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THURSDAY

November 24, 2016

WEEKEND

TEMPLE DAILY TELEGRAM

TEMPLE CIVIC THEATRE 'IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO SHOW'

TCT to bring 1940s radio drama to life

BY PATRICIA BENOIT
TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

The post-Thanksgiving turkey is a skeleton. If you see another pumpkin-flavored "whatever," you'll explode. Nothing on TV but football and politics.

Time to head to the Temple Civic Theatre for the sweet retro warmth of "It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Show," a staged take-off of the 1946 Frank Capra Christmas fantasy drama film.

It's just the right cure for what ails you after the big feast. Michael J. Fox is directing the show Friday and Saturday, Dec. 2-3, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 4, at 2:30 p.m.

The play isn't a re-creation of the Jimmy Stewart-Donna Reed holiday favorite. Rather, the drama unwinds as if it were performed in a 1940s radio studio with period microphones and applause sign. The actors have multiple roles, and one guy in the corner emits all the sound effects.

This stage version presented as a play-within-a-play adds another layer of nostalgia to a holiday classic. The actors,

Go to the show

What: "It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Show"
Where: Temple Civic Theatre, 2413 S 13th St, Temple
When: Friday and Saturday, Dec. 2-3, 8 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 4, 2:30 p.m.
Tickets: Online at www.TempleCivicTheatre.org or (254) 778-4751.

supported by a sound-effects man, deliver the lines of all the characters from the movie. They are dressed in fashions suggesting that their characters live in the golden age of radio, almost certainly the 1940s.

One character appears to be a 21st-century rambler who has wandered into a dusty, deserted old radio studio and sees the other characters as ghosts. Soon, he is interacting with them. In fact, he finds himself cast in the role of George Bailey, the Jimmy Stewart role.

The play also adds a few retro commercials for Trans World Airlines and life insurance to help the audiences feel transported.



John Elwood, left, Heidi Lewis, Jo Elwood and Jill B. Main are cast members of "It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Show," a staged take-off of the 1946 Frank Capra Christmas fantasy drama film.
*Michael Miller
Telegram*

"This beloved American holiday classic comes to captivating life as a live 1940s radio broadcast. The ensemble brings to the stage several dozen characters from the original movie. But the plot is unchanged. The story of idealistic George Bailey unfolds as he considers ending his life one fateful Christmas Eve," said Fox.

The small cast fills a multitude of roles: Dan Becker, including George Bailey;

Heidi Lewis, including Mary Hatch; Cayton Smith, playing Zuzu Bailey; and Darren Walker, including Clarence the angel. Other cast members in multiple roles include John Elwood, Jill B. Main, Gary Gosney, Jo Elwood, Jaida Blessing, Kalib Teetz, Elias Kline, Jeff Whitlock, radio stage manager; and Jesse Wyman, sound effects.

Besides Fox, production staff includes Lori Honey-

cutt, stage manager; Dustin Ozment, technical director; Jesse Wyman, lighting designer; and Jeff Whitlock, assistant lighting operator.

"Frank Capra's 'It's a Wonderful Life' is a classic that'll never be surpassed by any remake. But what this play has to sacrifice, it makes up for with its original twist, its clever use of props, entertaining voices and a love story," Fox said.

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