

A Study Guide

Of

Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings

A Musical Comedy

by Stuart Ross

Original *Forever Plaid* Vocal and Musical Arrangement by James Raitt

Vocal and Musical Arrangements by

James Raitt, Brad Ellis, Raymond Berg, David Snyder

Musical Continuity and Supervision by David Snyder

FORT WAYNE CIVIC THEATRE

IN THE WINGS

Arts-In-Education Program

PERFORMANCES FOR SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Services: Thursday, November 13, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

Schools: Saturday, November 15, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.

Compiled & Written By Hadley Todoran

Edited By Eunice Wadewitz



Biography of the Writer

Stuart Ross staged the premiere of *The Boswell Sisters*, a new musical which he co-rote with Mark Hampton at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Conference for the Nation Music Theatre. Prior to this he directed his new play *Tea With Bea* at Chicago's Royal George Theatre and Sag Harbor's Bay Street Theatre. He directed three productions for HBO's New Writers Project. He won Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Award for Best

Director of a Musical. Stuart wrote and directed the musical phenomenon *Forever Plaid*. He directed the original New York production, as well as subsequent productions across the United States, Japan, Canada, and on London's West End. On Broadway, he co-authored the Tony nominated musical *Starmites* and the acclaimed *Radio City Music Hall Easter Show*. Off-Broadway he wrote *Fun With Dick and Jane* (workshop Playwrights Horizons), *The Heebie Jeebies: The Musical* and *The Not-So-New Faces*. As a director his work includes *Breaking Up*, *Nasty Little Secrets*, *Conrack*, *Creeps*, *The Lunch Girls*, *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman* among others. For six seasons Mr. Ross has been a director and dramaturge for The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Conference.

Works of Stuart Ross

STAGE DIRECTOR, EXCEPT AS INDICATED

- *The Heebie Jeebies*, Westside Arts Theatre, New York City, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, MA – 1981.
- *Not-So-New Faces*, O'Neals Upstairs Theatre, New York City – 1982.
- *Sharing*, Equity Library Theatre and No Smoking Playhouse, New York City –1983.
- *The Lunch Girls*, Courtyard Playhouse, New York City – 1984.
- Musical staging/special material, *Hollywood Opera*, The Ballroom, New York City – 1985.
- (And musical staging) *Secrets of the Lava Lamp*, Manhattan Theatre Club, Upstage Theatre, New York City – 1985.
- *Creeps*, Courtyard Playhouse, New York City – 1985.
- *Nasty Little Secrets*, Walnut Street Theatre Company, Philadelphia, PA – 1987.
- *Conrack*, AMAS Repertory Theatre, New York City, 1987; and *Where She Stops Nobody Knows*, Walnut Street Theatre – 1988.
- (And staging) *Forever Plaid*, Steve McGraw's, New York City, beginning 1990, later Apollo Theatre, London –1993.
- Additional staging, *Catch Me If I Fall*, Promenade Theatre, New York City –1991.
- Also director, *The Knight of the Twelve Saucers*, Playwrights Horizons – 1976.

WRITINGS

- *The Heebie Jeebies*, produced at Westside Arts Theatre, New York City – 1981.
- *Not-So-New Faces*, produced at O'Neals Upstairs Theatre, New York City – 1982.
- *Fun with Dick and Jane*, produced at Playwrights Horizons, New York City –1987.
- (With Barry Keating) *Starmites*, produced at Musical Theatre Works, CSC Theatre, New York City – 1987.
- *Forever Plaid*, produced at Steve McGraw's, New York City, beginning 1990, later Apollo Theatre, London – 1993.

History of Plaid Tidings

The original cast included Jason Graae (Sparky); Stan Chandler (Jinx); David Engel (Smudge); and Guy Stroman (Frankie). The musical opened May 20, 1990 at Steve McGraw's in New York City after engagements at The West Bank Cafe, The American Stage Company and The Wisdom Bridge Theatre. Musical arrangements, vocal arrangements and musical direction were by James Raitt; the show was written, directed, and choreographed by Stuart Ross.

Characters

Frankie: The leader and caretaker of the group, Frankie has the most confidence. He takes care of his fellow Plaids and makes sure everyone knows where they're supposed to be and what is supposed to happen next. He is also the connection between the guys and the audience. He has asthma, which acts up whenever numbers are too fast or the choreography gets too energetic. He has a great deal of compassion for the music and the group.

Sparky: The "cut-up" of the group, Sparky is always looking for ways to crack jokes. He is very sharp and loves singing his tailor-made solos. Even though he is energetic and clever, he cares for his stepbrother, Jinx. He sings with a joyous bravura and loves to perform. He loves to tell stories and relishes every word. He is the comic engine of the show.

Jinx: The shy one, Jinx is usually terrified. He doesn't always remember what songs come next or what the next move is. He is Sparky's stepbrother and there is a little sibling rivalry going on between them. He occasionally gets a nosebleed when he sings above an A. He lives his life terrified. He was abused and beaten. He is only in the group because he sings the high notes beautifully. The others are very protective of him.

Smudge: The worrier, Smudge worries about the props and the running order and always assumes that the audience won't like him. He has a chronic nervous stomach and is very reluctant to perform. He is also very clumsy. Smudge never enjoys or appreciates what he has. He always worries about what is coming up and regrets what is past.

Synopsis

Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings is a show that offers the best of Forever Plaid tied-up in a nifty package with a big Christmas bow on top! Filled with holiday standards that have all been "Plaid-erized," our boys are back to do their holiday Special. At first they aren't sure why they've returned, but a phone call from the heavenly Rosemary Clooney lets them know that they're needed to put a little harmony into a discordant world. Sprinkled among the holiday offerings are audience favorites like their riotous three minute and eleven second version of "The Ed Sullivan Show" - this time featuring the Rockettes, the Chipmunks and The Vienna Boys Choir, and a Plaid Caribbean Christmas which puts the "Day-O" in Excelsis! This is one holiday treat that is truly "heaven-sent!"

Songs

1. **"Stranger in Paradise"** is a popular song from the 1953 musical *Kismet* and is credited to Robert Wright and George Forrest. Like all the music in that show, the melody was in fact based on music composed by Alexander Borodin, in this case, the "Gliding Dance of the Maidens," from the *Polovetsian Dances*. Richard Kiley (Man of La Mancha) performed the song in the original cast of *Kismet*. The most popular version was sung by Tony Bennett, but other versions by The Four Aces and Tony Martin also received popular favor in 1954. Ray Conniff, Wes Montgomery, George Shearing, Curtis Counce and Sarah Brightman have recorded versions of this standard.
2. **Amor/Hallelujah**
3. **Holiday for Plaids**
4. **"Sh-Boom"** (sometimes referred to as **"Life Could Be a Dream"**) is widely considered to be the first popular Doo-Wop song. It was written by James Keyes, Claude Feaster & Carl Feaster, Floyd F. McRae, and James Edwards and published in 1954. It was first recorded on Atlantic Records' subsidiary label Cat Records by a rhythm and blues group, The Chords, and would be their only hit song. Placed on the B-Side of a cover of "Cross over the Bridge" a Patti Page hit, Sh-Boom reached number 3 on the R&B charts, and topped at number 9 on the Pop charts, making it the first doo-wop or rock 'n' roll record to reach the Top Ten on the mainstream pop charts (as opposed to the R&B charts). This version was ranked #215 on Rolling Stone's list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time, and is the group's only song on the list. A more traditional style version was made by The Crew-Cuts for Mercury Records, and this version reached #1 on the Billboard charts in for seven weeks during August and September 1954. On the Cash Box magazine best-selling record charts, where both versions were combined, the song reached #1.
5. **A Psycho Christmas**
6. **The Most Wonderful Time/Merry Christmas**
7. **Besame Mucho/Kiss of Fire:**

Bésame Mucho is a Spanish language song written in 1940 by Mexican Consuelo Velázquez before her sixteenth birthday. The phrase "bésame mucho" can be translated into English as "kiss me a lot." According to Velázquez, she wrote this song even though she had never been kissed yet at the time. She was inspired by the aria "Quejas, o la Maja y el Ruiseñor" from the Spanish 1916 opera *Goyescas* by Enrique Granados. Jimmy Dorsey recorded a version of this song. This version had Bob Eberle begin the song and Helen O'Connell finished. Emilio Tuero was the first to record the song. It has since been performed by many artists including, notably The Beatles, who often played it during live performances throughout 1962 (though they never released a studio recording of the song.) The composition has been used on the soundtrack of numerous films including *Great Expectations*, *A toda máquina*, *Moon Over Parador*, *Arizona Dream*, *Moscow Does Not Believe In Tears*, *The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear*, *In Good Company*, *Paid*, *Juno*,

Mona Lisa Smile, and *Mivtza Savta*. In 2007, Composer/Arranger and Jazz Trombonist Steve Wiest was nominated for a Grammy for Best Instrumental Arrangement for his version of *Besame Mucho* that was recorded by Maynard Ferguson on *The One and Only Maynard Ferguson*.

Kiss of Fire (Spanish: *El Choclo*, meaning "the ear of corn" more accurately "The Corn Cob") is a popular song written by Angel G. Villoldo, an Argentine musician. Allegedly written in honor of and taking its title from the nick name of the proprietor of nightclub, who was known as El Choclo. The piece was premiered in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1903 - the date appears on a program of the venue - at the elegant restaurant "El Americano" on 966 Cangallo Street (today Teniente General Perón) by the orchestra led by Jose Luis Roncallo. A number of versions were recorded in 1952, but the most popular was the one by Georgia Gibbs, which reached #1 on the Billboard chart. Tony Martin's version reached #6, Toni Arden's #14, Billy Eckstine's #16, Louis Armstrong's #20, and Guy Lombardo's version reached #30. There is a Spanish version of "Kiss of Fire" by Connie Francis. In 1953 Olavi Virta released a Finnish version, titled "Tulusuudelman," which means "Kiss of Fire." The Finnish words, by "Kullervo" (Tapio Kullervo Lahtinen), closely follow the English.

8. **"Mambo Italiano"** is a popular song arranged by Bob Merrill in 1954. The song itself had been a traditional, danceable folk-like song in Italy for ages (no one knows who had actually written it and there were many versions of the song, including some different lyrics and types of music), but it was Merrill who put it on paper and made the song popular worldwide. The biggest-selling version, recorded by Rosemary Clooney, charted in 1954, in the francophone world it was popularized as a translation by Dario Moreno. Another version was recorded by Dean Martin. In the United Kingdom, the song was recorded by Alma Cogan in 1955. Bette Midler also recorded a version of this song.
9. **"Hey There"** is a show tune from the musical play *The Pajama Game*, written by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross. It was published in 1954. It was subsequently recorded by a number of artists. The recording by Rosemary Clooney reached #1 on Billboard's chart in 1954. Another version was also recorded about the same time by Sammy Davis, Jr., reaching #16 on Billboard's retail chart. The song (counting all recorded versions) also reached #1 on the Cash Box chart in 1954. In the context of the show, Sid sings it to a recording device, telling himself that he's foolish to continue his advances to Babe. He plays the tape back, and after responding to his own comments, sings a duet with himself.
10. **"Fever"** is a song credited to Eddie Cooley and "John Davenport" (a pseudonym for Otis Blackwell). The song was a rhythm and blues hit for Little Willie John that crossed over and became a pop standard after being transformed, with additional lyrics, by Peggy Lee. In the interim, Ray Peterson and Earl Grant had singles of the song which became regional hits. It was published in 1956 and originally recorded as a hit by Little Willie John that also made the popular charts as an early Rock'n'Roll song. In 1958, Peggy Lee's cover version was even more popular. The song became a signature song for Peggy Lee. Elvis Presley recorded a near identical version to Lee's two years later for his 1960 album, *Elvis Is Back!*.

11. Christmas Calypso:

The **Banana Boat Song** is a traditional Jamaican folk song, the best-known version of which was sung by Harry Belafonte and is the most well-known calypso. It is a song from the point of view of dock workers working the night shift loading bananas onto ships. Daylight has come, the shift is over and they want their work to be counted up so that they can go home (this is the meaning of the lyric "Come, Mr. Tally Man, tally me banana/ Daylight come and we wanna go home.") Belafonte's debut television performance of the song was on the TV series *The Muppet Show*.

Jamaica Farewell is a famous calypso about the beauties of the West Indian Islands. The lyrics for the song were written by Lord Burgess (Irving Burgie). Lord Burgess was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1926. His mother was from Barbados and his father was from Virginia. The song first appeared on Harry Belafonte's phenomenally successful album *Calypso*. Though many, including Belafonte himself, have said that the song was popular in the West Indies since long before Burgess, it is believed that Burgess compiled and modified the song from many folk pieces to make a new song, and it is indubitable that it was Belafonte who popularized the song outside the Caribbean Islands. Burgess acknowledged his use of the tune of another calypso, "Iron Bar." Other well-known singers of "Jamaica Farewell" include Sir Lancelot, Jimmy Buffett and Carly Simon.

Matilda is a calypso (sometimes spelled **Mathilda**) lamenting a woman who took a man for all he was worth. The song dates back to at least the 1930s, when calypso pioneer King Radio (the stage name of Norman Span) recorded the song. It became a hit in 1953 when it was recorded by Harry Belafonte. Songwriting credit is conventionally given as Harry Thomas. Sometimes additional names are listed, including Belafonte's. The oft-repeated phrase in Belafonte's rendition of the song is like the following, emphasizing the syllables of the subject's name as shown: *Hey! Ma-til-da; Ma-til-da; Ma-til-da, she take me money and run a-Venezuela*. The song was often performed in concerts, and the audience would be encouraged to sing that line. An example is in his *Harry Belafonte at Carnegie Hall* concert album.

12. Holiday Talk

13. Cool Yule

14. Twuz the Nite B4

15. **Let it Snow (to the tune of Heart and Soul)** "**Heart and Soul**" is a popular song, with music by Hoagy Carmichael and lyrics by Frank Loesser, published in 1938. The original 1938 version was performed by Larry Clinton & his Orchestra featuring Bea Wain. The tune (or at least the A section, which features just four repeated chords I-vi-IV-V) is very easy to play on a piano and commonly played by two people side by side. (Because of the repetition of the chords, many people are able to play at least one of the parts, whether they are actually piano students or are only able to play a song or two. In this respect, it can be compared to "Chopsticks." The song's chord progression became very common in doo-wop hits and is also known as the '50s progression. In 1939, three versions charted: Larry Clinton (reaching #1 on the chart), Eddy Duchin (reaching #12), and Al Donohue (reaching #16). The song later charted as #11 in 1952 by The Four Aces, as #57 in 1956 by Larry Maddox, as #18 in

1961 by The Clefones, and as #25 in 1961 by Jan and Dean. Many other versions have been recorded.

16. Carol of the Bells (also known as the "**Ukrainian Bell Carol**" or as "**Ring Christmas Bells**") is a choral miniature work originally composed by the Ukrainian composer and orthodox priest Mykola Dmytrovych Leontovych. Throughout the piece, a 4-note motif is used as an ostinato (a short melodic phrase persistently repeated by the same voice or instrument and at the same pitch) and was taken from an ancient pagan Ukrainian New Year's chant known in Ukrainian as "Shchedryk." The original work was intended to be sung "a capella" (without instrumental accompaniment). The composition was premiered in December 1916 by students at Kiev University and was introduced to Western audiences by the Ukrainian National Chorus during its concert tour of Europe and the Americas. It premiered in the United States on October 5, 1921 at Carnegie Hall and was later adapted into English language version by Peter Wilhousky in the 1930's. A version ("Ring Christmas Bells") with words written by Minna Louise Hohman in 1947 is also widely performed.

17. Joy to the World/Mr. Santa

18. Mambo in a Winter Wonderland

19. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

20. Ed Sullivan (I'll Be Home For Christmas): *The Ed Sullivan Show* was the definitive and longest running variety series in television history (1948-71). Hosted by the eponymous awkward and fumbling former newspaperman, the show became a Sunday night institution on CBS. For twenty-three years the show fulfilled the democratic mandate of the variety genre: to entertain all of the audience at least some of the time. As sports reporter, gossip columnist, and master of ceremonies of various war relief efforts, Ed Sullivan had been a fixture on the Broadway scene since the early 1930s. Although he had no performing ability, he understood showmanship and had a keen eye for emerging talent. He was hired to host CBS's *The Toast of the Town* and, on 20 June 1948, Sullivan presented his premiere show. He balanced the headliner, generally an unassailable legend, with the up-and-coming stars. He also liked to juxtapose the extreme ends of the entertainment spectrum: the classical with the novelty. In 1955, the title was changed to *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Sullivan had a keen understanding of what various demographic segments of his audience desired to see. As an impresario for the highbrow, he debuted ballerina Margot Fonteyn in 1958 and later teamed her with Rudolf Nureyev in 1965; saluted Van Cliburn after his upset victory in the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow; and welcomed many neighbors from the nearby Metropolitan Opera. As the cultural eyes and ears for middle America, he introduced movie and Broadway legends such as Pearl Bailey, Julie Andrews, Richard Burton, and Barbara Streisand into the collective living room. What distinguished Sullivan from other variety hosts was the ability to capitalize on teenage obsession. His introduction of rock 'n' roll not only brought the adolescent subculture into the variety fold but also legitimized the music for the adult sensibility. Sullivan's deal with Elvis Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker, created national headlines. The sexual energy of Presley's first appearance on 9 September 1956 jolted the staid, Eisenhower conformism of Sullivan's audience. In 1964 Sullivan signed the Beatles for three landmark appearances. Their first slot on 9 February 1964 was at

the height of Beatlemania, the beginning of a revolution in music, fashion, and attitude. Sullivan received the biggest ratings of his career. Sullivan responded by welcoming icons of the 1960s counterculture such as the Rolling Stones and Marvin Gaye into his arena. Sullivan saw comedy as the glue that held his demographically diverse show together and allowed a nation to release social tension by laughing at itself. The comic act that appeared most on the Sullivan show was the Canadian team of Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster (58 times). Sullivan was always on the lookout for novelty acts, especially for children. His interplay with the Italian mouse Topo Gigio revealed a sentimental side to Sullivan's character. He also was the first to introduce celebrities from the audience and often invited them on stage for a special performance. Forever the sports columnist, he was particularly enthralled by athletic heroes. *The Ed Sullivan Show* reflected an era of network television when a mass audience and, even, a national consensus seemed possible. Sullivan became talent scout and cultural commissar for the entire country, introducing more than 10,000 performers throughout his career. His show implicitly recognized that America should have an electronic exposure to all forms of entertainment. The Vietnam War, which fractured the country politically, also helped to splinter the democratic assumptions of the variety show. By 1971, *The Sullivan Show* was no longer a generational or demographic mediator and was canceled as the war raged on. Later in the decade, the audience did not require Sullivan's big tent of variety entertainment any longer; cable and the new technology promised immediate access to any programming desire. The Sullivan library was purchased by producer Andrew Solt in the 1980s and has served as the source of network specials and programming for cable services.

21. Finale

Reviews

'Forever Plaid' sequel makes its Texas premiere

By: Aisha Burns

Posted: 11/2/06

What happens when four dorky guys with amazing voices are summoned from the dead by a phone call from a 1950s celebrity? A little bit of fun, some holiday cheer and comedy shaken like a snow globe all comes together to create the holiday musical *Plaid Tidings*. A sequel to the hit *Forever Plaid*, *Plaid Tidings* makes its Texas premiere Thursday at Zachary Scott Theatre. *Plaid Tidings* begins where *Forever Plaid* left off. In the first of the *Plaid* stories, the '50s male vocal quartet dies in a bus accident en route to a Beatles concert. With a magical call from '50s singer Rosemary Clooney, the sequel brings Sparky, Smudge, Jinx and Frankie back from the dead and ready to embark on a Yuletide adventure.

"This holiday spirit takes over their bodies [and makes] these Christmas songs come out of their mouths," said director Dave Steakley.

The men can't figure out why they keep singing these holiday songs, until they realize they're needed to spread some holiday cheer. The group gets the opportunity to perform the concert they never had a chance to sing.

The musical is as goofy as it sounds. Largely a comedy, it's intended to give the audience a chance to forget their problems and be entertained. "Writer Stuart Ross dislikes sequels and

never planned on writing one," Steakley said, but after Sept. 11, upon request, Ross thought a holiday spin on the successful *Forever Plaid* would provide great escapist entertainment from a chaotic and frightening world.

Although it never takes itself too seriously, *Plaid Tidings* hints at the notion of a deeper side.

"I think there's a real heartfelt change that happens to the characters in the play," said Steakley.

"It's really saying that sometimes the family you're born into isn't your family. Along the path of life, you create your own family - though I should add, it says this very lightly."

Light characterizes this production's mood. Actor Kevin Farr is energetic as he describes his character, Jinx, the shy guy with the quirky misfortune of suffering nosebleeds each time he hits a high note.

"All four of the guys were kind of the nerdy guys in high school, the AV guys." Farr said, laughing.

Steakley describes the singing as "four spectacular voices working together very well."

"It's one thing to cast for roles," Steakley said. "It's another thing to set up a band."

Farr attributes the cast's strong musical abilities to the success of their sound, which mimics the jazzy, 1950s guy-group style. He appeared in the first showing of *Forever Plaid* years ago and is returning to participate in the holiday sequel along with Steven Michael Miller.

Farr admits he was curious about the effects of adding two new actors to the original pair. "It was kind of like, well, I hope this works," said Farr. "And indeed it has."

Expect intricate choreography, with dance numbers paying tribute to *West Side Story* and boy band-like moves. Watch for authentic '60s video featuring Perry Como's Christmas special, the quartet's idol.

Steakley emphasizes the family-oriented nature of *Plaid Tidings* and its ability to connect with all ages, unlike other productions currently showing at the theater.

"It'll be exciting for younger people discovering it for the first time. People who know the music from the first time around will be excited to hear some of their favorite tunes."

Forever Plaid was a huge success in Austin and ran for over a year. *Plaid Tidings* appears more than capable of living up to the reputation of its "older brother."

"I want to pay homage to the old play," said Steakley. "But this one has its own demands that must be met."

But never fear, *Forever Plaid* lovers. "The things people loved about the first one are back," Steakly said. And they're better than ever.

* * * * *

Plaid Tidings

Drury Lane Water Tower Place

Chicago may be the city of broad shoulders, but with few exceptions, it is not a city of long runs. One of the exceptions was the musical *Forever Plaid*, which enjoyed seven years at the Royal George Theatre in the 1990s. It concerned a fictional clean-cut 1960s male quartet that was killed in a collision with a Catholic-school bus on the way to their breakthrough concert. They return to the living for the one-night concert they never gave. In this sequel, the group has returned a second time to fulfill some other dreams they never realized while living - like singing backup vocals for Perry Como and starring in their own Christmas TV special.

Plaid Tidings, which originated in California at the Pasadena Playhouse, was conceived and directed by *Forever Plaid* creator Stuart Ross. It's a holiday fruitcake of a show, with little bits of a whole lot of things thrown together in a pleasant, innocuous way. Though drawing heavily

from hits and holiday songs of the forties and fifties, the boys are at times moved to anachronistically perform "The Night Before Christmas" in a hip-hop arrangement or unexpectedly segue from a swing standard like Steve Allen's "Cool Yule" into the dance steps from *West Side Story's* "Cool." Other unexpected medleys and transitions abound - like "Besame Mucho" into "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" and "Angels We Have Heard on High" morphing into the "Banana Boat Song" (in excelsis "Day-O"), complete with Christmas lights hanging from banana trees. In between numbers we have dialogue providing a lot of groaners trading on the afterlife status of the boys: lines like "I use post mortem moisturizer - it gets rid of the dead skin," and the lament that "eternity is ruined forever."

The second act is the stronger of the two. In addition to the "Cool Yule/Cool" number, it features a heartfelt tribute to the ultimate outsider, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" (whose uniqueness we're told would've made him a great Plaid) and two extended pieces paying tribute to great TV variety shows of the era. The Plaids explain how they nearly sang backup for Perry Como when he was performing on a snowy night in Bethlehem (yep, Pennsylvania) then see their dream fulfilled by backing up a projection of the crooner singing "I'll Be Home For Christmas." This is followed by an ingenious tribute to the Ed Sullivan Show including the likes of jugglers, plate spinners, and Topo Gigio. The show closes with the quartet singing a sweet rendition of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Four veterans of various *Forever Plaid* productions - Drew Geraci, Paul Pement, Jason Sperling and Stephen Wallem - do the honors admirably here. *Plaid Tidings* is a sweet and safe holiday entertainment that will be especially fun for those who remember the mid-century era. It may well join *A Christmas Carol* as a holiday standard (and cash cow) for local theater companies, but it would be much too Scrooge-like to deny the holiday warmth it will generate. For me, after exiting from the Drury Lane Water Tower Place Theatre into the middle of Chicago's brightly decorated North Michigan Avenue shopping area, it was beginning to look a lot like Christmas, indeed.

Bibliography

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