



---

## The Republican.

### Dan Kane Singers show thrills sellout audience

Monday, December 05, 2005

By **CLIFTON J. NOBLE Jr.**  
Music writer

SPRINGFIELD - Never underestimate the power of the Dan Kane Singers.

Their 28th Annual Christmas Spectacular played to a full house at Springfield's MassMutual Center Friday evening. As Master of Ceremonies Dave Madsen of abc40 revealed, Kane himself doubted that the event would sell out the center. A rafter-raising throng of more than 4,000 enthusiastic Dan Kane fans packed the seats and Springfield's streets to prove him blissfully wrong.

Madsen polled the audience by applause to find out how many "first-timers" were in the arena. Judging by the response, the faithful significantly outnumbered the novices, but concert-goers new to the Dan Kane experience indicated warmly that they would not miss it in the future.

"Spectacular" was the key word in the event's title. With giant video monitors on both sides of the stage linked to a roving camera crew worthy of MTV, an array of some 200 smartly attired, smiling singers, a keyboard rig putting a digital orchestra of organ, piano, chimes, harp, strings, bass, timpani, and a host of other noises at his finger and toe-tips, and a quartet of the area's finest professional sidemen, including guitarist Bob Ferrier, trumpeter Carlos Saloio, reed-man Bruce Krasin, and percussionist Gregory Caputo, Kane the showman pulled out all the stops.

The vocal highlight of the evening, the electrifying moment that raised instant goosebumps, was young Sam Plotkin's account of Julie Gold's "From a Distance."

Plotkin is one of several gifted DKS Junior Singers emerging from the ranks of this organization that calls singing sensation Ashley Gearing one of its own. He delivered Gold's profound lyrics with utterly pure, unmannered vocal tone, and a visible, sincere connection to their meaning in his eyes. With the right training and the right breaks, Plotkin could be following in the footsteps of Josh Groban in a few years.

Gearing herself made an eagerly awaited and boisterously applauded solo appearance on the concert's second half, asking "Where Are You, Christmas" in the polished, inflected popular style that has won her national acclaim.

Dry eyes were scarce as Sarah Gosselin and Kristin Martin collaborated in the "Les Miserables" ballad "Bring Him Home," while footage of American armed forces rolled on the big screens.

A roar of excitement greeted Kelsey Veillette and Nick Burrage as they sang and danced a rousing hybrid of the traditional and Bruce Springsteen versions of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town."

Among performances by veteran Kane vocalists, Jim O'Leary's rendition of "Bless This House" and Jim Kane's "One God" exemplified the atmosphere of community, faith, and family and the sense of searing conviction, all hallmarks of the group's music-making sure to melt the grinchiest heart.

The Singers turned from the secular to the sacred in their second half, raising John B. Dykes' grand old hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy" and giving Beethoven a Dan Kane spin in "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee."

Meghann Fahy captivated her audience with an impassioned turn on Mark Lowry's "Mary Did You Know?" and Jennifer Gaffney balanced that contemporary tribute with Schubert's classic "Ave Maria."

The Dan Kane 28th Annual Christmas Spectacular took the MassMutual Center by storm and illuminated it from end to end with an extravagance of true and welcome Christmas spirit.

©2006 The Republican

© 2006 MassLive.com All Rights Reserved.