

## Nov. 27, 2010 - Article from Beaufort County Now:

### 'Christmas: A Night of Glory' running at the Rocky Hock Playhouse



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Gloria Emmerich, co-owner of the Rocky Hock Playhouse in Washington, has reinvented the nativity story into a modern, musical melodrama, just in time for the Christmas season. Emmerich's "Christmas: A Night of Glory," fleshes out the brief narrative of Mary and Joseph, from the Hebrew Bible's Gospel of Luke, into an emotional two-hour play, which will take the stage every Tuesday and Thursday at 2 p.m., and every Saturday at 10:30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., through Dec. 18.



*Rocky Hock Playhouse performers sing Christmas songs during the 30-minute pre-show.*

Busloads of Virginia residents, as well as dozens of locals, were sitting in the auditorium of the old P.S. Jones Middle School for this afternoon's performance, which sold 114 tickets. Since the show opened on Nov. 19, the largest audience was about 400-strong, said Holly Emmerich, the daughter of Gloria and her husband and theater co-owner, Jeff.

Before the play began, the audience was treated to a Christmas caroling pre-show, followed by a special recognition of Gloria and Jeff's 39-year wedding anniversary.

When the curtains rose for the main event, the onstage love story of Mary (played by Mariah Perry) and Joseph (played by Jeff Emmerich) began to unfold. The play went through the very human reactions that the Immaculate Conception might have evoked in Mary; Joseph; Mary's mom, Anna (played by Beth Marsh); Mary's father, Joachim (played by Darryl Stallings; and Mary's aunt, Elizabeth (played by Gloria Emmerich). The

audience followed Mary from her betrothal to Joseph, to her visit from the angel Gabriel (played by Nathan Schierer), to her difficult conversations with Joseph and her parents about the pregnancy, to her hiding out in Judea, and, finally, to her birthing of Jesus Christ.



*Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel, who tells her that she is pregnant with the Son of God.*

These familiar, yet archaic, figures and situations were given an increased sense of relevance in Emmerich's play, through the contemporization of the characters' expectations and expressions. The timeless and universal crisis of unmarried pregnancy lent credibility to such a new take on the 2000-year-old story. Mary and Joseph teased one another along the lines of an evening sitcom, and Joseph even questions why God couldn't wait to impregnate Mary until after their marriage. The improbability of Mary being the Mother to the Lord's Son, as prophesied in the Book of Isaiah, was put into perspective by Mary's father, who angrily said: "You dare think that you are this virgin! That is near blasphemy, Mary."



*Joseph assumes that Mary isn't being honest when she tells him that she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit.*

Emotions run pretty intense the entire first act of the play, with much weeping and lamenting. Just before intermission, the mood lightens as all characters move toward acceptance during a powerful singing of "In God's Hands," which says: "Yes, I prayed, but I don't understand--so this must stay in God's hands."

Tickets are on sale and can be bought at the door or by calling the Rocky Hock Playhouse box office at 252-482-4621. Prices are \$18 for adults, \$17 for seniors and \$11 for children. They are also offering less expensive group rates, which can be arranged by calling the box office.