star on top of the tree. Then along came Rick Lombardo's imagination and ingenuity and the world changed a little.

He makes an old story fresh and new by blending a superb cast of 18 actors (playing 50 roles), who sing and dance, and are dressed in splendid Victorian colorful costumes (by Frances Nelson McSherry). Lighting (by Dawn Chiang) and ingenious sets (by Peter Colao) keep the attention even if we know the ending. Lombardo's direction is gentle and sure.

For a scintillating moment that's like popping a champagne cork, give yourself a break and see this absolutely delightful, refreshing production of "A Christmas Carol". And, oh yes: "God bless us everyone".

'A Christmas Carol'

Where: San Jose Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose

Through: Dec. 24

Details: (408) 367-7255 or visit www.sjrep.com



Richard Farrell as Scrooge and Everett Meckler as Tiny Tim in San Jose Rep's 'A Christmas Carol.'

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