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The Intelligencer

Bucks County Playhouse's take on 'Scrooge' a festive experience



Tracer Conyer Lee, Evan Alexander Smith, Don Stephenson, Kate Wetherhead, James Ludwig in "Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show" through Sunday at Bucks County Playhouse. (Photo by Joan Marcus)

By Michele Anzabi / Villa Joseph Marie High School

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"Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show!" at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope is the perfect show for the holiday season, writes this teen Reality panelist.

Upon the curtain's opening, the audience is greeted with the sight of a solitary ghost light that illuminates the actors' faces. This is the captivating beginning of "Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show!" at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope.

Now, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" has seen multiple adaptations. The week before, I even did a variation of it for an English project about "Crime and Punishment."

In this case, the Playhouse has incorporated comedy into this moving tale about the Christmas spirit. The play manages to skillfully transition from the necessary elements of the story to funny interjections that are relative to the lives of Bucks County residents — everything from jokes about the Strawberry Festival at Peddler's Village to discounted eggs at Wawa.

This play was a lovely way to embrace the Christmas spirit with a smile. It retained the classic structure of the Dickens' tale that we all know and love. However, since the play's setting was present-day New Hope, its relatability truly engaged the audience. For example, the ghost of Christmas present parallels a millennial with her Starbucks and selfies.

The cast of five — on- and off-Broadway veterans Don Stephenson, Evan Alexander Smith, Kate Wetherhead, James Ludwig and Tracey Conyer Lee — flawlessly transitioned from one character to another; in addition, the show evoked a variety of emotions. Whether it was sadness over the ominous potential future scenario or delight at the snow from the door, the audience went on a journey with Ebenezer Scrooge.

Throughout the tale, there was a childish whimsy and light-heartedness that came with the jokes that naturally belonged in this rendition. The play ended in a festive mood that made the audience want to dance and sing.

I definitely would recommend that others see this show. It was a positive and uplifting experience. While bringing smiles and laughter, "Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show!" reminds the audience about the importance of the holidays.

The play was graced with the efforts of a dedicated, professional cast and crew that transformed this traditional tale into a memorable experience. The executive producer is Robyn Goodman, the writers were Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen and the director is Josh Rhodes.

I also would be remiss if I didn't mention my love for this play's version of Tiny Tim. Therefore, it would be only fitting if I ended my piece with a quote from him: "God bless us, every one!"

May the holidays be a time for us to refocus our hearts on those we hold dear and the values we treasure.

"Ebenezer Scrooge's Big Playhouse Christmas Show!" continues at the Bucks County Playhouse at 70 S. Main St. in New Hope through Sunday. Tickets range from \$40 to \$75; special rates for groups of 10 and more. For more information, visit buckscountyplyhouse.org or call 215-862-2121.

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