

THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



The Detroit Symphony Orchestra presents an all-Baroque music program "Bach and Handel" featuring Ramón Barcella, DSO principal trumpet, 10:45 a.m. and 8 p.m. at Orchestra Hall in Detroit. Tickets \$14 to \$62, call (313) 576-5111.

SATURDAY



Bethany Yarrow joins her father Peter Yarrow, of Peter, Paul and Mary folk music fame, for a Hanukkah concert 8 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El, 14450 W. 10 Mile Road, Oak Park. Tickets \$10 for Jewish Community Center members, \$15 for non-members, call (248) 967-4030.

SUNDAY



St. Nicholas will hand out treats to children, and tell holiday stories, 2 p.m. in the Galeria of the Orchard Lake Road at Commerce Road, during Polish Day. Polish American dinners will be available for purchase in the campus dining hall (\$8 adults, \$4 children) after a 1 p.m. mass in Polish. Call (248) 682-1885 for information.



Not This The 1999 Holiday Walk at Meadow Brook Hall through Sunday, Dec. 5 puts a French accent on the celebration of the season. Titled "The French Collection," the walk features works of fine and decorative art by French artists and makers displayed among holiday decorations throughout the elegant mansion on the Oakland University campus. Admission \$12 adults, \$6 children age 3 to 12, no charge for children age 2 and under, \$6 for OU students, staff and faculty with ID. Knole Cottage admission \$1 for adults and children. Meadow Brook Hall is off Adams, south of Walton. Call (248) 370-3140 for information.



Starry Night: The Cantata Academy light up Detroit's University Cultural Center with song on Noel Night.

NOEL NIGHT

A holiday wonderland

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER
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Mark Perrine expects the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's stained glass windows and Gothic architecture to set an awe-inspiring mood as the Schoolcraft College Community Choir sings traditional seasonal favorites along with Mozart's "Regina Coeli" and Rachmaninoff's "Ave Maria" during Noel Night Saturday, Dec. 4.

But overall, Perrine is much too modest about the role the 50-voice group, now in its 35th season, plays in turning the University Cultural Center into a holiday wonderland.

"We're just part of the festivities," said Perrine, a Redford resident who directs the choir based at Schoolcraft in Livonia.

Outside the cathedral, it will begin to look a lot like Christmas as hundreds of handbell ringers, singers and actors share the spirit of the season through music and stories. Listen to the ringers from St. Paul Royal Oak Lutheran Bell Choir or a cappella groups, The Grunyons and Spartan Dischords, take a horse-drawn carriage ride, watch as Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer lights the trees then join in the community sing-along. The best part of this 27-year tradition is that nearly all of it is free.

The Festival Singers, led by Sharon Thomas, a Waterford voice teacher, bring to life Charles Dickens' classic "A Christmas Carol" 7:30 p.m. after the tree lighting ceremony at the city of Detroit Bandstand on Woodward Avenue. At the Detroit Institute of Arts, Michael Mitchell, director of Choral

Activities at Oakland University in Rochester, conducts the Cantata Academy in selections from its newly released Christmas recording "Born This Day." The group, which has sung with every major orchestra in the area including the Detroit Symphony, recently returned from its 13th concert tour of Europe.

"There's so much to do to get you in the holiday spirit," said Connie Mullett, executive director of the University Cultural Center Association. "In keeping with our theme, 'Starry Night,' three planetariums will be open at the Children's Museum, Old Main (Wayne State University), and the Detroit Science Center. I think that will be fun. There will be Santas everywhere. Beforehand, you can enjoy the DSO's performance of Handel's 'Messiah' at Orchestra Hall then come over to Noel Night."

The Detroit Artists Market joins in Noel Night fun for the first time. Due to construction at their new space in the Cultural Center, the nonprofit gallery hosts a reception in Suite 107 of the Park Shelton Apartments, at the corner of Woodward and Kirby. A diverse selection of works by more than 100 artists will be available for those who'd like to shop for holiday gifts.

"Noel Night"

WHAT: The 27th annual event rings in the holidays with carols, street theater, handbell ringers, choirs, a tree-lighting ceremony, sing-along, and horse-drawn carriage rides.

WHEN: 5-9:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4.

WHERE: Detroit's Cultural Center (bounded by Ferry Street on the north, Forest on the south, Brush on the east, and Cass Avenue on the west). For more information or a schedule of events, call (313) 577-5088.

Parking: In the Cultural Center and Detroit Science Center lots on John R. and underground garage on Farnsworth east of Woodward. Free shuttles run continuously throughout the evening.

The littles of Noel Night visitors will love taking part in a Matrix Theatre Company workshop/performance of "Woman Who Outshone the Sun" at 6 p.m. in the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. Based on a Mexican folk tale, the play features a 10-foot puppet played by Cara Granger who walks on stilts. For more information, call Shaun Nethercott at (313) 967-0999.

"It's interactive," said Mullett. "There are these huge puppets and the children can jump right in."

Some highlights

■ Schoolcraft College Community Choir, 7 p.m. at Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 4800 Woodward Ave.

■ Tree Lighting Ceremony featuring the a cappella group the Spartan Dischords at 8 p.m. followed by Festival Singers performing "A Christmas Carol" at 7:30 p.m. and a Community Sing-Along, 8:30 p.m. at the city of Detroit Bandstand on Woodward Avenue.

■ Marygrove College Dance Detroit, 6:15 p.m. followed by the Cantata Academy at 7:45 p.m. in Prentiss Court at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward.

■ Detroit Symphony Orchestra's performance of Handel's "Messiah" at Orchestra Hall, 3 p.m., at Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward. Evening classical series features "Bach and Handel" at 8:30 p.m. For tickets, call (313) 576-5111.

■ Horse-drawn carriage and sleigh rides depart every 10 minutes, 5-9 p.m., from the front of the Park Shelton, 15 E. Kirby at Woodward. \$6, \$3 children.

■ Wayne State University's Hunstetter and Hilberry Theatres, "Roméo and Juliet" at the Bonstelle at 8 p.m., and Neil Simon's "Laughter on the 23rd Floor, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Call (313) 577-2960.

■ Maggie Allesee Dance Studio performs excerpts from "A Detroit Nutcracker" 5:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in WSU's Old Main, 4841 Cass Avenue.

■ Old fashioned southern Christmas with Appalachian carols and spirituals as sung in the old south at Heritage Museum's Fine Arts Center, 110 E. Ferry.

■ 86th annual Gold Medal Exhibition at the Scarab Club, 217 E. Farnsworth. A cappella performances by The Grunyons, 7:30 p.m., and Spartan Dischords, 8:15 p.m. Jambalaya dinner by Union Street served 5-8:30 p.m.

■ Make an evening of it by having dinner at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Women's Club (4605 Brush) or First Congregational Church (33 E. Forest). First Unitarian Universalist Church (4605 Cass) serves pizza by the slice beginning at 6 p.m.

THEATER

'Forbidden Christmas' delivers lots of holiday hoo-ha

"Forbidden Christmas" continues through Friday, Dec. 31 at Detroit's Century Theatre, located in the same building as the Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave. at Brush, Detroit. Performances 1:30 p.m. Wednesday and Sunday; 7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday; 8:30 p.m. Friday; 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Saturday; and 6:30 p.m. Sunday. Tickets \$24.50 to \$34.50, call (313) 963-9800 or Ticketmaster (248) 645-6666.

BY JULIE VOLLER
STAFF WRITER

The proof is still in the spoof. After eight blockbuster months at the Gem Theatre, the musical comedy satire "Forbidden Hollywood" closed on Nov. 14. Just three days later, its holiday sibling "Forbidden Christmas" took its place at the historic cabaret theater and promises some hilarious yuletide cheer through New Year's Eve.

The brainchildren of Obie and

Drama Desk Award-winner Gerard Alessandrini, "Forbidden Hollywood," "Forbidden Broadway" and "Forbidden Christmas" have all been huge crowd-pleasers at the Gem Theatre.

While "Forbidden Hollywood" parodied summer movies, "Forbidden Christmas" now playing at the Century Theatre, takes fun jabs at the newest holiday movies such as "Music of the Heart," "Bekemon," and "Toy Story 2." Look forward to a Broadway Christmas Carol narrated by the original Christmas Carol Channing and some pun-ditties from the "Little Drummer Boy," Barbra Streisand, Luciano Pavarotti, Nat King Cole, the "Lion King" and Ricky Martin, who's "Livin' La Christmas Life."

Oh, holy note. "This show skewers everything—whether it's Hollywood or Broadway, it's a veritable hodge-podge of holiday hoo-ha," laughs Mark-David Kaplan,

who co-directed the production with John Freedson.

Though he was a name without a face for "Forbidden Christmas," he was several faces with celebrity names in "Forbidden Hollywood," including Roberto Benigni, Austin Powers and Gene Kelly.

"There's no brain surgery involved with these shows," adds Kaplan. "They're total irreverent fun."

That's what Kate Willinger thought six years ago when she was called in to audition for "Forbidden Christmas," a show she had never seen in all her years of living in New York.

"I didn't even know what the show was back then. I was hysterically laughing," said Willinger, who moved from New York to Auburn Hills a year-and-a-half ago.

But she auditioned and got the role



Spoof: The cast of "Forbidden Christmas" bring hilarious yuletide cheer to the Century Theatre.