



Friends of the fuzzy bear Paddington Brown rejoice at a London train station after finding the curious bear. "The Adventures of a Bear Called Paddington" will be performed at the Lincoln Community Playhouse.

Steven Bender/DN

innocent antics

BY JOSH NICHOLS

He's a 48-inch tall, suitcase-toting bear who wears a goofy looking hat and duffle coat.

Despite having a heart the size of a hot-air balloon, he has a knack for getting into troublesome situations.

Tonight, the innocent antics and misfortunes of the huggable little bear known as Paddington will be performed at the Lincoln Community Playhouse.

"He always finds himself in a 'muddle,' which is a British word for that familiar place where we find ourselves overwhelmed," said Mark Gruber, director of "The Adventures of a Bear Called Paddington."

The play will be showing through Nov. 26 at the Lincoln Community Playhouse's Family Theater.

Gruber said the play is a children's story that is an "episodic development of all the trouble one bear can get into."

Paddington Bear always has good intentions, but the means to accomplish these good intentions are often lacking, Gruber said.

"I hope children in the audience will be able to identify with Paddington," he said.

One aspect of the play Gruber said he was particularly excited about was the bear costume developed for the role.

"We've taken the image from a story book and made ourselves our own little Paddington," he said. "The costume is truly a delight."

Underneath the furry costume are Jamie Michelsen and John Potter, who alternate in the role of Paddington.

Gruber said he has been impressed with the job the

children have done in what he said is a difficult role to play. He said playing Paddington is a physically demanding role.

In theater, he said, Paddington's role is known as physical or low comedy and described as "circus clown-like."

"We're asking 12- and 14-year-old actors to do some of the most difficult comedy," he said. "I'm a skilled actor, and I think playing that part is difficult without a costume."

"It's great the children can pull it off."

Also thrown into the challenging mix is off-stage actor Bill Stibor, who does the voice of Paddington.

Stibor said it has been a challenge to make his lines correspond with the bear's actions on stage.

"Because I'm up in the booth and separated from the actors, I need to have an understanding of how they work as kids," he said.

But he said it's going well.

"They're lots of fun," he said. "The bear is really cute."

Paddington's appeal has enabled him to be a mainstay in children's stories for nearly 50 years.

The first "A Bear Called Paddington" story was published in the United Kingdom in 1958.

The stories were written by Michael Bond and illustrated by Peggy Fortnum.

Since then, numerous other books, short stories and shows have been done about the adventures of the curious little bear.

The original story is about Paddington being sent out to see the world by his aunt in Peru.

She hides him in a ship's lifeboat and sends him to England.

There he is discovered by Mr. and Mrs. Brown, who

find him with a note tied around his neck that reads: "Please take care of this bear. Thank you."

Mr. and Mrs. Brown take him home to live with them and their two children, Jonathan and Judy.

The little bear gets along with most everyone, especially Mr. Gruber, his good friend and mentor who owns an antique store.

The only person Paddington doesn't get along with is the Brown's mean neighbor, Mr. Curry.

Stibor, who speaks with an English accent in the play, described Paddington as a curious, helpful chap with a good soul.

The bear always means well but also gets into difficult situations, especially with Mr. Curry.

"He's not quite up for the task he sets himself up for sometimes," Stibor said.

But that's OK, Gruber said, quoting a line from the play: "He's just that kind of bear."

PERFORMANCE PREVIEW

The Adventures of a Bear Called Paddington

Where: Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 26th St.

When: Tonight at 7 p.m.
Friday at 7 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday at 1 & 4 p.m.
Nov. 24 at 4 & 7 p.m.
Nov. 25 at 4 p.m.
Nov. 26 at 1 & 4 p.m.

Cost: \$10 general public
\$9 students

Honeydogs' premier whets palate for more

BY ANDREW SHAW

Honeydogs' debut release, "Here's Luck," is a barbecue bacon cheeseburger of an album.

Adam Levy's songwriting talents are a mouth-watering combination of early-rock influence and modern-rock expertise.

The beef of the album is Levy's melody writing. Each track offers a tune that sticks to the roof of your mouth and slowly seeps into your brain.

The songs are reminiscent of Fastball, catchy and hummable, but the lyrics are an intelligent slice of cheese, melting around the meaty melodies.

The full five-piece band works with the intricacy of the finest barbecue sauce, blending spicy drum patterns with sweet harmonies and smooth keyboards. A soothing acoustic guitar track follows you throughout the album, comforting and satisfying your appetite.

Honeydogs surge with Beatles influence like Elliot Smith, complete with searing Beatles-esque guitar solos and a John Lennon-like organ matched with "Octopus's Garden's" arpeggios. Like a sesame-seeded bun, the sound is not expected on a band's first album, but the surprise is very stimulating.

The best part of "Here's Luck" is how it all fits together and feels so effortless. We could call it the "bacon" of the album—how strings, piano, acoustic and electric guitar, a rollicking drum set, and Levy's heartfelt lyrics bring all of the Honeydogs' various tastes and bouquets together into a perfect meal.

PERFORMANCE PREVIEW

Honeydogs

Where: W.C.'s 1028 P St.

When: Friday at 9 p.m.

Cost: \$6 advance, \$8 at the door. Tickets at W.C.'s and Recycled Sounds.

MUSIC REVIEW

Title: Here's Luck

Label: Palm Records 2000

★★★★

Every bite of "Here's Luck" is a well-planned and well-executed song, from the moseying "Stonewall" to the tremolo-happy "Red Dye #40" to the strip-it-down and build-it-up "Freakshow."

The only regret from the album is that it is gone too soon, only whetting the listener's appetite for more.

The second course will be Friday at 9 p.m. at W.C.'s, when Honeydogs and Lincoln's Floating Opera, with special guests The World Record Players, take the stage. Tickets, sold at W.C.'s and Recycled Sounds, are \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door.

Folk musician to entrance listeners

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

He's got crazy hair—not quite an organized-chaos mop of hair like Jimi Hendrix, but he does have crazy every-which-way hair.

The craziness ends there.

His smooth voice takes over the microphone while he strums his acoustic guitar gently in the background.

He would almost lull you to sleep with the peacefulness if it weren't for his critically applauded lyrics, which keep the audience entranced.

His name is Vance Gilbert, and he might be one of the better folk musicians you've never heard of.

Only you just might start to hear of him. Gilbert took the New England area folk scene by storm and is now trying to invade the nation.

"News of this bold, infectious performer spread like prairie fire," the Boston Globe reported. "No local acoustic performer in recent memory—not Tracy Chapman, not The Story, not Dar Williams—has gotten hot faster than Gilbert."

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram called Gilbert's lyrics "some of the best you will ever hear."

This is exactly why the Lincoln Association for Traditional Arts jumped at the chance to have Gilbert perform in Lincoln.

On Saturday, Gilbert will perform at 7:30 p.m. at the 7th Street Loft. Tickets sell for \$12 and \$6 for students.

"Some of the board members

PERFORMANCE PREVIEW

Vance Gilbert

Where: 7th Street Loft, 2500 S. 26th St.

When: Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$12 general public
\$6 students

were familiar with Mr. Gilbert, and they unanimously recommended he come here," LAFTA board member Kerry Krause said.

Gilbert may sound familiar. He played as a guest artist at the Lied Center for Performing Arts last year.

Fans can expect Gilbert to play many of the songs from his newest CD, "Somerville Live," which features 16 tracks. It is the fourth CD that the New England native has produced.

LAFTA President Pat Kirkenback said those who attend won't be disappointed.

"He's a wonderful performer," she said. "Some people are just good at guitar or singing, but he's got the whole package. He can play, has a great voice, and he's funny and a great entertainer."

Kirkenback said Gilbert also adds another dimension to the 7th Street Loft's season schedule.

"We really like to have singer and songwriters perform like Vance," she said. "He offers folk music, but we've had many different types now like blue grass and Celtic."



Megan Cody/DN