

Christmas at the Crighton;

Offering a Banquet of Holiday Entertainment!

By: Carolyn Corsano Wong

The 'Crown Jewel of Montgomery County' is setting the stage for a variety of holiday offerings this season. From a hilarious musical comedy, to the soaring sounds of a renown Broadway vocalist ending with down home Texas swing. There will be something for the whole family this holiday season at the historic Crighton Theatre in downtown Conroe. And, as always, she'll be decked out in all her Christmas finery with a beautiful tree in the lobby, abundant garland swags and niches filled with holiday decorations. The homey atmosphere will be the icing on the cake to top off a bounty of talent. Come sample a slice of the entertainment that will grace the stage.

Your starter is a musical comedy. From Dec. 4-20th STAGE RIGHT of Texas, will present MRS. BOB CRATCHIT'S WILD CHRISTMAS BINGE by Christopher Durang. The show, directed by Jeff Elkins, is a hilarious family friendly parody of the Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol." The narrator of the tale - the ghost of Christmas past, present and future (all embodied in a sassy songstress that would rather be performing Billie Holliday tunes) - has trouble taking Scrooge to the right time and place. If that wasn't problem enough, Mrs. Gladys Cratchit, a minor character in the original tale, takes center stage in this story with her not being the sweet, patient, silently suffering soul she's always been. The show has something for everyone. Kids will enjoy the slap-stick physical gags while adults will chuckle at all the modern references. In typical Durang style,

familiar characters take on their usual qualities but with a twist. Durang adds many classic allusions and pop-culture references to the story, including scenes where the Ghost accidentally takes Scrooge to the lives of Oliver Twist and Leona Helmsley. The play also makes stops in "It's a Wonderful Life", the Enron scandal, "The Gift of the Magi", and "Touched by An Angel". It's a rollicking roller coaster ride, but fear not, Scrooge does manage to learn the true meaning of Christmas. Well, almost.

To top off the 'binge' of entertainment, area choirs and instrumental groups will be performing holiday music a half hour before the show. So, come early, grab a cup of hot cider, a cookie or two and look at the decorations in the lobby. Then at 7:30 pm take your seat and enjoy holiday classics provided by the likes of Peet Junior High School Choir, The Houston Slide Oil Company (a trombone quartet that appeared with us last year), and selected quartets from the Statesmen Chorus (the barbershop harmony group that appeared in our Vaudeville show recently). At 8 pm, Mrs. Cratchit will literally be off and running.

Show dates are weekends Dec. 4-20; Friday & Saturday evening at 8 pm and two Sunday matinees Dec. 13 & 20 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$17 for adults, \$15 for seniors and groups, and \$12 for children and college students with ID. Prorated season tickets are still available for purchase as well; our 4 remaining shows for only \$52. Tickets may be purchased by calling

the Crighton Theatre box office: 936-441-SHOW (7469). Check out the rest of our season on our website: www.stage-right.org.



Lobby Christmas tree

Last year STAGE RIGHT collected nearly a pallet of toys for the Interfaith toy drive during our Christmas show, this year we will be collecting food for the Montgomery County Food Bank in the lobby of the theatre during the run of the show. Please help area families in need and help us hit the 1,000 lb mark (we've already collected nearly 800 lbs this year).

After Mrs. Cratchit closes, the Crighton Theatre Foundation will be serving up two Crighton favorites back by popular demand. First course will be a Christmas concert with David Gaschen on Dec. 21. Mr. Gaschen is a world-wide renown vocalist and performer best known for being the youngest Phantom to be cast in Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Phantom of the Opera. He has performed that role over 1,300 times to thunderous applause. His rendition of "The Music of the Night" at his Crighton debut concert this past Summer, brought the audience to their feet, and that was before intermission!

Tears welled in the eyes of many during his moving rendition of "Bring Him Home" from Les Miserables. And David showed his Texas Tech roots (and warm sense of humor) with a rousing encore of George Strait's "The Fireman".



David Gaschen

Born in Kansas City and raised in Lubbock, Texas, Gaschen was blessed to be born into a big loving family who held traditions and family values high. From the age of 10, David sang in choir, talent shows and school plays, and memo-

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Live Texas Music

rized every piece of music on the pop rock chart. He went to New York to sing at a cousin's wedding; while there, he decided to catch The Phantom of the Opera on Broadway. And on September 19, 1989, David Gaschen's life changed forever when he saw Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman perform. That night he told his father, "I have to do that." David debuted on Broadway in the role of Phantom in 1999 - exactly ten years after telling his dad that he had to play that part. His father sat in exactly the same seat he sat in beside his son ten years earlier. "Working with David Gaschen has been one of the highlights of my career at Phantom." said Kristen Blodgett, Associate Musical Supervisor, of the Broadway productions of Phantom and Cats. "David's voice soars in the upper register and resonates with rich crimson overtones in the lower register. His voice is an instrument which has been expertly trained and groomed."

Come hear for yourself on Dec. 21 at 7:30 pm! David's concert will be benefiting the Crighton Theatre Foundation. So come enjoy songs of the season as well as Broadway classics and help support the 'Crown Jewel of Montgomery County.' Tickets are \$25-30 and can be purchased by calling the Crighton box office at 936-441-SHOW (7469).

The dessert course in this holiday banquet of entertainment will be served Dec. 26 as the Crighton Theatre Foundation presents the 9 time Grammy winning Kings of Texas swing: Asleep at the Wheel. This will be the second time they will have played the Crighton and if the first visit was any indication, all are in for a foot-stomping good time.

Started in 1970 in Paw Paw, West Virginia and now based in Austin, Texas Asleep at the Wheel played their first 'big show' opening for Alice Cooper and Hot Tuna (doesn't that bring back memories?)



Asleep at the Wheel

After the release of their "Texas Gold" album on Capitol Records the group was recognized as one of the most popular country acts of the decade, with "The Letter That Johnny Walker Read" becoming a top-ten Country hit. The first band to appear on the first regularly scheduled "Austin City Limits" they have since appeared a record of 10 times. They are sure to serve up 'Wheel' favorites including the Grammy winning "Choo Choo Ch' Boogie," "Take Me Back to Tulsa," "Sugar foot Rag," and surely "Christmas in Texas."

Buy your tickets now folks, the last time Asleep at the Wheel played the Crighton there were only a handful of seats left in a house of over 500 seats. The show will be on Dec. 26 at 6 pm. Tickets are \$42. Call the Crighton box office at 936-441-SHOW (7469) today!

For more information about STAGE RIGHT, discount offers available, and to sign up for our mailing list to receive a monthly e-newsletter containing upcoming Crighton events please visit our website devoted to all things Crighton: www.crighton-theatre.com. Here you will find more information about all groups performing at the Crighton Theatre with links to their websites. Don't forget, tickets to a show or a season at the Crighton would make a great Christmas gift. Start your shopping today! ♦

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