

Ben Vereen To Co-Host Annual Disney Christmas Telecast

Special To The Post
 Lake Buena Vista, Fla. - Tony Award winner Ben Vereen will join "Good Morning America's" Joan Lunden as co-host of the annual Walt Disney World Christmas Parade telecast.

For the third consecutive year, the 90-minute holiday-fantasy spectacular will be broadcast live via satellite by ABC-TV on Christmas Day. Parade step-off and show time are December 25 at 10 a.m. EST, 9 a.m. in all other time zones.

Vereen, best known to television audiences for his role as Chicken George in the Emmy Award-winning "Roots," has earned a raft of awards ranging from the Tony Award for his role in "Pippin" to the 1986 Father of the Year Award for his role with his five children. This year marks Vereen's first appearance on the Disney Christmas Show.

For Lunden, popular hostess of ABC-TV's top-rated morning news show, "Wall Disney World's Very Merry Christmas Parade" is becoming as much a part of Christmas as presents under the tree and stockings hung by the chimney with care. She is returning for her third appearance on the yule special. She also co-hosted last April's telecast of the Disney Easter parade.

Starring the famous Walt



A MARSHAL AND HIS STARS - Mickey Mouse, who along with Minnie will act as grand marshal for the annual "Walt Disney World's Very Merry Christmas Parade." It sees with the parade co-hosts, Joan Lunden and Ben Vereen. For

the third consecutive year, the 90-minute holiday-fantasy spectacular will be broadcast live via satellite by ABC-TV on Christmas Day. Parade step-off and show time are December 25 at 10 a.m. EST, 9 a.m. in all other time zones.

Disney animated characters, the holiday TV presentation will feature favorite Christmas themes, storybook scenes from classic Disney films, colorful marching bands and song-and-dance numbers from Magic Kingdom and Epcot Center holiday shows.

Grand marshals Mickey Mouse and Minnie will parade in a horse-drawn landau coach which was used by Walt Disney in Disneyland's Christmas parade 30 years ago in California.

Santa Claus will appear along with dancing reindeer, marching toy sol-

diers, candy-cane elves, gingerbread people, swirling Christmas trees and

Higgedy-Ang and Amy, Donald Duck, Pluto, Goofy, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs will work in Santa's Toy Factory while Chip and Dale, Peter Pan, Wendy, Captain Hook and Mr. Smee enjoy the delights of the North Pole Candy House.

Dumbo the Flying Elephant will lead a troupe of circus performers. Pinocchio, Gopetto and Stromboli will recreate scenes from the memorable Disney classic, and Inigo de Montalban will escort Cinderella in a crystal coach pulled by six white ponies.

Musical units will include the Minnie Band, which accompanies Robin Hood, the Marching Card Band, which performs at the whim of the Queen of

Hearts from "Alice in Wonderland," and the Glochesteer Girls, who play Christmas tunes on their bell-like instruments.

In all, more than 300 performers and 42 marching and dancing units will take part in the colorful parade.

Preparations for "Walt Disney World's Very Merry Christmas Parade" started in September when the Disney wardrobe staff began work on costumes tailored for each performer. By Christmas, they will have spent 15,000 hours preparing for the parade.

Last year's show pulled a nine rating and a 30 share in the United States, making it number one in its time period.

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UNCC Schedules Several Concerts For The Holidays

Several concerts by Performing Arts Department ensembles at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte will herald the holiday season.

The University Chorale, directed by William Dalley, will join with the Wind and Jazz Ensembles, both directed by John Harding, for a gala concert December 11 at 7:30 p.m. in Howe Recital Hall.

The Chorale will perform a mixed bag of music from Renaissance to contemporary jazz, including some seasonal favorites. The Wind Ensemble will perform several medleys of Christmas carols. The Brass Choir will follow with additional carols, and the Woodwind Choir will do a version of "Jingle Bells." The Jazz Ensemble will perform arrangements of "Winter Wonderland," "Santa Claus is Comin' To Town," "The Christmas

Song" (featuring award-winning student vocalist Damon Stinson), and a jazz-rock version of "Joy To The World."

The Wind and Jazz Ensembles will repeat their portion of the program at 12:30 p.m., December 12, on the front steps outside the Rowe Building (weather permitting).

The Oratorio Choir, directed by Dalley, will perform a varied musical program at 3 p.m., December 15, in Howe Recital Hall.

All concerts are free to the public.

Call 997-2478 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays for more information.

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