

# 40-Plus Family-Friendly Holiday Shows

*By Gemma Alexander*

Whether it's an elegant ballet, uplifting music or holiday comedy gold, these shows are shared memories that only require one thing: Show up.

**Note:** Shows with regular adult ticket prices of \$15 or less are marked bargain.

## Musicals, plays and holiday classics

### [A Christmas Carol, Lakewood Playhouse](#)

Ebenezer Scrooge journeys from humbug to human thanks to three spirit guides. This richly textured play brings the full spirit of the book, as well as the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come to life on the stage. Through Dec. 17. \$26. All ages. Lakewood Playhouse, Lakewood.

### [A Christmas Carol, ACT](#)

This is ACT's annual production of Dickens' classic holiday tale of the curmudgeonly businessman who requires the intervention of spectral guides to understand the true meaning of Christmas. Note: This includes somewhat scary characters; consider the age and sensitivity of kids you take to this show. Through Dec. 28. \$37-\$90. Ages 5 and older; no babes in arms. ACT — A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle.





*Credit: Michael Brunk*

### [Christmas Carol Junior](#)

**Bargain:** Join us for story time at the North Pole as Mrs. Claus and her kittens bring the story of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge to life in this original adaptation of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” The ghosts are all portrayed by the zaniest cats in Santa’s workshop. Dec. 3–17. \$12. Ages 5–12 with families (Sunday shows are all ages). SecondStory Repertory, Redmond.

### [Irving Berlin’s Holiday Inn](#)

The West Coast premiere of the Broadway hit “Holiday Inn” is inspired by the Oscar-winning film featuring 20 songs written by Irving Berlin. Jim leaves show business to settle down on a farm in Connecticut — but he finds the simple life is not as simple as he thought. Through Dec. 31. \$29–\$101. Ages 4 and older; no babes in arms. The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle.



*Mark Fishback, Sam Hartley and the Elf Tour Company 2017. Photo credit: Jeremy Daniel*

### [Elf the Musical](#)

“Elf the Musical” is the hilarious tale of Buddy, a young orphan raised by North Pole elves. Misfit Buddy’s enormous size and poor toy-making abilities lead him to New York City to find his birth father — who’s on the Naughty List. Can Buddy help his father — and New York — remember the true meaning of Christmas? Dec. 5–10. \$30–\$95. Paramount Theatre, Seattle.

### [Scrooge, the Musical](#)

“Scrooge, the Musical” by Leslie Bricusse is closely adapted from the music and screenplay of the 1970 musical film “Scrooge,” which follows the plot of Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” Dec. 8–17. \$13–\$21. Auburn Avenue Theater, Auburn.

### [Annie](#)

**Bargain:** Heavier Than Air Family Theatre presents the rags-to-riches adventure of the little girl whose pluck and positivity lead to a Christmas dream come true in one of the world’s best-loved musicals. Dec. 15–21. \$12–\$14. Ages 6 and older; no babes in arms. Green River College, Auburn.

### [Miracle on 34th Street the Musical](#)

**Bargain:** Is Macy’s Santa real or just a hire? Including classics such as “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas,” this show for the whole family will delight both young and old. This play uses child performers and is one hour and 45 minutes in length. Dec. 8–17. \$10 shows on Dec. 9 and 15. \$12–\$15. All ages. Bellevue Youth Theatre – Crossroads, Bellevue.

### [Christmastown: A Holiday Noir](#)

In this film-noir-inspired holiday thriller, hard-boiled detective Nick Holiday investigates the truth about Big Red. A glamorous elf, a used-Christmas-tree salesman, a muckraking reporter and a quick-thinking cab driver round out this nontraditional holiday mystery. Dec. 8–24. \$17–\$34. Seattle Public Theater, Bathhouse Theater at Green Lake, Seattle.

### [It’s a Wonderful Life](#)

Faithfully adapted from Frank Capra’s beloved film, the musical follows George Bailey’s life in Bedford Falls as he discovers what the world would be like if he had never been born. Featuring a beautiful contemporary score. Through Dec. 16. \$15–\$25. Ages 3 And older. ManeStage Theatre Company at Sumner Performing Arts



Center, Sumner.

## Comic romps

### [Mr. Popper's Penguins](#)

Try a new holiday classic with the stage adaptation of this beloved children's tale. Mr. and Mrs. Popper are an ordinary English couple until some unexpected guests come to stay! Through Dec. 31. \$22–\$40. Ages 4 and older. Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle. [And read our review!](#)

### [The Best Christmas Pageant Ever](#)

**Bargain:** The staid traditional Christmas pageant at the local church gets an injection of new “talent,” and comic mayhem is the result, in this delightful comedy adapted from the best-selling young adult book. Features a few favorite Christmas carols and a lot of laughs. Dec. 16–24. \$10. All ages. Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Tacoma.

### [Beauty and the Beast](#)

In a beloved annual tradition, Centerstage turns a well-known fairy tale on its head with English panto twists. Expect corny songs and a few surprises. Through Dec. 21. \$12–\$35. Ages 5 and older. Centerstage Theatre, Federal Way.



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*Photo credit: Studio East*

### ['Twas the Night...](#)

Belly laughs are in order as the classic Christmas Eve poem is spun to comical new heights — with surprise twists every year — as the Big family awaits the arrival of St. Nick. Through Dec. 17. \$20. Ages 4 and older. Studio East, Kirkland.

### [The Elves & the Toymakers](#)

In its annual holiday show, StoryBook Theater presents the heartwarming holiday tale of two generous elves who help out a desperate toy maker and his wife, just in the nick of time. Dec. 2–19. \$18. Ages 3–10 with families. Venues in Renton, Seattle, Shoreline and Kirkland.

### [The Elves & the Shoemaker](#)

**Bargain:** The old shoemaker hasn't had many customers lately, but his kindness to someone in need leads to a few surprises in the workshop. Who is creating these surprises? Olympic Family Theater's Let's Play series offers short, dynamic, interactive shows suitable for all ages. Giggles guaranteed. Dec. 4–10. \$5, children younger than 2 free. Olympia Family Theater, Olympia.

### [Holiday Classics Series](#)

**Bargain:** For the first three weekends in December, put family movie night on the big screen with SIFF's holiday classics series. See "Edward Scissorhands" (Dec. 1–3), "Home Alone" (Dec. 8–10) and "Die Hard" or "Scrooged" (Dec. 15–17). \$9–\$14. SIFF Film Center, Seattle.

### [The Flight Before Christmas](#)

Can a group of travelers stuck at the airport on Christmas Eve maintain their Christmas spirit? Find out in this heartwarming new holiday show about finding your way home and the family we discover for ourselves. Dec. 1–24. \$17–\$34. All ages. Seattle Public Theater, Bathhouse Theater at Green Lake, Seattle.

### [A Charlie Brown Christmas](#)

This musical based on the beloved television special follows Charlie Brown as his anti-commercial funk is relieved when Linus helps him find the true meaning of Christmas. Appropriate for all ages, with special sensory-friendly performances on

Dec. 2 and 9. Through Dec. 27. \$15–\$25. Taproot Theatre, Seattle.

### [The 12 Days of Christmas: A Musical Celebration](#)

A group of carolers learn the fractured fairy tales behind each of the gifts sung in the song. Tell-ing the stories of the spirit of a mother reincarnated as a partridge, a soldier reunited with his true love, six geese desperately trying to avoid the roasting pan, a kick line of milk maids, and others, this production keeps Christmas spirited. This is not your mother’s “12 Days of Christ-mas,” but one Auntie Mame would adore. Dec. 8–23. \$22–\$25. Ages 13 and older. Renton Civic Theatre, Renton.

### [The Stardust Christmas Enchantment](#)

At the Stardust Club in lower Manhattan in 1960, the gang celebrates the election of John F. Kennedy to the White House and the sense that America has entered a new age. However, mysterious events involving myth and magic draw them into circumstances only the spirit of Christmas can untangle. Period music, dance and comedy for all ages. Through Dec. 21. \$25–\$48. State Theater, Olympia.



**Leapin’ ‘Nutcrackers’ and more dance**

### [George Balanchine's The Nutcracker](#)

Celebrate the 125th birthday of “The Nutcracker” with the Pacific Northwest Ballet’s staging of Russian dancer and choreographer George Balanchine’s classic 1952 version of the ballet. Ian Falconer, creator of the kids’ book character Olivia the Pig, designed the fanciful sets. Through Dec. 28. \$26–\$190. McCaw Hall, Seattle.

### [The Nutcracker by Evergreen City Ballet](#)

A period production of the classic ballet features magical sets and costumes. Select one-hour shows for young children, which take place at each venue. Through Dec. 17. \$18–\$36. Venues in Bellevue, Auburn and Renton.

### [The Nutcracker by Emerald Ballet Theatre](#)

This North Sound ballet company presents a full-length performance featuring brand-new sets, gorgeous costumes, professional and youth performers, and live performances by the Rainier Symphony Ballet Orchestra. Dec. 2–10. \$20–\$43. Northshore Performing Arts Center, Bothell.

### [The Gift of Dance](#)

**Bargain:** Kaleidoscope Dance Company presents its family-friendly holiday performance featuring dancers ages 7–16, who helped choreograph this showcase of imaginative modern dance. Dec. 3. \$6–\$10. Shorewood Performing Arts Center, Shoreline.

### [Nutcracker Sweets](#)

This popular, one-hour Nutcracker by ARC Dance caters to young audiences and showcases the talents of student dancers, alongside youth and professional company dancers. It always sells out, so get tickets soon. Dec. 8–10. \$15–\$25. Venues in Seattle and Shoreline.

### [The Nutcracker & The Tale of the Hard Nut](#)

Presented alongside the traditional Russian “The Nutcracker,” Tacoma City Ballet’s annual production includes the seldom-told Nutcracker backstory of the magical Krakatuk Nut in “The Tale of the Hard Nut.” Accompanied live by the Tacoma City Ballet Orchestra. Note: This is the show’s first year at the Federal Way Performing Arts and Events Center. Dec. 15–23. \$18–\$104. Federal Way Performing Arts and

Events Center, Federal Way.

### [The Nutcracker by Olympic Ballet Theatre](#)

Olympic Ballet Theatre presents its annual, full-length performance of the holiday favorite, this year featuring new Act One sets in honor of the ballet's 125th birthday. Abridged performances on Dec. 8 and 14 are perfect for younger viewers. Dec. 8–17. \$25–\$48. Venues in Everett and Edmonds.

### [The Nutcracker by International Ballet Theatre](#)

The beloved ballet is performed in traditional Russian style with elaborate sets and costumes from Ukraine, plus Arabian dancers and a fierce battle scene. Some performances are already sold out. Dec. 13–22. \$25–\$50. Theatre at Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue.

### [The Nutcracker by Ballet Northwest](#)

A South Sound tradition for more than three decades, the production this year will feature all-new sets for the Snow and Land of Sweets scenes. More than 200 dancers are part of Clara and her Nutcracker's magical journey. Dec. 8–17. \$14–\$33. Washington Center Main Stage, Olympia.

## **Orchestras, singers and choirs**

### [Sing-Along With Santa!](#)

**Bargain:** Santa and the Tacoma Musical Playhouse elves will kick off the holiday season with favorite holiday carols, live accompaniment and a special story time read by St. Nick himself. After the sing-along, children can meet Santa and give him their holiday wishes, with professional photography. Dec. 2. \$10. All ages. Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Tacoma.

### [Seattle Men's Chorus: A Sassy Brassy Holiday](#)

Sometimes traditional Christmas carols can start to feel, well, tired. Trust the Seattle Men's Chorus to infuse the classics with the warmth of brass and a pinch of sass! The program features a soaring gospel arrangement of "Joy to the World," the cheeky and cheerful "A Super Gay Christmas," and a down and dirty Dixie version of "Let It Snow." Dec. 10–23. \$34–\$84. Benaroya Hall, Seattle. (Also Dec. 9 at Rialto Theater, Tacoma; and Dec. 16 at Historic Everett Theatre, Everett.)



### [The Coats' Holiday Extraordinaire — Shine On!](#)

The Coats' holiday show is an all-ages evening filled with laughter, joy and love. The quartet displays an awe-inspiring vocal range, performing catchy music that even gets Santa dancing! Dec. 15–17. \$42.50. Benaroya Hall, Seattle.

### [Ensign Symphony and Chorus presents Hosannah!](#)

This production centers on traditional Christmas favorites that focus on the spiritual side of Christmas, including “Silent Night,” “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and many others. Dec. 18–19. \$18–\$38. Benaroya Hall, Seattle.

### [Tiny Tots Holiday Hooray!](#)

**Bargain:** Singing twin sisters Lisa and Linda invite the youngest of concertgoers to experience delightful holiday tunes in an interactive sing- and move-along performance accompanied by a brass trio. Dec. 8–9. \$12. Ages 0–5 years with families. Benaroya Hall, Seattle.

### [Handel's Messiah](#)

The Seattle Symphony, along with its chorale and talented soloists, presents this annual tradition that includes the magnificent “Hallelujah” chorus. Dec. 15–17. \$24–\$89. Benaroya Hall, Seattle.

### [Community Messiah Sing-along](#)

**Bargain:** Come to sing (or just listen) to Handel's masterpiece in a true community event with guest conductors and soloists, featuring the audience as the chorus! Selections of the work will be performed. Vocal scores will be available for purchase. Dec. 18. FREE. Washington Center for the Performing Arts, Olympia.

### [Mark O'Connor's An Appalachian Christmas](#)

Grammy Award winner and Seattle native Mark O'Connor's Meany Hall performances have become a tradition. Joined by members of his musical family, O'Connor and the O'Connor Band will perform Christmas classics, with Appalachian fiddling and bluegrass. Dec. 16–17. \$49–\$57. Ages 5 and older. Meany Hall for the Performing Arts, Seattle.





*Photo credit: Broadway Center for Performing Arts*

## One-of-a-kind shows

### [The Christmas Revels](#)

This celebration of the winter solstice presents traditional music, dance and drama on the Spanish pilgrimage route, Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The show features pilgrims (actors, and adult and children's choruses) singing, dancing and storytelling on the camino in a lively, lovely, funny and joyous celebration for all ages. Dec. 16–20. \$19–\$36. Rialto Theater, Tacoma.

### [The Muppet Christmas Carol](#)

**Bargain:** See the madcap Muppets spin on Dickens, starring Michael Caine, on the big screen. Dec. 17. \$10. Pantages Theater, Tacoma.

### [Community-Wide Hanukkah Pajama Jam](#)

**Bargain:** In the coziest community Hanukkah celebration ever, don your PJs and enjoy live mu-sic performed by Josh & Chava, a live presentation of a special Hanukkah story, food trucks, arts and crafts, gift bags and more! Bring new and gently used pajamas to donate to children in foster care. Dec. 16. Free with pajama donation. Stroum Jewish Community Center, Mercer Island.

### [Cirque Dreams Holidayze](#)

The 10th-anniversary national tour of this critically acclaimed holiday stage

extravaganza is a cirque spectacle, Broadway musical and family show all in one. Dec. 22–24. \$40–\$70. Paramount Theatre, Seattle.

### [Fiddler on the Roof Sing-Along](#)

Get ready to belt out “If I Were a Rich Man” and “Tradition” with this beloved 1971 film. A kosher Chinese food buffet and live klezmer music, included in ticket price, precede the screening and are part of what is now a SIFF tradition. Dec. 25. 12 p.m. \$20 –\$25. SIFF Cinema Uptown, Seattle.

### [White Christmas Sing-Along](#)

Join Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney as they save a Vermont inn in this participatory White Christmas at SIFF. Dec. 21–25. \$9–\$14. SIFF Film Center, Seattle.