

## The Performant: Jingle Balls

12.07.10 - 2:29 pm | [Nicole Gluckstern \(/category/author/nicole-gluckstern/\)](#) (0)

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*Decking the halls with "The Oddman Family Christwanzaakah Spectacular" and "Balls to Balzac"*

How many more ways are there to teach the true meaning of Christmas-Solstice-Chanukah-Kwanzaa now that Jim Carrey has been both the Grinch and Scrooge, dreidels come in rainbow colors, and Kwanzaa candles are available in soy wax? Well, you could start by teaching your children that everyday is like a holiday, and that the spirit of giving can permeate the entire year. That's what the Oddmans do. And look at how multi-talented their precious little tykes are turning out. They sing, they dance, they play music, they translate the songs in ASL -- some without the average number of limbs usually sported by working musicians (besides Rick Allen, that is). All the Oddman family wants is to spread a little multi-cultural holiday cheer around. In Hollywood. Right now. SHOW ME THE MONEY.

Of course the Oddmans aren't the first family in the history of show business to hit upon the idea that perseverance in the face of physical adversity makes for good television. The forcibly-mutilated beggar children of the Middle Ages were assembled with a similar desire to tug the heartstrings and pursestrings of the general public. Gathering a group of discarded orphans together in a rock-solid backup band for star duo Johnny (Ryan Marchand) and La'ree (Whitney Thomas), who do in fact retain possession all their limbs and most of their mental faculties, is downright philanthropic in comparison. Or is it?

I definitely went into "[The Oddman Family Christwanzaakah Spectacular](http://www.guerillarep.org) (<http://www.guerillarep.org>)" at the Exit Theatre with the more-or-less on the mark notion that it would be a weird evening. But I certainly didn't anticipate the gleeful depths of depravity to which the characters stooped. In particular, Mother and Father (Sheena McIntyre and Matt Gunnison) whose creepily literal interpretation of the motto "give 'til it hurts" and entrenched cultural myopia took what could have been just another attempt at holiday fruitcake to turn it into the most debauched food-for-thought of the season. Above all, teaching the valuable lesson of how when the ghouls of Christmas Present are coming for your kidneys, sometimes it's better to give a little than a lot.

Meanwhile, a neighborhood away, choreographer [Amy Lewis](http://www.pushproductions.org) (<http://www.pushproductions.org>) presented a lecture at [Cellspace](http://www.cellspace.org) (<http://www.cellspace.org>) entitled "Balls to Balzac: A Journey from Testicles to Women in the Bourbon Restoration" to a hardy breed braving the rain. She began by exploring the true true meaning of the word "balls" and why there were not as many other euphemisms used in its place as with other major players in the nether regions, then worked her way up to discussing the literary treatment that Balzac, the prolific author of The Human Comedy, gave to his female protagonists. What was most fascinating to me though was the topic she touched upon only briefly -- the use of mapping techniques in choreography, a tool I admit I'd been hitherto ignorant of. Now that my interest is piqued, I only hope that Ms. Lewis will incorporate more examples and explanation of this very topic into her next public presentation.

### **The Oddman Family Christwanzaakah Spectacular**

**Through Dec 18**

**Exit Theatre**

**156 Eddy, SF**

**\$20**

**(415) 673-3847**

<http://www.guerillarep.org> [www.sffringe.org](http://www.sffringe.org) (<http://www.sffringe.org>)

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