

OPINION

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Concert jazzed us into the Christmas spirit



DORIS WELLE
DICKINSON COUNTY NEWS

If you weren't full of Christmas spirit by Saturday night, the Jazzed Up Big Band of Okoboji brought you there in style.

The band's concert in the Roof Garden at Arnolds Park was everything one could hope for. Outstanding musicians, lively music, colorful decor and a big crowd.

Sixteen musicians comprise the band which plays every Tuesday night in the Roof Garden during the summer. These guys came from Vermillion and Sioux Falls in South Dakota; Omaha, Nebraska; Worthington, Minnesota; and Twin Lakes, Storm Lake, Sioux City and Spirit Lake in Iowa.

We got off to a very upbeat start with a lively rendition of "Jingle Bells," and the fun began.

The band played so many of our favorite yuletide songs with upbeat arrangements for jazz bands. It was so much fun to listen to the beat.

"Joy to the World" really showcased the talented trumpet section. I very much enjoyed CJ Kocher's (Vermillion) rendition of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" on his beautiful gold clarinet.

A fantastic version of "Christmas Time Is Here" featured the very talented Ken Hoynes (Sioux Falls). He plays the trombone like no other!

Two guest soloists appeared with the band. Carol Nesbitt is a former news anchor at KELO TV in Sioux Falls. She made the trip from her present home in Denver, Colorado, to perform and has a beautiful voice. Shawn Cable is a former meteorologist at KELO who now resides in Mankato, Minnesota. They treated us to several duets throughout the evening as well as solo performances which were well done by both.

Nesbitt did a really neat version of "Merry Christmas Darling" with special accompaniment by Steve Smith (Sioux Falls) on keys. It was delightful.

I have waited since last year's show to hear Cable sing "O Holy Night" again. He does it the best I have ever heard. He did not disappoint me Saturday night. The audience went wild with cheers and applause. Even the band members applauded his performance. Thanks Shawn! It once again brought tears to my eyes and goose bumps on my skin.

The audience got involved in a singalong to "Silent Night" and, if I may brag ... we did a great job on that Christmas favorite.

The audience was not ready for the evening to be over. A standing ovation brought a much appreciated encore from the band.

Thank you to Rick Ayres from Spirit Lake for all the work he, his family and friends did to bring this special concert to fruition. I sincerely hope they can come back and do it again next holiday season. But at least we only have to wait until June 2023 to hear this talented band again in the Roof Garden.

ARGUS ON CURRENT EVENTS



ARGUS HAMILTON

GOP Senate candidate Herschel Walker gave a gracious concession speech Tuesday after he lost a very close runoff election in Georgia to incumbent Democratic Senator Raphael Warnock. How close was it? If only a third of Herschel's children had voted for him, it would have gone the other way.

The White House was confronted about President Biden's calling Georgia's voting law restrictive after a record turnout reelected Democrat Raphael Warnock. It was a lot closer than expected. Due to a computer glitch in Fulton County, some of Warnock's votes were only counted once.

Fox Business Channel interviewed economists this week who warn that falling real estate prices ensure that a recession next year is all but certain. I'd say the recession is definitely here already and there's proof. Last night in Arkansas, the guy who owns Walmart was seen shopping at Walmart.

Walmart signaled an alarm to the retail sector Wednesday by announcing Walmart may start closing stores because they're losing so much money due to shoplifting. Has Walmart ever thought about hiring checkout staff for the front of the store? Look, they either want self-checkout or they don't.

The Wall Street Journal warns that McDonald's raising its minimum wage to \$22 an hour will send fast menu food prices sky high. It certainly won't affect the wealthy. Last night Paul Pelosi walked into the McDonald's in San Francisco and asked the counter person for a McWhiskey.

Time magazine named Ukraine president Vladimir Zelensky Time Man of the Year. Ukraine has gotten \$20 billion from the U.S. this year. It appears the three greatest investments were buying Bell Telephone stock in 1876, buying Apple stock in 1982 and paying Hunter Biden \$80,000 a month in 2016.

Elon Musk's Twitter release exposed a nexus of surveillance over conservatives by the FBI, the DNC and social media. Last week I ordered a subscription to the New York Times and the Washington Post and my bank called to see if I lost my credit card.

READY SETH GO

Well wrought words from a past pressman



SETH BOYES
DICKINSON COUNTY NEWS

I'm finding more and more that I and one of my predecessors long-past would have probably gotten along quite well.

Abraham Benjamin Funk wore more hats in his time than I could fit on my shoulders, he was not only owner and editor at the Spirit Lake Beacon, but his obituary noted he was the city's first mayor and was its postmaster from 1882 to 1885.

He was elected to the Iowa Senate in 1887 and served for three terms before resigning and taking on other non-elected state positions. Heck, he even sat next to Abbie Gardner in the state capitol while legislators appropriated the \$5,000 in funding to construct the granite monument that stands in Arnolds Park today.

Busy guy, no doubt.

But what I imagine probably revealed Funk's personality and love for his newspaper was what he wrote in the paper's editorial columns — at least, I assume it was him ... bylines weren't quite standard at the Beacon in his day.

You see, back then, newspapers could poke jabs and barbs at their fellow publications, and keen editors would respond on their own pages. I'm not sure whether I regret missing out on those days or whether I'm relieved I'm not burdened with pages through dozens upon dozens of Iowa newspapers to see if the DCN's name is being besmirched by someone on the opposite side of the state.

As it happened, I came across one such response in the Beacon's archives last week.

About 136 years ago, the Beacon had apparently taken some flack from the Peterson Patriot over the Beacon's printing operation. Knowing the paper's history as I do (see the paper's 150th anniversary story published in the Progress section of the March 25, 2020 edition) I know that it was around that time the Beacon was switching to a steam-powered press, thanks to the economic boom brought on by the railways. Prior to that, they'd been using an old press.

A very old one ... one with mismatched typesets and

separators cut out of cigar boxes.

"From the dished condition of its bed, this printing machine was evidently much older than the state," Funk would later write.

But that press served the community for at least a decade — thanks in part to a "fine line of picturesque profanity" on the part of one press operator, according to Funk's account (but the news office is of course 100% profanity free these days, especially when dead lines are near). So it's no wonder the Beacon took issue with the Patriot's words about their old type.

"It chronicled events more important to this county than will any other metal ever placed in form," the Beacon (and probably Funk himself in my opinion) said. "Even when the editor's faith was dim and his spirits were low, it spoke words of cheer to the discouraged homesteader and the businessman, weary with long waiting for the dawning of a more fruitful era. It told of the glee of the almost fairy-like transition of the lake country from the Slough of Despond to a position of prosperity and prominence."

Boy, they just don't write columns the way they used to (says the guy writing this column).

Bottom line is, there was some real love for the paper — not the formed-lead letters and the press itself so much mind you, but the actual work of the paper and what its purpose was. It's a difficult thing to describe, but it's an easy one to understand once you get your hands in it. And it's comforting to know that those who pursued that same goal — telling the public not only our triumph but our tragedy and everything in between in each and every edition — realized the calling is and never was contained in the concrete trappings of the press room.

"It has served its full destiny and must like us frail mortals make room for other and more serviceable agents; but for the sake of the tender memories clinging to its mute face, give it the credit due to a well spent existence," the Beacon's column said.

Every so often, words like this — the kind that reverberate with hues of Shakespeare — stretch across the decades and show they are as true today as they were then. Time marches on, but those things which are worthwhile carry on anew somehow.



GUEST COMMENTARY

Qatar is the ally we need to counter Putin's influence

TAREK KTELEH

Russia's reprehensible invasion of Ukraine has made one thing clear: The global order is changing. An axis of repressive, authoritarian world powers — all with ties to Vladimir Putin — is growing bolder and more confident, and wants to see America's influence decline.

It's more important than ever for the United States and all liberty-minded Western nations to have dependable, moderate allies to counter Putin and his cronies. As policymakers look abroad to cultivate relationships, they shouldn't overlook Qatar, a rising star on the world stage.

While some folks might have trouble locating Qatar on a map, millions of eyes are turning to the Arab nation. Qatar is hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup in November and December, having beat out the United States, Australia, Japan and South Korea for the bid.

Hosting the World Cup will put the modern capital city of Doha in the limelight and further Qatar's use of "sports diplomacy" to enhance cooperation, respect and tolerance among all nations.

And there's certainly good reason to pay attention to Qatar. Although smaller than Connecticut, it has the fourth-highest gross domestic product per capita in the world, and is the second-highest exporter of liquefied natural gas. It is also home to thriving financial and tourism sectors, as well as the highly influential Al Jazeera media group.

Qatar has long cooperated with the United States and NATO in maintaining security in the Persian Gulf. When the West conducts air operations against Islamic State terrorists, Qatar has often provided space for staging zones. After the United States withdrew from Afghanistan last year, Qatar helped to evacuate more

than 40,000 civilians as the Taliban swiftly took over the country. The Biden administration recently designated it a major non-NATO ally.

Qatar played a pivotal role in supporting pro-democracy movements with financial and military resources during the Arab Spring. The country has backed youth, liberal and conservative change movements working to implement democratic governance and advance liberty and justice.

Qatar has also proven itself able and willing to oppose Putin and his proxies. While Putin aided the reign of terror of Syrian dictator Bashar Assad during the Syrian civil war, it was Qatar that supported the rebels who opposed him.

Even more important than Qatar's aid is its position as a top petroleum exporter. In a world where controlling the global supply of energy is of increasing strategic importance, Qatar may very well be able to deprive Putin of one of his greatest advantages over the West.

Washington may not agree with Doha on all issues, particularly its history of providing financial support to extremist groups. If such support still exists, Qatar should certainly rethink it. But that possibility should not stop the United States from courting Qatar as a friend and ally. The nation can play a vital role in countering Putin and his gang of illiberal authoritarians. That includes Syria's murderous dictator, Assad, who has long oppressed the people of my homeland.

Now is the time to build lasting ties with moderate nations. It's time for the United States and its Western allies to strengthen ties with Qatar.

• Dr. Tarek Kteleh is a practicing medical doctor and president of Rheumatology of Central Indiana. He is the author of "The Six Pillars of Advocacy: Embrace Your Cause and Transform Lives." This piece originally ran in "Issues & Insights."



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Brad Hicks Publisher
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