

## Q&A: Mustard Seed revives 'All Is Calm'



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Last winter, Mustard Seed Theatre scored a resounding success with its sold-out production of “All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914.” An a cappella musical based on real events during World War I, when soldiers on both sides put down their weapons to celebrate the holiday, the show is built around traditional carols and period songs in English, French and German. “All Is Calm” won five St. Louis Theater Circle awards in March, including the award for outstanding production of

a musical. Now Mustard Seed is reprising the production with the same cast and the same music director, Joe Schoen.

**What made “All Is Calm” so successful?** Coming in, people knew that it was a cappella, but they didn’t expect the impact that would have in combination with the story. It was (originally) written as a concert, with singers in tuxedos and two actors to read all the roles. But Deanna (Jent, the director) and I staged it like a normal musical, with actors who can sing. Deanna, who is very smart, thought it would work. But we weren’t expecting what happened.

**Is the music hard?** It’s very challenging — and I am a real stickler. But it’s a labor of love. Every single person came back to do it again.

**Is a cappella enjoying a revival?** Yes! ... You know, before there were any instruments, even before percussion, there was the human voice. It still surpasses any instrument, and it always will.

**What “All Is Calm” • When** Friday through Dec. 14; 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, 2 and 5 p.m. Sundays • **Where** Fontbonne University Fine Arts Theatre, 6800 Wydown Boulevard • **How much** \$25-\$30; Thursday performances are “pay what you can” shows (canned food is welcome) • **More info** 314-719-8060; mustardseedtheatre.com