



The Cratchit family in production of 'A Christmas Carol'...play runs through Dec. 7 in Paul Green Theatre

'A Christmas Carol' lesson in humanity

By JED LELAND
Staff Writer

When the audience enters Paul Green Theatre to see the department of dramatic art's production of *A Christmas Carol*, they are confronted with a barren stage extending in front of a small forest of Christmas trees. But, the barren desolation disappears when narrator Earl Wynn begins his rendition of the Dickens tale.

Theater

From then on, the stage is alive with a zestful cast, colorful costumes, wonderful theatrical effects and the spirit of Christmas.

Director Del Lewis captures closely the tale that Dickens told. Much of the credit for this must go to Tom Haas's adaptation which is faithful in dialogue and spirit.

Scooge, as rendered by Frank Raiter, is a delightful lesson in humanity. Raiter's skillful acting expertly portrays the nasty, selfish and cynical old miser who thinks Christmas and all its merrymaking is pure humbug. Raiter's characterization also captures the sadness and pathos which give the character roundness and fullness. As Ebeneezer Scrooge goes through his metamorphosis from misanthrope to idealist, the audience also experiences the painful changes and slow awakening to the fact that riches and loneliness don't add up to happiness.

In this production the Cratchit family is every bit as cheerful and hearty as Dickens intended. Hamilton Gillett, who plays Bob Cratchit, is indeed the "poor clerk with fifteen shillings a week and six children." His thin, wiry body and meek demeanor are a wonderful contrast to the grumpy, crotchety Scrooge.

As Cratchit's wife, Karen Nelson is marvelously robust. And the

children—including little Tiny Tim—are charming and lovable.

However, the ghosts, portrayed by Thom Gillot and Margaret Brewington, lack the spooky, eerie qualities associated with spirits. Instead, they offer charm and mystery.

Thom Gillot plays both the Ghost of Christmas Past and the Ghost of Christmas Future. His performances meet the requirements of both parts; his Christmas Past is rightfully robust and his Christmas Future is properly ethereal and enigmatic.

Margaret Brewington, exotic in her rounded head-piece and bright costume, shows a wide range of mood as she takes Scrooge on a tour of Christmas Present.

Many of the second year master of fine arts and the licensee of dramatic art candidates give excellent performances in supporting roles. Their characterizations, solid and distinct, capture the subtle nuances of Dickens' tightly drawn characters.

The lights, costumes and setting in *A Christmas Carol* are all successful in creating the mood and atmosphere of the story. David Glenn's lighting and set design is a perfect playground for the actors, allowing the costumes and the performers to brighten the stage.

A round of thank you's is definitely in order for this fine production. Sure to become a popular tradition in coming years, this second annual *A Christmas Carol* is the perfect way to begin the Christmas season and take a study break.

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Holiday movies look good, bad, mediocre

By TIM POPE
and TOM MOORE
Staff Writers

After those dreaded exams comes ...VACATION TIME!!!! Some folks will head off to exotic lands in the sunny tropics or the snow-filled mountains. But most of us will just sit at home watching the paint peel off the walls.

Those boys out in Hollywood know all this and that's why they schedule the release of so many films at Christmastime. With school out and many workers on vacation people have the time to go to the movies.

We've seen enough (groan) movies of Christmas past to guess with some accuracy which of this year's mega-buck-mega-hyped films will catch on with the public and which ones will prove to be total dogs.

The most promising Christmas release has to be Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull*, which stars Robert DeNiro as Jake LaMotta, a middle weight boxing champ whose career lasted only a decade. Scorsese and DeNiro have worked together before with stunning results—in *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, and the somewhat flawed *New York, New York*—and *Raging Bull* apparently ranks above anything else has done in the past. The film opened in New York to the best reviews that any movie has received this year.

This holiday season, as in years past, is dominated by a whole host of comedies. The two most promising feature teams previously paired in the box office smash *Foul Play* and *Silver Streak*.

'Nutcracker' to be presented

By TOM MOORE
Arts Editor

Certain things make Christmas. Without them the yuletide wouldn't be the same. The season would feel incomplete without mistletoe, Santa Claus, Ronco bottle and glass cutter commercials, eggnog, Bing Crosby crooning "White Christmas," the Grinch, giving gifts to relations you can hardly stand, Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Handel's *Messiah*, the last-minute shopping rush, worrying whether those blinking lights will set the tree and house afire, Rudolph and Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*.

The Carolina Dancers, the performing dance company of UNC, presents its popular modern dance interpretation of Tchaikovsky's Christmas classic at 8 p.m. Dec. 12 and 13 and at 2 p.m. Dec. 14 in Memorial Hall. Tickets are available at the Carolina Union Information Desk, the Dancers' Shop in Chapel Hill and the Danshop in Durham.

This version of *The Nutcracker* will differ from the 1978 interpretation of the ballet; the new version is described as Clara and the Nutcracker's search for truth.

The Nutcracker is choreographed by UNC dance faculty members Diane Eilber, Carol Richard and Marian Turner. The three choreographers appear in the ballet that features a company of UNC dance students. *The Nutcracker* also features appearances by some of the Triangle area's most noted dancers: Jack Arnold, Donald Blumenfeld, Marion Calloway, M'Liss Dorrance, Kay Gross, Joy Jarvis, Gene Medler and Jennifer Potts.

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