

This Side of the Hill Players



by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc. present

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever



by
Barbara Robinson

directed by
Margaret Harris

December 15 - 22, 1994

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Written by Barbara Robinson

Directed by Margaret Harris

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

	Dec. 15, 17 (mat.), 18, 19, 21	Dec. 16, 17, 18 (mat.), 20, 21
Beth Bradley	Melanie Cole.....	Kelly Rudisill
Imogene Herdman	Kerry Mcgrath	Emily Miles
Ralph Herdman.....	Ben Knolls	Ben Knolls
Leroy Herdman	Matt Coleman	Matt Coleman
Claude Herdman	Dustin Becker	Dustin Becker
Ollie Herdman	Teddy Guntren	Teddy Guntren
Gladys Herdman	Allison Hooker	Katie McKeon
Alice Wendlaken	Lauren Hutchins	Natalie Gehrels
Maxine.....	Tori Steeves	Kamille Rudisill
Grace Bradley.....	Lisa Hutchins	Lisa Hutchins
Bob Bradley	Peter Rudisill	Peter Rudisill
Charlie Bradley	Gabe Perez.....	Gabe Perez
Mrs. Armstrong.....	Marcia Sellers	Marcia Sellers

Young People's Group:

Elmer Hopkins	J. Andrew Lamont	J. Andrew Lamont
Doris	Kaitlyn Wong	Daisy Lamont
Hope	Kieri Hutchins.....	Casey Harper
David	Joey Guntren.....	Joey Guntren
Baby Angel Shirley	Kelsey Guntren	Vanessa Gehrels
Choir Member Juanita	Jordan Steele.....	Arianna Morales
Shepherd Child	Dario Morales	Aliyah Cline
Edna McCarthy.....	Pam Nocerino	Pam Nocerino
The Women's Guild	Catherine Miles, Jackie Samoluk, Lorna Wong Linda Covello, Micki Guntren, Michelle Mcgrath Diane Butera, Gail Cline, Julia McKeon	
Fire Fighters	Cameo appearances by family members of Cast and Crew	
Rev. Daniel E. Hopkins.....	Ed Vignos	Ed Vignos
Vocal Solo	Meghan Ganskins singing "The Lute Carol"	
Flute Solo	Erica Racz playing "He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd" from Handel's <i>Messiah</i>	
Piano Solo	Brittney Hooker playing "Allegro in F Minor" by Bach	

THE CAST

(continued)

The Young People's ChoirBrooke Bierdeman, Danielle Butera,
Leisa Campana, Mariellen Carter, Andrea
Coleman, Megan Gaskins, Jessica Hallett, Skye
Harper, Ivy Henry, Ashley Hutchins, Erika
Iverson, Shannon Juengling, Julie Kari, Michelle
Kissinger, Nicole McFadden, Christa Miles,
Katelyn Mullins, Corinne Nelson, Kim O'Brien,
Erica Racz, Allison Rockey, Kathleen Sheridan,
Christine Stuber, Meaghan Stuckey,
Shannon Tatman.

Baby AngelsMolly Becker, Ryan Becker, Dana Harriman,
Olivia Henry, Anna-Leia West-Stuber

The Crew

DirectorMargaret Harris
Assistant to the DirectorAstrid Harper
Stage ManagerJane Seifert
Music DirectorRebecca Achenbach
Assistant Music DirectorAbe Engel
Scenic Design.....Ron Thomas
Lighting Design.....Paul Anable
Accompanist.....Mrya Fraser
Sound Design and Tech.....Marcia Sellers
Set MasterMichael Scheller
Children's CoachCathy McNeal
Finale ChoreographyMichael Sellers
Construction Crew Paul Anable
Brad Barker, Mike Flores, Astrid Harper
Chad Hooker, Duncan Lamont
Andrew Lamont, Daisy Lamont
Jim Larson, Jeri Scheller
Paint CrewAstrid Harper
Al Murphy, Jeri Scheller
Michael Scheller
Lighting TechMatt Scordelis
Spotlight OperatorsTony Mullen
Evan Campodonica, Charlie White
CostumerJudy Larson
Costume AssistantsDiane Butera
Linda Covello, Rebecca Coleman
Suzanne Gaskins, Patrice Campana
Suzette Hallett, Meridith Lamont
Cheri Pettit, Jackie Samoluk
Make-up ConsultantJudi Engel
The Hacienda
Pageant Administrative Staff.....Dave
Johansen, Lorna Wong
PhotographerMichael Wong
PublicityAmy French
Hospitality.....Families of the cast and crew
Lobby Music
Pageant Carolers (except Dec. 17, 18-eve. & 21)
Mariellen Carter, Megan Gaskins
Corinne Nelson, Kim O'Brien
Shannon Tatman
Coastside Community Orchestra
Brass Sections (Dec. 17, 18 and 21)
Advertising DirectorBruce Marion
Advertising Sales.....Bob Rogers
Program CoordinatorMargaret Harris
Poster and Program Design..Bruce Marion
Correspondence SecretaryAl Rose

'Best Pageant Ever' — since last year

By STACY TREVENON
Half Moon Bay Review

Differences in form but not substance distinguish This Side of the Hill Players' new production of "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" from last year's version, promised director Margaret Harris.

"We're trying for the same substance, which is to give kids a wonderful experience to act, and (give) the audience a great experience of the play itself," she said.

"Pageant" opens an unprecedented, week-long, 10-show run on Thursday, Dec. 15 at the Mel Mello Center for the Arts. A host of Coastside adults and children — including 16 families' members — will appear.

A slice of Americana at Christmas, penned by Barbara Robinson, the play is about River Hills Community Church's annual Christmas pageant. In it are the irreverent, neglected Herdman kids, who suggest the wise men bring food, want to name Mary's baby "Bill," and wreak havoc until the Women's Guild demands cancellation. "Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children to come to me'," says the minister, played by Ed Vignos. "I don't think he meant the Herdmans."

Nevertheless, reliable mom Grace Bradley (Lisa Hutchins) braves the Herdmans to recreate the Christmas story — with unexpected, touching results.

"They're mean because nobody wants to be by them," said Emily Miles, 10, who plays Imogene Herdman. "(Imogene's) really poor and she's thinking, maybe this baby can help her . . . if she's nice,

then maybe some people will care."

Narrating the play is sensible Beth Bradley, alternately played by Kelly Rudisill, 10, and Melanie Cole, 11.

Though traditional, the play has something for today, says actor Peter Rudisill, who is Beth's father onstage and off.

"It's a good approach to defining the meaning of Christmas because (the Bradleys) are introducing it to people who have no idea what it is," Rudisill said. "This brings it home with humor and warmth."

Directing 13 adults and 60 children ages 3-14, including a 40-member choir through 10 straight shows makes demands that, says Harris, her cast is meeting. "This is an incredible thing I'm asking these kids," she said. "They're little pros."

Reprised as an outlet for the many young local thespians, "Pageant" is staged this year on a more complex set and with more non-traditional carols. Rebecca Achenbach serves as musical director, assisted by Abe Engel.

One of the play's two casts, who have dubbed themselves the "Timberwolves," will open the play Dec. 15. The other, "Broadway," will close it Dec. 22, and the two casts will trade off during the run. The play runs every evening at 7:30 p.m., and there are two 1 p.m. matinees on Dec. 17 and 18.

Tickets at \$12 (evening) and \$10 (matinee) are available at Eriksen Art and Framing and Bay Book and Video in Half Moon Bay. The Mel Mello Center is located at 1167 Main St. in Half Moon Bay. For information, call 726-0998.

'Best Christmas Pageant Ever' in Half Moon Bay

12/19/94
By GAIL EDWARDS

Times Correspondent

This Side of the Hill Players opened its holiday family theater production for this year with Barbara Robinson's "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever."

This is the story of the 24th annual Christmas pageant at the River Hills Community Church and the way the production is dramatically changed when the usual director is hospitalized.

Six children of a non-church-attending welfare family hear of the free desserts served at church and audition for the pageant.

Known for their strong-armed approach to social encounters, the six children take over the entire production and its meaning for the participants and congregation.

Since the story is built around the story of the production of a children's play, most of the actors are children.

The youngest member is 3, with a predominance of 8- to 11-year-olds. Anyone teacher or parent will realize what a logistical nightmare this presents not only in scheduling rehearsal time, but also in getting things done efficiently and effectively.

Despite all the adversity, this production is entertaining, amusing and often touching.

What "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" by Barbara Robinson, presented by This Side of the Hill Players

Where Mel Mello Center for the Arts, 1167 Main St., Half Moon Bay

When 8 p.m. daily through Dec. 22, 1 p.m. Dec. 17-18

Price \$12

Call 726-1598, 726-3488

Rating ★★★ (of a possible 4)

Children wave and looked into the audience, and they stumbled on a few limes, but the show went on.

The youngest cast members are shepherded by a couple of the teen-agers. The fact that baby Jesus is a doll also makes things simpler.

The sets are simple, minimal and open, allowing freedom of movement for this high-energy cast that has quite a bit of moving around in the dark.

Some of the spotlight work tends to meander, diminishing the accents it seeks to achieve.

Nevertheless, director Margaret Harris obviously had a clear vision of this work and achieved it convincingly with this diverse cast.

The presentation of the pageant contains quite a bit of Christmas music including carols, a flute solo by Erica Racz and vocal solo by Meghan Ganskins, all accompanied by pianist Myra Fraser.

This is not a high-tech or flashy show, but the story is entertaining, and watching the children be children in what must have been a major effort for both the families and the kids is more enjoyable than glitz or high-tech could make it.