'Christmas' will delight the young

THEATER REVIEW

By Ashley D. Polasek
Contributing writer

The heart and cleverness of American poet Ogden Nash meets lively song and dance at Warehouse Theatre's "The Christmas that Almost Wasn't" this holiday season.

In a musical adaptation by Will Rhys, the 50-minute play stages Nash's poem about good King Oldwin of Lullapat, whose love of holiday cheer and cinnamon buns can't save him from the schemes of his wicked nephew Evilard, who imprisons his uncle and declares an end to Christmas. Only the pure-hearted young shepherd Nicky Knock can save the king and bring festive joy back to Lullapat.

The production, directed by Brenna Yeary and geared toward a young audience, is lively and pleasant. The minimalist set allows the cast of nine to pantomime throughout much of the narrated show, which complements the upbeat story-book nature of the production, though tends to detract from the overall immersive theatrical experience.

Most members of the cast play more than one role. Particularly engaging are Warehouse veterans Angie Price, who, as the malicious bird Croaker, gets the opportunity to put her impressive jazzy voice to great use, and Chelsea Atkins, who takes obvious delight in skulking menacingly as one of Evilard's vile henchmen.

As the well-meaning young hero Nicky, Graham Poore gives an appealing performance . Stevie Keese, playing the innocent and tender Nell, shines on her solo "Nell's My Name." Playing the villain Evilard, Chris Onken is suitably wicked.

Michael Hart, Drake King, Charles Poore and Clarka Wickliffe round out the cast with fine characterizations and attractive vocals.

Performances continue through Dec. 29. For tickets, call 864-235-6948