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ENTERTAINMENT LEISURE



Dance Around

The Washington Ballet is bringing classes to The Athenaeum.

DANCE, PAGE 3

'Cheaper by the Dozen'- Family Message

Home schoolers display thespian talents and skills.

BY CHUCK HAGEE
GAZETTE

About a family, for families and by families — that's could be the tagline for Morningstar Productions' latest theatrical offering, "Cheaper by the Dozen." It opens at 7:30 p.m. tonight, Thursday, Aug. 7, at Plymouth Haven Baptist Church, 8523 Fort Hunt Road, in Mount Vernon District.

There are also presentations on Friday and Saturday nights, commencing at the same hour, as well as a Saturday matinee with a 2 p.m. curtain time. Admission, collected at the door, is \$7 per adult and \$4 per child, student, or senior citizen. There is a \$25 maximum per family unit regardless of size. All proceeds go to financing the production.

Formerly known as Actors Communicating Character Through Theater, Morningstar Productions enters its sixth year with this show. The cast is composed

"The beauty of this group is the families that are involved."

—Malissa Graves, parent and director

entirely of home educated students in grades seven through 12 residing in Northern Virginia.

Formed in 2003 by several families who wanted to provide a venue for home educated students to hone their communications and thespian skills, members of the troupe "strive to utilize their talents for the purpose of presenting lightly spirited yet thought provoking plays, which edify and encourage the community" at large.

"Various families want their children to have the opportunity to perform on stage. That is difficult for home educated children," said Malissa Graves, a parent who directs this year's production.

"The reason I initially became involved was because my daughter was in one of the previous productions. Now she is a sophomore at NOVA Community College. Right now she is attending Shakespeare Camp in Stanton, Va.," Graves said.

Many parents are actively involved in the productions serving as stage hands, makeup artists, set designers and constructors, and a variety of other roles. Students, who are not acting in the annual production, also serve in support

capacities.

"This is a group of parents and students who want to do shows that are family friendly. There is some real talent in the group, and has been since the beginning. Plus they are very good at telling stories," said parent Beth Sterne who has been involved for five seasons and directed last year's production of "The Matchmaker."

This year her daughter, Mariana Sterne, has one of the lead roles as daughter Ernestine.

Karen Anderson, another active parent, serves as the photographer for the production company, and her husband, Don, handles technology. They have been involved for the past four years. Their daughter Summer plays the role of Mrs. Gilbreth, the mother, in this show.

"We choose the play in the Spring. Then we hold auditions and pick the cast. The kids take two months to memorize their lines. That is followed by an intense practice week of five to six hours a day. From the start of rehearsals to the actual performance is just three weeks," Anderson said.

In each play, some of the actors have some experience from being cast in previous plays. For other it is their first live stage performance. "They all do a really professional job," she said. However, once they graduate from high school they are no longer eligible to participate, according to Anderson. Actors range in age from 12 to 17.

In addition to the outstanding display of stage talent, the costumes and sets are also very professional. "This year we are borrowing a set from Mount Vernon High School. They have been very generous in supporting us," said Graves.

Normally, the group constructs its own sets under the direction of home schooling parents Stacey and Mike Ipsan. They also have a son, William, and two daughters, Meredith and Catherine, playing roles in this week's show. William portrays Fred Gilbreth, Catherine is Martha Gilbreth, and Meredith takes on the role of Mrs. Fitzgerald.

The costumes are rented from a costumer in New York City that gives the production company a discount in the summer because the demand for costumes is down at this time of year, Anderson explained. "We also get compliments every year on how professional our staging and costuming are as well as the individual performances," she said.

GRAVES FIRST became involved after watching the group's first show. "The 17 year old who directed that first show asked me if I would become the director," said Graves, who has a background in musical theater, having been involved in dinner-theater while a student at State University College in Buffalo, N.Y. She is also a dancer.

"The beauty of this group is the families that are involved. Most of us participate in the Harvester Teaching Services at Harvester Presbyterian Church on Rolling Road in the Springfield area," Graves said.



The cast of 'Cheaper by the Dozen'

She and her husband live near Mount Vernon High School. But there are parents and students involved from Springfield, Annandale, Vienna, Alexandria, and throughout Northern Virginia.

This week's show involves 20 students, 16 cast members and four involved in production. This does not include parents involvement in everything from publicity, handled this year by Gina Smithers, to program production and ticket sales to flat out grunt work.

"Cheaper by the Dozen," based on the book by the brother/sister team of Frank Gilbreth, Jr., and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey, relates the true story of Frank and Lilly Gilbreth and their 12 children as told through the eyes of two of their children. It highlights the comic events that occur as father and his oldest daughter, Anne, portrayed by Christina Morgan, navigate her emerging independence.

A pioneer of industrial/corporate efficiency, Frank Gilbreth, played by Matthew Silver, tries to apply those rules and methodologies to his large family and their daily activities. This leads to a wide array of encounters and incidents that prove both embarrassing and amusing, but usually very effective.

However, Anne often views her father's methodologies as making the family appear ridiculous to her classmates. But, in the end, the purpose of his approach is revealed.

"Each of our plays is geared to family audiences and presenting a family friendly message that everyone can enjoy," said Graves. Previous productions, in addition to "The Matchmaker," have included such classics as "Sense and Sensibility," "Pride and Prejudice," and "Little Women."

Others in this production's cast and the roles they play are: Frank-Daniel Hyland; Jackie - John Christophersen; Dan - Michael Schuenemeyer; Bill - Jackson Bargery; Lillian - Christina Schuenemeyer/Hannah Silver; Dr. Burton and Joe Scales - Felix van der Vaart; Miss Brill - Emily Hyland/Christine Orsini; and Larry - Jared Smithers.

From the Producer

BY CAROLYN GRIFFIN

Last Sunday, New York came to Old Town Alexandria. It was the official Opening/Press night for the world premiere of "Rooms" a rock romance by Paul Scott Goodman and Miriam Gordon. It tells the story of Monica and Ian, songwriters, musicians, and singers who travel from Glasgow to London to New York in search of stardom. It is a musical that offers an audience everything from beautiful poignant ballads to punk rock numbers that take the house down. It is a musical journey and a touching love story. MetroStage, director Scott Schwartz and the creative team from New York are all committed to this story, the music and the artists involved, particularly composer Paul Scott Goodman and his wife, writer Miriam Gordon. Audiences are wildly enthusiastic as well.

But Sunday was especially exciting because not only were we officially opening the premiere of a new work, and introducing it to our audience comprised of VIPs, supporters and several dozen theatre critics, but we had as our special guests many New York producers who are interested in investing in this show and taking it to New York. Having seen it in a run in a small rehearsal room in New York City a month ago, they were able to see "Rooms" in its present form after two weeks of previews and rewrites—a lost song here, an additional word, phrase or scene there. Sunday it was ready for an audience made up of regular theatre-goers who are always anxious to discover a new work, critics and investors. The excitement was palpable and the energy infectious.

With a lot more work and a little luck, Monica and Ian's journey and Paul Scott Goodman's music will reach New York City within blocks of Times Square in the near future. "Rooms" is already scheduled to travel to Rochester, N.Y. in September for a run at Geva Theatre Center, as a result of a co-production with MetroStage.

DANCE

Dancing Into Old Town

The Washington School of Ballet is offering ballet classes at The Athenaeum.

BY BRITTNEY FERGUSON
GAZETTE

Ballet is a historical art form that is taught by dance studios and companies throughout the world. One dance company in particular, which continues to instill traditional ballet technique to dancers, is The Washington Ballet. And now with the help of The Northern Virginia Fine Art Association, they will be offering beginning ballet training at The Athenaeum.

"The company was established over 40 years ago," said Donna Glover, the schools manager and Children's Coordinator for The Washington School of Ballet, in reference to the company's history. The Washington Ballet has both a dance company and a dance school but "we are doing a school" said Glover.

The Washington School of Ballet currently offers dance classes at two locations in Washington D.C. but wanted to offer another location outside of the city. "It's the demand from the parents, so to speak, across the river," said Kee Jaun Han, the director of The Washington School of Ballet. And Han said, "It was a beautiful place to have our satellite program."

Meanwhile the Northern Virginia of Fine Arts Association always trying to supply fine arts to the area, saw the want for dance classes. "It is a wonderful building," said Harry Mahon, the President of The Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association, and "is the home of the Fine Arts Association. We have the art gallery which presents visual arts; we also have music, Second Thursdays; and now we have The Washington Ballet coming with a dance program."

"We recognized a desire for ballet classes in the area. We talked to several different people and the Washington Ballet made sense," said Mahon.

"The Washington Ballet has a close relationship with the Athenaeum. They [The Washington Ballet] have been performing there," said Han. They had done a presentation around Christmas and "we did that and it started to foster a relationship. When we started to branch out we thought of he

More

Visit their Web site at <http://www.washingtonballet.org/school/index.htm>

Athenaeum," said Glover.

However, "for years and years, we [The Athenaeum] had dance classes for young people," said Mahon. Previously with the recent history, dance was ministered by The Fine Arts Association. It became a management challenge. [But] we are thrilled to be working with The Washington Ballet. They have quite the reputation. We have been very impressed with their professional attitude and how they work with the kids.

But even though The Northern Virginia Fine Art Association and The Washington Ballet are working together, Mahon said, "They are running the program under their rules. The art association does not tell them how to run their program. It's more of a community service. The Washington Ballet was looking for a building and it just worked."

Since the dance program itself will be ministered by The Washington Ballet, they will be getting the same program as the one in D.C. said Holly Rasmussen, a facility member and dance instructor for The Washington Ballet who will be teaching at The Athenaeum.

Rasmussen said "We are training them like they will be professional dancers."

Han said, "We are offering creative movement and pre-ballet" for ages 4 through 8 and "it's the same syllabi that we use at the North East [Campus] and the South East [Campus]. To participate in these classes, children have to audition. "We just held an audition," said

Han, but "we have another audition Aug. 9."

Han said in the audition they look for things such as coordination, flexibility, attention span, and musicality because, "first of all when they are too young, they are not really ready for dance."

"Mostly it's such an early age, we look for the ability to follow direction," said Glover.

In terms of the actual audition, Rasmussen said "One [person from the Washington Ballet] is teaching and one [person from the Washington Ballet] is watching. When it's over, we collectively decide." For the students who make the auditions, their classes will start in September and will follow with their annual session.

"We are very excited to be there. Its perfect for dance classes," said Glover, "We are hoping this is a year of many."

Caffeine Fix Available

Local coffee shops serve customers their ration of caffeine.

BRITTNEY FERGUSON
GAZETTE

The coffee house, a place to drink what once was an exotic brew and talk to friends has been around since at least the 18th century. Now local coffee shops are still selling coffee and conversation, even if it's often by wireless, throughout the Alexandria area. And Janet's Java, Uptowner Café, Misha's Coffeehouse and Coffee Roaster, Perk's Coffee Shop, and St. Elmo's Coffee Pub are among the local coffee venues that are offering more than just a cup of Joe.

Janet's Java resides off of Telegraph Road and is a short distance from I-495. The coffee shop's location gets them a lot of commuter traffic but with its fun décor and awesome selection of menu items it is not hard to see why customers keep coming back.

Janet Kimmel, the store owner of Janet's Java, said "I would say it's very casual. It is community oriented and fun." Phil Suky, a regular customer, said "It is bright, welcoming and friendly. It's a bit more friendly than Starbucks ... [and] the prices are fairly reasonable"

Local customers come here often said Melane Riddle, a manager at Janet's Java. Theresa McCabe, a regular customer, said "I bike here a lot with my family and sisters."

But besides their atmosphere, they also have a wide range of menu items. "We have coffee, bagels, sandwiches [and] a beer and wine license when we have events" said Riddle. She said they have events "2 or 3 times a month... and we usually have bands," such as Points of Roguery a Celtic band that plays once a month.

When asked what she felt was the most popular beverage, Kimmel said "Probably a latte. They say its better than Starbucks."

Another reason customers might continue to return is the personal service, which Riddle said "Me and the owner are the only people that work here."

UPTOWNER CAFÉ is a smaller coffee shop that is located on the corner King Street and Harvard Street and offers a nice sit down place close to the Alexandria Metro stop with a great selection of gourmet coffees and delicious foods.

"Starbucks is our competition" said Du Hyun Choe, a manager and co-owner of Uptowner Café. The coffee shop was originally part of St. Elmo's Coffee Pub but was sold and the new owners changed the name.

When asked if he was happy to be associated with the Del Ray coffee shop, he said "Yea I am very happy... a lot of people think this is still St. Elmo's."

But though it might still be associated to St. Elmo's Coffee Pub, Uptowner Café still has its menu items and atmosphere like the



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFT/GAZETTE PACKET

Enjoy a cold drink from St. Elmo's.

majority of coffee venues in the area.

Breakfast and lunch foods of all kinds are served to complement their gourmet coffee which includes "all kind of muffins, pasties..., [and] sandwiches, chicken salad, Tuna, vegetarian, grill cheese" said Choe.

He said "they [the customers] like a latte or a coffee," but the most popular gourmet coffee is their Carmel macchiato. Choe said their prices are not that bad either with a "small coffee [for] \$ 1.15 and a Carmel macchiato [for] \$ 3.00," they try to make it reasonable for their customers.

This coffee shop also has more to offer than its menu selection with the collective décor that creates its relaxing ambience. "I like things that are homey and this comes across homey...It's clean and cozy," said first time customer Sussanne Artiss from Windsor, Canada.

Misha's Coffeehouse and Coffee Roaster is the oldest coffee house in the area and is located in the middle of Old Town Alexandria on South Patrick Street right next to King Street. The coffee house was opened in 1991 by Misha said Andrea Seward, a co-owner of Misha's Coffeehouse and Coffee Roaster. Seward said "Both Misha and I are in our store everyday...we really care about what we do."

"I think we are unique, we are not a chain. We bring authenticity" said Seward in reference to the coffeehouse. And that is a trait the customers seem to like. Brian McDonald, a customer, said I think it is an anti-Starbucks sort of bohemian."

Kait Neely, a regular customer, said the area is "lacking in cool coffee shops, but I like this one."

With hand picked a high end coffee beans making their way from places all over the world into this locally owned coffee shop, Seward said "we are artist coffee roasters."

Seward said "We mostly focus on coffee,"

SEE JOE, PAGE 6

Not Your Average Cup of Joe

FROM PAGE 3

but do they do offer have pastries from local bakeries around the area.

The customers also recognize their specialization in coffee roasting. "Its good coffee to begin with... [but] I

"We really care about what we do."

- Andrea Seward, a co-owner of Misha's Coffeehouse and Coffee Roaster

always get the route 66 blend which is one of the house coffees," said Chuck Willett, another regular customer at Misha's Coffeehouse and Coffee Roaster.

With different jars of coffee beans lining one side of the counter, it is easy to see they take coffee to the next level and even though they consider themselves serious about the businesses their coffee is very reasonable priced for the customers. For instance, Seward said an "8oz coffee is \$1.60" and for the more expensive items "up to not even \$4."

Perk's Coffee Shop is another coffee

venue that is located in Old Town Alexandria off of North Fairfax Street and serves more of the local customers. And this particular coffee venue not only serves coffee but also a wide array of breakfast and lunch foods.

"I do not call it a coffee shop, it is a full fledged café," said Phil, owner of Perk's Coffee Shop, "Its Cheers without the alcohol."

From sandwiches to coffee, this little sit down spot near the water has a lot of menu items to offer to incoming customers, which Phil said "85% of my customers are

regulars."

Amanda Nicholas, an employee at The Art League School and a customer at Perk's Coffee Shop, said "I think it's almost a family place, not like a chain."

When asked what he thought was the customers' favorite menu item, Phil said "our sandwiches are the best in town. We use real meat. We do more top of the line in terms of sandwiches." But when asked about the coffee, he said "It's our house medium blend," which is made from the Seattle Coffee Blend. And the prices range from \$ 1.65 for a small coffee to roughly \$7.00 for lunch foods said Phil, making it a great spot to pick up a cup of morning brew.

A little bit further down the road in the friendly community of Del Ray resides St. Elmo's Coffee Pub located off of Mount Vernon Avenue. The coffee shop has been open twelve years and still continues to be the friendly place it was since its original opening. Nora Partlow owner of St. Elmo's Coffee Pub said "It's one of my life ambitions [opening a coffee shop]...I wanted to open it there because of the people there."

All types of people can come to the coffee shops said Partlow. She said "Our focal point is for you to sit down ...single people can come and participate and not feel left out," as well as moms and babies, older people, and the working class.

When asked about the menu, Partlow said "My number one thing is we are a coffee shop and everything else that goes with coffee. And for lunch we have sandwiches." "We have smoothies, all kinds of iced drinks, frappachinos. It is not just hot drinks."

However, they buy all of their tasty complements to coffee through local bakeries "so we can help other businesses," said Partlow. She also looks out for her customers by the very reasonable prices in which she said "Everything is pretty much under 5 dollars except our salads."

The atmosphere of the coffeehouse also keeps the customers coming back. "I come with my grand-kids when I baby sit...Its

Want stop by these coffee shops?

❖ Janet's Java is located at 5735 Telegraph Road in Alexandria. The store is open Monday through Sunday 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

❖ Uptowner Café is located at 101 Harvard St. in Alexandria. The store is open 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day.

❖ Misha's Coffeehouse and Coffee Roaster is located at 102 South Patrick St. in Alexandria. The store is open Monday through Saturday 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

❖ Perk's Coffee Shop is located at 822 N Fairfax St. in Alexandria. The store is open Mondays through Fridays 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

❖ St. Elmo's Coffee Pub is located at 2300 Mount Vernon Ave. in Alexandria. The store is open Mondays through Fridays 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sundays 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

very family oriented. It's nice, they have a basket of toys for kids," said Nancy Barkume, a customer at St. Elmo's.

"There are other coffee shops but I gravitate to this place," said G.M. Malliet, a customer and a local writer.

With coffee shops serving items from gourmet coffees and regular coffee blends to ice teas, these beverages are not only reaching the early morning work crowd that holds this warm brown liquid so close at hands. And these coffee shops are not only providing caffeinated beverages to their customers but an experience and memorable taste. Seward said, "Some people are businesses to make money, we are in businesses to make coffee."

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 5

Book Discussion. 10:30 a.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Discuss "Crime Beat" by John Connelly. Free. 703-768-6700.

Nicolo Whimsey Show. 2:30 p.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 6-12 can enjoy juggling and more. Free. 703-765-3645.

Book Discussion. 7:30 p.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Discuss "The Gravedigger's Daughter". Free. 703-765-3645.

Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Children ages 6-12 can learn how to make balloon animals. Free. 703-768-6700 for more information on the event.

Book Group. 7 p.m. at Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road. Discuss "Three Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortenson. Free. 703-768-6700.

Poet Meeting. 7 p.m. at Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave. Share poems or just listen. Free. 703-519-3498.

Telegraph Road. Hear Washington Balalaika Orchestra perform. Free. 703-922-9841.

Lunch Bunnies. Noon at Kingstowne Library, 6500 Landsdowne Centre. Children ages 1-5 can bring lunch and enjoy stories and more. Free. 703-339-4610.

Rising Words, Rising Images. 11 a.m. at Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Children ages 9-12 discuss "Shadows on Society Hill" by Evelyn Coleman then do an activity. Free. 703-765-3645 for more.

Book Discussion. 7 p.m. at Barrett Library, 717 Queen St. Discuss "Seal Woman" by Solveig Eggerz. Free. 703-838-4555.

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Music Performance. 7:30 p.m. at Lee District Park Amphitheater, 6601

TUESDAY/AUG. 12

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Tim suffers with diabetes. His foot developed a wound that just wouldn't go away — bad circulation. He had almost given up hope until he came to **Inova's Dorothea R. Fisher Wound Healing Center**. He began to heal. He even got to ring the "Healing Bell" on his last visit.

Our commitment is to find a healing plan that works for you. Visit the Wound Healing Center online at www.inova.org/imvh or call **703.664.8020**.



INOVA HEALTH SYSTEM IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM