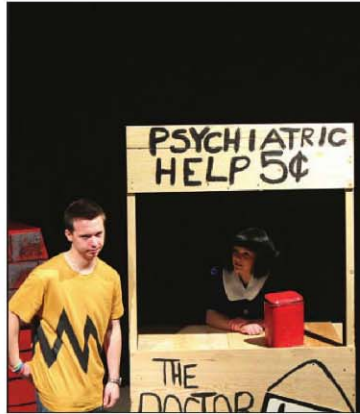


# Merry Christmas Charlie Brown!



Marco Viglotti High River Times  
NDC put on a special Christmas play that has become a classic the world over; *A Charlie Brown Christmas*



By Ani Carlson  
TIMES CONTRIBUTOR

On Dec. 8 my family attended a live performance of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Held at the High River Library's W.O. Mitchell Theatre, starring very talented actors from Notre Dame Collegiate and the lovely vocals of NDC's choir, *A Joyful Noise*, it was indeed a treat. The collaboration of live music, song and acting together was like having your cake and eating it too. In fact, one of two parts my nephew enjoyed most was a beautiful duet, sung by Miranda Hartung (Lucy) and Raeann Jaudinnes. It was actually quite moving and it gave me goosebumps. I admit, my eyes even welled up a bit. The second scene he liked was simply when Charlie Brown gets mad and yells at the crew, really loudly. My nephew is eight-years-old, and enjoys the finer things in life. After the show, I received feedback from my own two drama-loving children, and it was all very positive. My kids, who had grins on their faces from beginning to end, loved the singing, music, and acting together. My son loved the entire show, but especially the very entertaining intro.

This is where the director/teacher, Dan Guenette, and actor/student Austin Miller, performed a creative little skit relating to the other performances the school has put on, and thanked all who were involved and supportive of the show. The show itself was based on Charles M. Schulz's *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. For those who are unfamiliar with the plot, I'll break it down for you. Charlie Brown, our beloved and beleaguered main character, is fed up with the commercialism that Christmas brings. Everyone around him is demanding presents, the best decorations and more. Even the Christmas play the characters are putting on is filled with strife. Enter comic relief in the form of Snoopy taking on the role of all the animals present at the Nativity scene, cow, sheep, and of course penguin. Linus, the blanket carrying philosopher, played by Dylan Lafreniere, gives a touching monologue about the history of and true meaning of Christmas. Shortly afterwards, the cast realizes the error of their ways and starts experiencing and sharing the true joy of Christmas. This is illustrated



in part by them bringing back to life Charlie Brown's sad, decrepit, little Christmas tree. The moral of the show was a great reminder for us, the audience, about what exactly this season is about. It is definitely a concept my eight-year-old son is struggling with. To him, that is the entire gist of Christmas; counting down to the presents and desserts. As much as I try to tell him about the spirit of kindness, of sharing time with family, of giving, of good cheer, it comes down to the tangible gifts for him. It comes down to the anticipation of furiously unwrapping presents early Christmas morning, and I am sure it's the same for many other kids at that age. I'm hoping the play's message sticks somewhere in his brain, and honestly, it reminded me as well not to get all caught up in the stress of spending money, of making everything 'perfect', of 'commercialism'. Christmas to me is about spending time with my family, about giving to others. Christmas is about random acts of kindness, such as carolling and shovelling other people's sidewalks. It's about sharing joy and spreading good cheer. What's this holiday season about for you?

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