Actors present reading at a 'Christmas Carol Feast'

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which is the scene between Scrooge and Belle, the love of his life when he was a young man.

Yolanda Fliescher of Bloomfield Hills, who teaches at the University of Detroit, is Belle and other characters, such as the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come and one of the hags.

"My favorite scene is the old hag scene in act three," Johnson said.

Other performers this year are Art Bear, Peggy Thorpe and Fred Karn.

The man who really makes the evening possible is Victor Dazbaz, manager of the restaurant, who got the idea for the "Christmas Carol Feast" about four years ago. He wanted to put on a festival and contacted a friend to help, poet Raghudas, who then contacted a friend, Johnson. The work began.

For the first year's one-night performance, Johnson wrote the script, produced it and directed.

"I adapted the novel," she said. "Basically, it's taken exactly from the novel. It seemed a little stupid to do Dickens, to me, if you're not going to do Dickens.

"WE WERE GOING to be as authentic as we could.

"We had three weeks to a month to put the show together from a time that Victor and I met and he said this is what he wanted. That meant that the script had to be done and the actors had to be found and rehearsals had to be made, and costumes, etc., etc."

That first one-night event was a smash. "By the end of the evening of the first year, we had half the house for one night the following year already sold."

"As far as I'm concerned we have the cream of the crop of the actors in Detroit," Johnson said.

"Mr. Fox has a tendency to get very, very excited at the end, and he's a marvelous Scrooge . . . he's very 'bah, humbug,' but his elation at the end far exceeds any Scrooge I've seen. So that usually brings the audience up very high. And that's nice."

And she said about Art Bear: "He is probably one of the most versatile actors in the city because he has a number of dialects."

The evening has everything great going for it. That's why a couple of the nights are already sold out. And two nights of the presentation of "The Canterbury Tales" for this coming February are already sold out, too.

Reservations for both events are a must. A ticket for the "Christmas Carol Feast" costs $65.

"The food is tremendous," Johnson said. "I'm very proud of the show."

Last year, as shown here, performers stood at podiums to read from the Dickens classic. They will do more acting out, with more memorization, for this year's event, which also features a six-course Victorian dinner.

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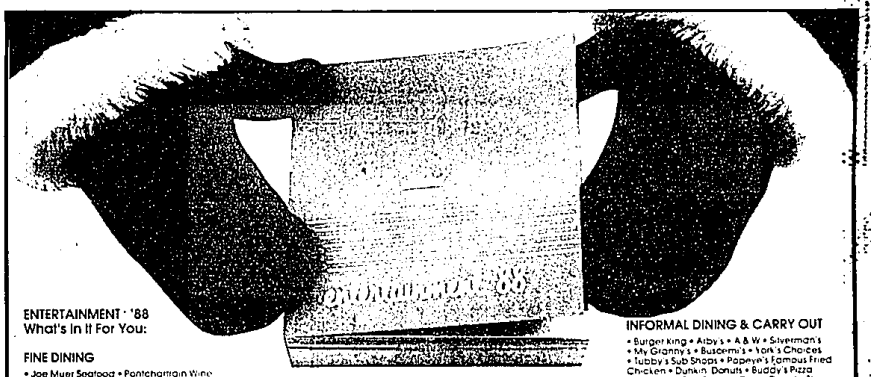

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