

# Holiday Harmony, a Plethora of Performances To Enrich and Inspire

By Wendy Hollenbach Hellyer, B.A., M.A. (Voice & Music)  
Esther Boyer College of Music, Temple University

"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" has been playing on the PA speakers of stores and shopping malls since before Thanksgiving and rap versions of "Jingle Bell Rock" abound on the radio. But if this is your child's only exposure to America's Holiday culture you're missing a wonderful opportunity to explore and discover wonderful music, art and drama.

A new shirt or blouse will last a season or two and be forgotten. But hearing Handel's Messiah for the first time, seeing the Nutcracker Suite, hearing a live Klezmer band, dining at a Renaissance Feast or seeing an enactment of "Christmas Carol" remain shared memories for life.

Instead of more material things or one more mindless video/computer game that will lose its appeal as soon as the new 'latest trendy item' is marketed, give a gift that you can share together – plan out together, enjoy together and remember together. This works whether you're a two parent traditional family or a divorced or single parent, a grandparent, real or 'adopted' aunt or uncle.

If you are inexperienced at attending 'cultural' events – ask a friend or teacher to help you choose something that you and your child can more easily 'digest' and enjoy. For example: if you have never gone to a 'Messiah' concert – don't start with the complete version. Try a 'Christmas Portion' concert first. (There are also 'sing-in' versions for singers who wish to take the score and sing along.) Don't be afraid to learn and experience new things with your children.

We are so fortunate to live in an area that abounds with cultural events! Right here in Bucks County we will have December performances of holiday orchestral music including a Klezmer band at the Delaware Valley Philharmonic (see [www.dvpo.org](http://www.dvpo.org)), a "Messiah" concert by the Bucks County Choir accompanied by the Chestnut Hill Orchestra (see [www.bcpai.org](http://www.bcpai.org)) and several dramatic and musical version of "Christmas Carol" (see local papers).

In Philadelphia there are even more events like The Pennsylvania Ballet's "Nutcracker Suite" and Longwood Gardens Christmas displays. Many art museums do special Christmas histories and exhibits at this time of year. And New York is only an hour by train. What a wealth of events there!

Don't forget that tickets for after-holiday events make a great gift as well as gift certificates for music, drama, dance or art lessons!

In the hullabaloo of holiday giving, it is easy to become overwhelmed with the need to give and get material gifts. But the message in all these 'holy days' whether it's Christmas, Hanukkah or Ramadan is that life has deepened dimensions. Giving gifts that enrich and inspire us can bring out true 'Holiday Harmony'.

## Calendar of Events



### December

Family Night, Bucks Gymnastic Center II, Fallsington. Every Friday, 6-7:30pm. Call 215-292-5354 for details.

11/19-1/6 Ginger Bread House Competition and Display. Peddler's Village, Lahaska. Call 215-794-4000 for details.

11/20-12/31 Annual Gingerbread Festival 2004. Crayola Factory at Two River Landing, Easton, PA. Call 610-515-8000 for details.

11/19-12/19 Visits with Santa. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Peddler's Village, Lahaska. Call 215-794-4000 for details.

11/30-12/18 HOLIDAY. Bristol Riverside Theatre, Radcliffe Street, Bristol. Call 215-785-0100 for show times and to purchase tickets.

12/8-12/12 ANNIE. Bucks County Playhouse, South Main Street, New Hope. Call 215-862-2041 for show times and ticket information.

12/11 & 12/13 A Colonial Christmas. 10am-7pm Saturday, 11am-7pm Sunday. Historical reenactment of Christmas, 1777. Crafts, games, tours and more. 80 Lower Silver Lake Rd. & Hwy. 332 in Newtown. FREE. Call 215-968-0276 for details.

12/18 Pancake Breakfast with Santa. Garden State Discovery Museum, Cherry Hill, NJ. Call 856-424-1233 for details.

12/18 Babes in Toyland. 11am and 1pm. Bucks County Playhouse, South Main Street, New Hope. Call 215-862-2041 for ticket information.

12/26 & 12/28 Kwanzaa Celebration with Queen Nur. Garden State Discovery Museum, Cherry Hill, NJ. Call 856-424-1233 for details.

12/31 New Years at Noon. Garden State Discovery Museum, Cherry Hill, NJ. Call 856-424-1233 for details.

12/31 First Night Newtown 2005. 6pm-midnight. Music, food, fireworks and more. Start off the new year with a bang. For more information go to [firstnighnewtownpa@comcast.net](mailto:firstnighnewtownpa@comcast.net)

### January

Family Night, Bucks Gymnastic Center II, Fallsington. Every Friday, 6-7:30pm. Call 215-292-5354 for details.

1/1 New Years Day Pajama Party. 9:30am-5:30pm. Garden State Discovery Museum, Cherry Hill, NJ. Call 856-424-1233 for details.

1/2-1/31 January Sales Event. Peddler's Village, Lahaska. Call 215-794-4000 for details.

1/8 Auditions for "Extra Extra": Male & female dancers, actors, singers 9-16 years old. The Barn at Brookside Manor, 63 Heather Ct., Newtown. Call BC Discoveries for more information, 215-357-7402

1/15 Multimodal, Non-Drug Treatment for AD/HD: free seminar for parents and professional to learn more about our exciting program featuring EEG biofeedback, Interactive Metronome, and HeartMath Stress Reduction Training. Pre-registration is required. Call 215-497-0240 for details.

1/17-4/3 Quilt Competition and Display. Peddler's Village, Lahaska. Call 215-794-4000 for details.

1/26 9am-11am. Open House, Pen Ryn School, Fairless Hills. Call 215-547-1800 for details.

1/30 Open House, 2-4pm. Newtown Friends School, Newtown. Call 215-968-2225 for details.

### February

Family Night, Bucks Gymnastic Center II, Fallsington. Every Friday, 6-7:30pm. Call 215-292-5354 for details.

2/10 Multimodal, Non-Drug Treatment for AD/HD: free seminar for parents and professional to learn more about our exciting program featuring EEG biofeedback, Interactive Metronome, and HeartMath Stress Reduction Training. Pre-registration is required. Call 215-497-0240 for details.

2/23 9am-11am. Open House, Pen Ryn School, Fairless Hills. Call 215-547-1800 for details.