

SEATTLE SKETCHER

An illustrated journal of life in the Puget Sound region by Times artist Gabriel Campanario.

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Dickens Carolers put lots of effort into making it look easy

Posted by Gabriel Campanario



Tenor Nathan Rodda, right, shared a little-known fact about the Dickens Carolers of Seattle: The soprano and the tenor always wear red, and the alto and bass, green. The other carolers, from left to right, are John Huddlestun, Shoshauna Mohlman and Maggie Tisdale.

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Sketched Dec. 10, 2013

So far this holiday season, this quartet of Dickens Carolers has welcomed machinists arriving for their morning shift at a Boeing plant, entertained the homeless at Occidental Park and added to the festive atmosphere during employee appreciation day at Swedish Medical Center.

Dickens Carolers co-owner Nathan Rodda said the group started in 1978 and has grown to include 11 quartets that perform an average of 50 gigs each from Thanksgiving to Christmas. The job isn't easy to get. To be a Dickens Caroler, candidates – even veteran members – audition every summer, attend weekly rehearsals in the fall and study a 50-page manual that spells out proper caroler etiquette, down to the way to stroll.

And, oh, can they sing. I was touched when the quartet at Swedish broke into the Catalan carol “Fum, Fum, Fum.” Rodda understands. What these carolers do is very real, he said. “You’d be surprised to know how many people cry.”

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