'Penny By Penny' too early to catch Christmas spirit!

By Ida Peters

"Penny By Penny! The Story of Ebenezer Scrooge" a new musical celebration based on Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" opened at the Mechanic Theatre Tuesday night before a luke warm audience.

Watching a Christams story before Thanksgiving or before you get in the mood of Christmas is depressing. The press night audience just did not seem to catch the spirit of the musical and some folks were up and out of their seats before the star, Richard Kiley had taken a bow.

"Penny By Penny" as a musical is a great idea and if plugged into the Christmas season should do well. The producers Barry and Fran Weissler plan to tour limited cities...they play Florida at Christmas... retire the play and open on Broadway next Christmas.

Tiny Tim (R. D. Robb) leads the Cratchit Family in a sensitive madrigal rendition of "One Family" during their family Christmas celebration ... Richard Kiley stars as the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge ... in this scene from the new musical "Penny By Penny," playing a three week engagement at Baltimore's Mechanic Theatre Nov. 16 thru Dec. 5.

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Ice skating rink opens

The Department of Recreation and Parks announces that the three Municipal Ice Skating Rinks opened today Friday, Nov. 20.

The Charles Center Rink (837-7258) located on the N.E. corner of Lexington and Liberty streets will be open Sunday through Saturday from 12 Noon until 3 P.M., and from 6 until 9 P.M. The Patterson Rink (327-7556) on Eastern and Linwood Avenues and the Stadium Rink (396-7113) on the West parking lot off of 33rd St., will adhere to the following schedule. Monday-Friday, 7:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Saturdays, Holidays and Christmas Vacations: 12 Noon to 2 P.M., 3 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. and 7:30 to 10 P.M., Sundays- 2 P.M. to 5 P.M. and 7 P.M. to 9 P.M.

Enjoy a day of fun and exercise for the entire family. If you are interested in figure skating, hockey games and other special programs, contact the ice rink nearest you or the Baltimore Office of Promotion and Tourism at 752-8632.

CCB Calendar

Friday, Nov. 20 — "Night Moods Disco;" Liberty Campus Cafeteria; 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.; Free to CCB students with I.D.; $1 to public.

Monday, Nov. 23 — GED classes begin at Liberty Campus; classes meet Mondays—Fridays through December 22. Call Lois Esterson at 396-0380 to register.

Tuesday, Nov. 24 — "Tuesday Mornings older adult series; Memorial Apartments; Featured program: "Be Responsible for Your Health," by Betsy Simon, Coordinator, Health Education, Baltimore City School System; see November 10 for details.

Wednesday, Nov. 25 — "Wednesday Mornings" older adults series; Lafayette Square Multi-Service Center, 1501 Lafayette Avenue; 11 a.m.; Public invited; Free; Featured program: "Be Thankful for Your Years," by the Rev. John R. Bryant, Bethel AME Church; for details call 396-0199 or 396-7846.

Monday, Nov. 30 — Board of Trustees meeting; 4 p.m.; Harbor Campus, Lockwood Building, Board Room.

Impetus at CCC

The Impetus Dance Company will perform in concert at Catonsville Community College on Friday, Nov. 20, at 8 p.m. The performance will be held in the Humanities Theatre on the CCC campus, 800 S. Rolling Road.

Led by Jeff Duncan, director, Impetus will perform "Canticles," percussion by the dance company, "Bach Concerto," music by J. S. Bach, and "Color Suite," a new work set to electronic music. Impetus comes to CCC from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and Impetus Endeavors Ltd.

Singers Gwen McRae (L) and Jean Knight get together for girl talk when they met in Atlanta, Ga. Gwen's big tune, "Funky Sensation" and Jean's album, "Keep It Coming," are their tickets to stardom and fame.

Drama Therapy Conference at Morgan

The Department of Communication and Theatre Arts, Morgan State University and the Department of Psychiatry (Provident Hospital) hosts the International Conference on Drama Therapy, December 9-11. Dr. Frederick W. Hickling, D.P.M., Sociodramatist; Senior Medical Officer, Bellevue-Jamaica; and Director of Jamaican Mental Health Services, is director.

Drama therapy owes its existence to psychodrama, sociodrama, creative dramatics, play therapy, recreational therapy, and experimental theatre. While this conference will use the techniques of each form, the conference will focus principally on the theory and practice of sociodrama and its application to minority mental health.

Dr. Hickling is the creator of "Cooling the Fires of Hell—Our Way," the widely acclaimed sociodrama which uses the patients and staff of Provident Hospital's Department of Psychiatry. In two weeks, Dr. Hickling taught the principles of sociodrama and fashioned the thoughts and feelings of the Department into a most stimulating and satisfactory play. The production will open the conference and will be the pattern which conferees will use to create their own play. Dr. Samuel A. Hay is chairman of Morgan U's Theatre Arts program.

U of Md. Theatre Scholarship

The University of Maryland Freshmen Theatre Scholarship competition will be held on Monday, Nov. 23. This competition was instituted last year by the Theatre Patrons Association to recruit talented high school seniors for the theatre program at College Park. The competition, held in conjunction with the Maryland Drama Association, results in two scholarships. One scholarship is awarded in the area of performance and one scholarship is awarded in the design - technical area.

Applications, which are due November 6, have been sent to area high schools. Further information and applications are available by contacting Joanne McLafferty or William Patterson at the University of Maryland at (301) 454-2202.

Ballet Auditions

The Baltimore Ballet is holding auditions for professional, classically trained male and female dancers, who are available for a 20 week contract from Jan. 4, 1982 through June 15, 1982.

Auditions will be held in the main studio of the Baltimore Ballet Center at 1398 W. Mount Royal Ave. on Saturday Nov. 21, at 2:00 p.m. Take a current resume and photograph, and be prepared to take a full class conducted by Ms. Wendy Robinson, director of the school. For further information, details, and directions, please contact Ms. Marion Myers, school registrar, at 225-0850.

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Rosemont Program Nov. 23

The Central Rosemont Recreation Center will present its annual Thanksgiving Program on Monday, Nov. 23 at 7 p.m. at 2621 Winchester St.

Admission is by donating a canned good or non-perishable food.

This year's program features the Calverton Jr. High School Band under the direction of Johnnie Gaines with choreography by Ms C. Feider, dance instructor. Also participating in the program is Ms. Brenda Coleman.

For further information call Mrs. Ellie Colopi at 396-9414.

Fillmore Theatre

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Sun. 4 p.m. & 7:15 p.m. & 10:20 p.m.

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Shirley Verett has role as Delilah on "Great Performances" on PBS Monday.

SNOOPY, as chef, and helpers Linus (L) and Charlie Brown add the unique flavor of Peanuts to "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving," Monday, Nov. 23 on CBS.

—Johnny Watson

(Continued from Showtime)

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talent show and wound up cutting "Gangster Of Love" for King Records. The laconic talking style would become a trademark and the distinctive guitar playing would provide him with a nickname and subsequent blues hits ("There's Been Some Lonely, Lonely Nights," "Cuttin' In On You"). The latter became a hit for French pop sensation Johnny Halliday in the early 60's, establishing a European appreciation for Watson that continues to the present.

"In '65, "Watson picks up, "Larry Williams got an offer to tour England. He asked me to go with him." Johnny laughs, remembering "They billed me as 'Elvis Presley's private guitar player.' We got SRO crowds in London." Back in the States the next year, Watson broadened himself, "plugging into jazz." He wrote lyrics to Adderley's "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy," cut some instrumental LPs, researched deeply the music of Fats Waller and in 1968 cut a keyboard tribute to the late pianist, "In A Fats Bag".

By the early 70s, he'd made three LPs for California jazz label Fantasy Records. He also made several trips to Europe, starred in a T-Bone Walker benefit in Hollywood and furthered his rep as a blues guitarist of note. A deal with DJM Records subsequently took Watson's career to a whole new plateau. It happened on June 2, 1977.

"I can't ever forget that date," he says. That's the day the first two of his DJM LPs, "Ain't That A Bitch" and "A Real Mother For Ya," both went gold. Major R&B hits, the two records signaled the arrival of Johnny Guitar Watson, the pop music maker. Herb Alpert's contention that the boundaries of Watson's appeal were near limitless, was becoming apparent. Alpert acted on his belief in 1979 when he invited Johnny to contribute to his hit "Rise" album. The renewal of the two musicians' friendship ("We'd see each other every now and then; we were always aware of each other," says Alpert) led directly to Watson's signing with A&M and "That's What Time It Is".

Recorded last July (with Michael Zager and Johnny producing and Alpert as executive producer), the album showcases Watson's versatility, with the accent on the good-natured funk that's brought him his most recent acclaim. There's rap in the appropriately electrified "Do The Guitar"; "timely" advice, a jazz flavor and stretching brass in the title cut; and wry nonsense singing in "You Sexy Thing." "I Miss Your Kiss" could teach Rick James a few tricks and "At The Wishing Well" is a shimmering, reflective ballad in the classic mold.

Watson's immediate plans center around assembling a band around him, for live dates. "There's less guitar on this record than I usually do," he admits, promising to "extend it much more when I play live." He's even preparing for the follow-up to "That's What Time It Is" ("I got a backlog songs that's up to my Adam's apple").

Johnny views music, in general, as composed of "cycles." What I'm doing now is a little different, but basically the same as I've always done. It's updated. Groove-wise, that's what the album title means: the rhythms are the only thing that really change. We had disco, and its overtones led us to where we are now. It's all still dance music, because everyone's groove-conscious.

"And that's really what time it is now. You have to know what time it is. That's the whole ballgame."

James Ross is now manager for Jimmy Briscoe and the Little Beavers. He posed in front of their new bus when he visited AFRO to help Mrs. Santa by selling poinsettias ... $50 worth.

—More happening

(Continued from Showtime)

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guitarist Tal Farlow, and bassist Steve Novosel will combine their talents at the Maryland Inn's King of France Tavern, Thursday, through Sunday, Nov. 19-22.

Red Norvo single handedly made the xylophone into a valid, respected solo jazz instrument which could safely take its place alongside sundry horns, keyboards and guitars. He started his career at 17 and through the years has combined his musicianship with the great innovators of jazz including Benny Goodman and Woody Herman. In the early fifties, he played in a trio featuring Tal Farlow and Charles Mingus. At the King of France Tavern, he will be re-united with Farlow, one of the most accomplished and influential of jazz guitarist.

The First Annual Harvest Day Fine Arts and Crafts Festival, sponsored by the Maryland Craft Consortium, will be held at the Towson Center, Towson State University on Sunday, Nov. 22 from 10:00 a.m. until 7 p.m. More than one hundred artisans will display and sell their works. In addition, there will be crafts demonstrations and live Blue Grass entertainment.

Mark your calendar: Brenda Alford will give her 2nd Annual Benefit Concert for Radio Station WEAA and the National Association for Sickle Cell Anemia on Saturday, Nov. 28 at 8 p.m. in the Carl Murphy Auditorium of Morgan State University.

Baltimore's own Howard Rollins is starring in the new movie "Ragtime" and he's being given the STAR treatment. Next week he'll be in town for press interviews and Ebony Magazine is coming to Baltimore to do a feature story.

Mark your calendars and get tickets early for the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 4 and 5 at the Lyric. There are two Baltimoreans in the Dance Theatre of Harlem troupe and we'll be doing interviews next week. The troupe is now performing in four cities in Japan and will come to Baltimore direct from Japan.

Yvonne Butler and Kay Shelton are exhibiting their art in Murphy Fine Arts Center thru Dec. 3.

TV Watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

The Muppet Show: Guest is singer Cleo Laine. 5:30-6:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Sha Na Na: Singer Gloria Gaynor performs "I Will Survive". 7:00-7:30 p.m. Ch. 45.

Battle of the Network Stars: ABC, CBS, and NBC series stars compete in kayaking, swimming, football, an obstacle course, a baseball dunk, tandem-bicycling, a running relay, and a tug of war. Celebrities include Telma Hopkins, Tim Reid, and Bertinda Tolbert. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Ch. 7.

Movie: "Rollerball", a corporate run world where war has been replaced by a violent sport. Starring Moses Gunn. 8:00-10:00 p.m. Ch. 20.

Strike Force: The team is tipped off about a kidnapping by Frank's ex-partner, a spouse who claims he also witnessed a murder. Starring Dorian Harewood. 10:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Fridays: Singer Al Jarreau is guest. 12:00-1:30 a.m. Ch. 13.

Saturday

Fat Albert: A bully terrorizes the neighborhood. Hosted by Bill Cosby. 1:00-1:30 p.m. Ch. 11.

Dance Fever: Guest the Brothers Johnson perform "The Real Thing". 7:00-7:30 p.m. Ch. 2.

Solid Gold: Performances by The Pointer Sisters, Peaches and Herb and Johnny Mathis. 7:00-7:30 p.m. Ch. 20.

Walt Disney: Conclusion- "Dumbo", Oscar winning cartoon about the baby circus elephant that learned to fly. 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Movie: "Love at First Bite", Dracula the elegant Transylvania vamps a sharp-tongued Manhattan model. Starring Sherman Hemsley and Isabel Sanford. 9:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Sunday

CBS News Sunday Morning: A report on boxer Joe Frazier's attempted comeback. 9:00-10:30 a.m. Ch. 11.

Bob Hope: Bob Hope salutes the National Football League in songs and sketches. Guests include Bucky Dent and O. J. Simpson. 8:00 - 10:00 p.m. - Ch. 2.

Today's FBI: A paramilitary faction of the KKK terrorizes the black leaders of a small Southern town. Starring Harold Pompey, and Desmond Wilson. 8:00-9:00 p.m. Ch. 13.

Movie: "Mary Poppins", a winner of five Oscars, this delightful fantasy remains the highest-grossing film ever produced by the Walt Disney Studios. 8:00-11:00 p.m. Ch. 11.

Monday

John Davidson: Guests include singer-actress Nell Carter. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Ch. 13.

Sha Na Na: Singer Isaac Hayes is the guest. 7:00-7:30 p.m. Ch. 45.

Peanuts: "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving" with Charlie Brown as the hapless host and Snoopy in the kitchen, dishing up a meal of ice cream, popcorn and potato chips. 8:00-8:30 p.m. Ch. 11.

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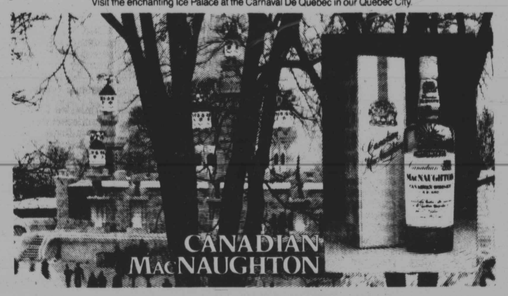

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