

'Christmas in Wales' a welcome discovery

Wales has long suffered from an identity problem — people don't know what it is, where it is or anything else about it. The people have a different language, national anthem and church from their English neighbors, but they have been stuck using English money and laws since 1542, when they were incorporated into the United Kingdom.

The point is that England and Wales are two different entities, and while you might be familiar with some

Kelly Rhodes Theater

English customs, you probably know little about those of the Welsh people. "A Child's Christmas in Wales" is ready to take you by the hand and lead you into this magical land where dragons once ruled and ghosts still hide in the shadows.

The play is being performed for the second year in a row during the holiday season by the PlayMakers Repertory Company in the Paul Green Theatre.

"A Child's Christmas in Wales" is based on the poem by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and adapted to the stage by Jeremy Brooks and Adrian Mitchell. The play itself is a beautifully wrought piece that brings joy and fun into anyone's heart, young or old.

The poem deals with six Christmases, swirling in a mist of memory, so that the separate Christmases become one glorious day when Dylan got a bike and a magician's set and his mother burned the turkey and they used a good tray to go sledding down Cwmdonkin Drive . . .

Dylan is portrayed by Cal Winn, a Shakespearean actor by trade and simply a big child at heart. For the second year now, he has come to Chapel Hill to become that child for a few weeks and to touch everyone he comes in contact with. Winn is a wonderful young Dylan, rolling and romping on a wooden stage that is covered with snow in the mind's eye of the audience. He becomes everything that embodies Christmas, and he does it so well.

It's almost impossible to single anyone else out for special recognition, because everyone did so well and made it look like the difficult job of acting was somehow transformed into playing.

The most obvious kudo goes to

Candice Milan, who played Dylan's sad and sweet Aunt Eleri. The Welsh language is a difficult one to speak, but Milan goes above and beyond by singing in the Celtic language.

One difference from last year's production was a subtle and underlying one that created an entirely different atmosphere — the music. This year Barney Pilgrim provided live music before, during and after the show in a way that blended everything together in an intangible way. The music alone would be enough to put anyone in the Christmas spirit, but the play added on is enough to make anyone lead a Christmas life.

Welshness is deeply ingrained into the play. Even some of the names in Dylan's family — Tudyr, Gwyn, Glyn, Eleri and even Dylan itself — may sound strange at first, but sound musical and special all the same. The customs of having pudding with tokens baked inside, opening crackers with paper hats and riddles, and then ending with a sing-along and a traditional Welsh carol are well played out in the story line.

This year may be the last that PlayMakers can do the play, so go see it before it's too late. And even if you saw it last year, like I did, you'll be surprised how many things you've forgotten.

A Child's Christmas in Wales runs through Dec. 18 on Tuesdays through Saturdays and matinees on Sunday. Ticket prices vary, so call 962-1121 for more information.

Hanukkah

recent modification is the increased emphasis on gift-giving.

"From what my parents tell me, before World War II, Hanukkah was just another Jewish holiday," said Steve Levin, a senior political science major from Raleigh. "But I think today, with this generation, that Jewish children feel sort of left out because their Christian friends receive presents from Saint Nick, and they receive bupkus (the Yiddish word for nothing)."

Others agree that gift-giving is basically a response to Christmas, unique to the United States. "The only reason we get presents too is because of the American culture," Berlin said. "They added presents to it because they didn't want the little Jewish kids to feel left out."

Danielle Nieman said she noticed the cultural difference when she spent a year abroad. "In Israel, it is all just based on tradition and they don't exchange gifts," said the senior psychology major from Philadelphia. "When I asked if I should get gifts for anyone, they looked shocked."

Though the gift-exchanging tradition may be a reaction to Christmas, it is distinct from the Christian tradition in many ways. "You don't look under the Hanukkah bush and say, 'Look what Rabbi Claus brought me!'" Levin said.

In some families, the parents give the children gelt (money) rather than gifts for one night of Hanukkah to encourage the children to donate to

charity, Stone said. Chocolate gelt is a popular gift for little children.

Hanukkah is a special holiday for children because it is a fun way to remember their religious identity, Sasson said. "It is a time when you bring out your Judaism in a constructive way," he said. "It serves a different function now. It's a matter of surviving as a group in an area where there aren't very many of us."

Several students said they would be getting together with friends to light the candles, at least on the first night. They will exchange gifts with their Jewish friends now. Later they will give Christmas gifts to their Christian friends.

Many Jewish students accept the barrage of Christmas hoopla good-naturedly. "I've grown up with it my whole life," Weiss said.

Nieman said she noticed the absence of Christmas when she was away. "In a way, I missed it when I was in Israel," she said. "There was something lacking."

The beautiful decorations and warm spirit of the season can be appreciated by both Jews and Christians, Levin said. "I think it is a wonderful time of the year," he said. "I think it is sad that we need a holiday to augment this kind of love for mankind. But it does serve to instill a sense of belonging and unity to all Americans as it transcends all religions."

The ignorance of non-Jewish friends about Hanukkah can be frustrating at times, Levin added. "The people around you don't really know what the holiday entails," he said. "It is frustrating that they are wishing us a happy holiday season sometimes a month after our holidays have passed."

Since most students cannot go home during Hanukkah, they are welcome to remember the holiday together by coming to the activities planned by Hillel, Stone said. Also, students who need a menorah may pick up a free one at Hillel.

"Just because they are not with their families, they shouldn't forget it is Hanukkah," Stone said.

from page 1

Unsympathetic characters ruin ' 'Tis Pity'

Cara Bonnett Theater

It was a far cry from Shakespeare. In fact, although the parallels between the Bard's "Romeo and Juliet" and John Ford's Jacobean revenge play " 'Tis Pity She's a Whore" were at times painfully obvious, the only thing the two plays truly had in common was that " 'Tis Pity She's a Whore," as performed by the Lab Theatre, is a tragedy in every sense of the word.

Ford's 1633 play depicts the drama of Annabella and Giovanni, star-crossed lovers battling society and the church in a struggle to realize their love.

However, unlike Romeo and Juliet, Annabella and Giovanni's relationship has one little twist: they're brother and sister. But instead of drawing the sympathy of the audience, this pair of lovers elicited little more than horror and disgust.

Kristine Watt seemed to fare the best with the poor script, turning in a convincing and occasionally powerful performance as Annabella. Her scene with the friar (played by Deb Teitelbaum) was especially poignant, with the friar chanting visions of hell over her while she murmured pleading No's, finally burying her face in shame with a tortured cry of "Mercy!"

But moments like this were few and far between.

As the romantic lead, Timothy Karcher's Giovanni was little more

than a puppet, victimized by his own misplaced intensity.

And where was the passion in the couple's kisses? Only at one moment in the play did they begin to transcend their relationship of warped innocence and waken in the audience a sense that perhaps these were indeed two people fated to be lovers who just happened to be born into the same family.

However, this scene — their final one together when Giovanni eventually kills his sister — was lost in poor staging; he embraced her with his back to the audience, and his face remained out of sight even as he stabbed her.

Possibly due to its bizarre subject, the play seemed to suffer from a great deal of confusion on the part of both the actors and the director, from the overly literal interpretation of some scenes — the widow Hippolyta bleeding from the mouth was a little much — to the apparent uselessness of certain characters — what was the purpose of Grimaldi anyway?

In fact, the only redeeming part of the play was the one comic character Bergetto, wonderfully played by

New clinic at UNC to offer special dental care services

From staff reports

A new Special Care Clinic at UNC's School of Dentistry is designed to benefit adults with chronic medical or mental problems needing dental treatment.

The new clinic was officially dedicated Friday as part of the school's Dental Seminar Day, a continuing education program for professionals that focuses on the treatment of geriatric patients.

The clinic will provide comprehensive dental care to adults with complicating conditions, including chronic illnesses such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The dental problems of younger adults and healthy older adults are similar and can be treated by a general dentist, according to James Beck, chairman of the Department of Dental Ecology.

But, he said, geriatric patients who use multiple medications are examples of the kinds of patients who may need special care.

A unique feature of the clinic is that a multidisciplinary team, not just a dentist and his assistants, will provide more comprehensive care for the patients, Beck said.

Phi Beta Kappas inducted

One hundred and nine UNC students were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's highest honorary society, Nov. 29.

George Houston, who is a Bowman and Gordon Gray asso-

University Briefs

ciate professor of classics, gave the keynote address during the ceremony.

Students in the Division of Academic affairs are eligible for admission into Phi Beta Kappa. A junior must have a 3.7 grade point average on a 4.0 scale and 75 credit hours. Seniors must have a 3.6 grade point average and 105 credit hours.

Chemistry fellowship created

The Ralph Walton Bost Graduate Fellowships in chemistry will be established at the University to honor a former faculty member and chairman of the Department of Chemistry.

The fellowships will be created through a permanent endowment from the proceeds of a gift of land from Beulah Bost Montrose of Chapel Hill. The gift was made to the UNC Arts and Sciences Foundation.

A native North Carolinian, Bost received a doctoral degree from UNC in 1928 and was appointed to the faculty the same year. Bost held the posts of Mary Ann Smith professor, Kenan professor and head of the department from 1939 until his death in 1951. He also served as acting dean of the School of Applied Sciences from 1933-36.

Todd DeVries. DeVries was hilariously endearing in his portrayal of the fool who wants to be gallant, and in addition to providing delightful, and much-needed, comic relief in the first act, his death speech was, beyond a doubt, the most moving scene of the play.

But it all went downhill from there. Giovanni deteriorated into a maniacal little boy in the last scene, as he showed up at a dinner party thrown by his brother-in-law, flourishing his sister's still-bleeding heart skewered on his dagger. And when Annabella's bloody body was brought onstage, it was simply

ridiculous. What followed was a meaningless orgy of death, culminating in one long, drawn-out death speech after another.

One can only wonder why the Lab Board selected this play, which, against a backdrop of timeless lines like "Husband: in that name is writ divinity," only manages to revel in its own blood lust and depravity and drag an entire cast down with it.

"Tis Pity She's a Whore is being performed by the Lab Theater is 06 Graham Memorial today at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. and tomorrow at 5 p.m. Reservations can be made on the first floor of Graham Memorial.

Policies

from page 1

tries has been military-related.

"The main effect has been to expand the conflicts there," LeoGrande said. "U.S. policies made the militaries very powerful . . . which has made it harder to bring about democracy."

Although Reagan paid "lip service" to the Contadora initiative and the Guatemala accord, the two regional peace plans, internal documents show the administration opposed both, LeoGrande said.

"(The administration) saw them as interfering with the direction of our policy."

By attacking Nicaragua for human rights violations while supporting El Salvador and Guatemala, which are known for greater human rights violations, Reagan displayed double standards that have hurt U.S. credibility, LeoGrande said.

Reagan's policies also failed to meet the challenges in the Middle East, leaving the United States with less influence, the analysts said.

"American policy in the Middle East has sort of waffled along," Garthoff said.

The Camp David agreements between Israel and Egypt, which Reagan "inherited" from Carter, left openings for regional negotiations that Reagan failed to pursue, said David Ignatious, an editor for the Washington Post, who has written on Reagan's foreign policy.

"(Reagan) has done dismally in the Middle East," Ignatious said. "Our position today has declined sharply as a mediator."

U.S. relations with Africa have also deteriorated as U.S. support for the UNITA rebels in Angola was "an affront to most of the African nations," Borosage said.

And Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" in South Africa, intended to push for reform of apartheid via continued diplomatic and trade relations, failed to force the government to change the system, Borosage said.

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