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Lisa Friedman Miner examines 'High Holidays' at the Goodman Theatre
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ONSTAGE



Glad 'Tidings'

David Meadows, left, stars with Robert Deason, Sean Effinger-Dean and Brad Simanski in Noble Fool's "Plaid Tidings."

Cabaret prepares Geneva singer for holiday show

By Jack Helbig
Daily Herald correspondent

David Meadows may have been born and raised in Geneva, but he's spent his life performing around the world.

For the time being, though, he is back home and appearing in Noble Fool's production of "Plaid Tidings" in St. Charles.

He got his start with a theater internship in Philadelphia and then moved to New York City, where the trained singer/actor found lots of work in the "piano bar and cabaret" circuit.

"It was there I got the opportunity to meet a couple who have a piano bar in Greece," Meadows says.

He took a job working on the island of Mykonos, performing every night during the tourist season.

"I had no night off," Meadows says. "It was just a piano player, myself and a female singer. We used to take

turns, the other singer and me, on who would sing the early time slot."

After Greece, Meadows lived for 13 months in Dublin, appearing in various shows. "I did the Irish premiere of 'A Chorus Line,'" he says.

He moved back to Chicago a few years ago to help his mother take care of his ailing stepfather, and then stayed while she battled cancer.

"She had lung cancer and they removed the tumor," he says. "She beat it and has retired to Arizona and is playing bingo every night."

While back in Chicago, Meadows began appearing in local productions, starting with smaller theaters — including Steel Beam's production of the musical "Chess" — before moving up to larger companies.

Meadows' extensive work in music theater and cabaret prepared him well for "Plaid Tidings," the holiday version of the highly successful musical revue, "Forever Plaid."

The plot is a bit offbeat. The group, killed in a freak bus accident on the way to a gig, comes back from the dead to perform a final concert.

In "Plaid Tidings" this story is given a holiday twist. "They have come back with a full-fledged holiday show," Meadows says, "plaid style."

The show is packed with hit songs and beloved standards from the 1940s and '50s, plus some holiday tunes and a tribute to the late, great "Ed Sullivan Show."

"The show is full of tight harmonies," Meadows says. "It is really hard but it sounds good when we are all together. "Thank God for rehearsals."

• "Plaid Tidings" is running in previews at the Pheasant Run Resort Mainstage Theater, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles. It runs through Dec. 27. For tickets, call the box office at (630) 584-6342, or visit ticketmaster.com. For more information, visit noblefool.org.

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Seasonal fare

Twain titans Drury Lane Oak Brook Theatre and Marriott Theatre present family-friendly versions of "A Christmas Carol" as their holiday offerings. Gene Weygandt ("Wicked") stars as Scrooge in Marriott's production of the Charles Dickens classic, while Santa makes a special appearance to dine with audience members at select performance dates of Drury Lane's version.

Opens Friday, Nov. 13, at Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire. (847) 634-0200 or marriotttheatre.com. Opens Wednesday, Nov. 18, at Drury Lane, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace. (630) 530-0111 or drurylaneoakbrook.com.

Howie at the Hemmens

Comedian, actor and "Deal or No Deal" star Howie Mandel takes time off from his TV hosting duties to headline one show at the Hemmens Cultural Center.

8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13, at 45 Symphony Way, Elgin. (847) 931-5900 or hemmens.org.

Crazy for Coward

Writer's Theatre salutes playwright/songwriter Noel Coward with "Oh Coward!" — a revue comprising Coward's sophisticated songs and sly quips. Director Jim Cort and music director Doug Peck head up the creative team. The cast includes Kate Fry, John Sanders and Rob Lindley.

Previews begin Tuesday, Nov. 17, at Books on Vernon, 664 Vernon Ave., Glencoe. (847) 242-6000 or writerstheatre.org.

— Barbara Vitello