

The Broadway Critic

Theatre Review: "A Christmas Story" @ SJ Rep, 12/5

12/09/2009... 2:00 PM



Photo credit: Kevin Berne

If you are looking for some holiday cheer, then look no further than San Jose Rep's production of *A Christmas Story*. After watching last Saturday's matinee, I literally ran off, bought a Christmas tree and decorated it. That's how much it put me into the Christmas spirit. San Jose Rep's artistic director, Rick Lombardo, said "When the Rep first produced *A Christmas Story*, little did we know it would become the highest selling play in our history. The audience asked us to bring it back during the holidays at some point, and it felt to me that this year, with the struggle we're all confronting, was a great time to revisit what has become one of the timeless American holiday tales." I couldn't be happier that Lombardo decided to bring this classic holiday story to the stage again. It's perfect for your entire family!

One of the most exciting parts about this production is the set. Robert Mark Morgan's creative rotating house moved the play along at just the right speed. The main house rotated 360 degrees, as well as the sidewalk in front of the house on two separate moving devices. You never knew what would pop out from behind the house as the sidewalk was rotated around. I especially loved how they used the sidewalk as the kids walked to school. Randy (Emilio Fuentes) was so cute as he laid stuck in the snow in his ginormous snowsuit. (That's one of my favorite moments in the show.)

The show's narrator, Adult Ralph (Dan Hiatt), delivered his lines as if we were sitting next to the fireplace, sipping hot chocolate and enjoying the warmth of friends and family during a cold wintry day. It reminded me of when my Grandpa would start telling stories about his childhood during Christmas family dinners. It was sometimes endearing, funny, a little long (at points) and ultimately heartfelt. I miss those stories and *A Christmas Story* reminded me of those days.

This is truly a perfect choice for the family. Your kids will love this production and it's a great way to introduce them to the theatre, knowing full well that they will love it and not get bored. While, it's not groundbreaking theatre, by any means, I left the theatre feeling the Christmas spirit and that's just what I needed to jump start my holidays.

A Christmas Story
by Phillip Grecian
Directed by Chris Smith
[San Jose Repertory Theatre](#)
Closes December 20, 2009