

# A Bear-y Rockin' Holiday

AH... the holiday programs continue. Last night, my first grade niece, Alyssa, and fifth grade nephew, Alex had their Elementary Christmas Program. Unlike Elizabeth's production of *Seussical, Jr.* last weekend, every student in grades K-5 were involved. However, the evening was divided into 2 (or three if you count the 6th grade guitar class) musical extravaganzas.

The youngest 3 classes presented *A Bear-Merry Holiday* in which the Kindergartners were dressed in brown as Grizzly Bears. The first grade group as white Polar Bears. The second graders transformed into either Black or Panda Bears. Some of the highlights of this show were the angry, rapping grizzlies who promised to "be good." However, when they thought they were not being watched, returned to their rappin' ways.

"Panda-monium" found a group of pandas chasing each other in a circle... not much room on the stage and one nearly fell down; however, I think this might have been slightly intentional as the near stumble looked a bit choreographed.

After two intermissions (after the K-2 were finished and following the guitarists), it was time for the big kids to present *Santa's Rockin' Christmas Eve*. The televised variety show featured an array of musical talent everything from a 60s Motown girls group, to a bluesy Mrs. Claus, to a Beatles-esque fivesome (ok, the Beatles were the fab 4) who made the girls swoon and faint.

There were more individual character roles in this production and I would have to say that my favorite was the quick talking, frequently "ad-libbing" emcee Swingle Kringle (brother of the guy in the red suit who everyone was waiting to make a surprise appearance) who was often admonished for his penchant for going off the cue cards.

When Santa finally arrived, he did not come alone. He and his back-up group performed the traditional holiday Disco hit, "S.A.N.T.A." I think the costumes could have been a bit more creative for that number. Perhaps not the traditional garb of a police officer, construction worker, Native American, biker dude, and military guy but a little more than just the jolly old elf in his polyester suit.

After the performance, we came home for our annual viewing of the 1938 version of *A Christmas Carol*. One tidbit gathered from the pre-show introduction: Scrooge was originally supposed to be played by Lionel Barrymore who had for years performed the role over the radio and was the original choice.

However, just before filming was to begin, Mr. Barrymore took a nasty fall and was unable to be in the film. He would create a role just as curmudgeonly (love that word) some eight years later, Mr. Henry F. Potter, himself. Tonight, the Muppet's take on the Carol is on. Haven't seen that one in years!

Another fun-filled holiday extravaganza. Monday night (weather permitting) I will take in my final concert at the glorious Huber... weather permitting of course. We could be in for a bit MORE of the white tonight into Sunday.

---

## **A Show And A Cop In A Mall**

Before the curtain went up on night two of the play, I got to watch the hilarious escapades of *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*. The film finds officer wannabe and quite agile mall security man Paul Blart (Kevin James of "The King of Queens") up against a group of high-tech robbers on Black Friday. I must congratulate the writers of the piece for setting the action

at the end of the busiest shopping day of the year... what a coup that would be! The bad guys take a number of hostages including the object of Paul's affection. The security officer takes it upon himself to not only defend and protect his mall but also rescue the hostages. Several laugh out loud moments abound. I also loved the use of 80s tunes throughout, including "I Can't Hold Back" by Survivor. I also found Paul's "Detroit Rock City" on Guitar Hero very entertaining. A hilarious movie that was a much more family oriented take on *Die Hard*.

Night two *It's a Wonderful Life* was great! Dan and Carla were up from Sandusky. After the show, Dan told me that I rivaled Lionel Barrymore (who originated the role in the classic movie). Quite a compliment from someone who watches the film annually. Over 100 people were in the audience so while only filling about a third of the seats, a great turnout. For some reason, I got more boos at curtain call that night one. And several audience members told me how evil my performance was.

After intermission, there was a drawing for a free ticket to a show next year (something that was forgotten Friday night... sorry). I could have sworn that the name ShelBY Shaffer was announced. However, two things are wrong with that. One, I don't think she could win since she is part of the show. Two, she did not sign up for the draw. The winner was Shelly Shaffer (no relation).

So for a good time... check out *Paul Blart: Mall Cop* and come to one of the final four productions of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Incidentally, I did watch the last half hour of the movie after returning from the performance.

---

# Deliciously Evil

Today at our second rehearsal, we got to watch the original 1947 classic film starring Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, and Lionel Barrymore. I now wonder why *It's A Wonderful Life* has not been a holiday tradition along side the myriad versions of *A Christmas Carol* and other movies. I thought it was extraordinary for the first time. Primarily, Travis wanted us to watch and listen to line inflection and deliveries since many of the lines in the script are taken verbatim from the film, but I think watching Mr. Barrymore's performance will help even more in developing my take on Mr. Potter. Producer Mare asked if I could channel Drew's great-uncle. I thought the performance was stupendous and I can see why many in the cast have congratulated me on getting the role.

I also had time today to highlight my lines with the extremely cool erasable highlighters. Whatever genius at Crayola came up with these deserves millions. I highly recommend them to every actor.

And **ONE MORE WIN TO GO!** but I will not be so bold as to predict a five game series. But I will ask... how many HBPs does it take before it becomes intentional? In his first at bat, A-Rod was hit for the third time in two games. A warning was immediately given to both pitchers. Coincidental? I realize that pitchers like to come inside to him but jeez...

Final score... Evil Empire 7... Defending Champs 4