

A Fortnight before Christmas  
or  
A Visit to the Symphony

'Twas two weeks before Christmas, when all through the town  
The car motor was whirring with the radio turned down.  
They were driving to Wentz Hall and parking with care.  
The folks heard that Christmas was coming with flair.

The children came, too (although dragging their feet);  
Their parents cajoled them with "It'll be neat!  
"The DSO's put the classics on Naperville's map!  
(“Sure beats ‘alternative,’ head bangers, hip-hop and rap.”)

They got out of their car, climbed the stairs like a ladder  
To symphonic heaven. “Matthew, what is the matter?!”  
Mamma hollered as little Matt ran through the lobby,  
Grabbed a program from the usher, and smacked brother Bobby.

The two boys then raced through the doors to the hall.  
Bobby had trapped Matthew against the side wall,  
When, what to their wondering eyes should appear,  
Some eighty musicians were warming up here.

A statuesque blonde, at the head of the crowd,  
Made them play soft, then made them play loud.  
The stage lighting made her hair shine like platinum;  
As she called to the players, the boys thought she would flatten 'em,

"Now, TRUMPETS, now, TROMBONES! Now, CELLOS and BASSES!  
"Now tutti crescendo! Don't fall on your faces!  
"To the top of the movement! You, violins all,  
"Don't thrash away, slash away! Get on the ball!"

As a battalion of soldiers that's seasoned and drilled,  
Those string players followed wherever she willed.  
Like a squad of Blue Angels the wild fiddle-sticks flew,  
Their sound filled the hall and enveloped the two.

They finished their practice, and the boys found their Dad.  
He was dreading the concert, his sons acting so bad.  
When they tugged at his sweater, and he turned around,  
They stood like two cherubs, not making a sound.

They were dressed in their blue jeans, with holes in the knees,  
"Settle down now," said Dad, "and let's find our seats, please."  
Each had his Game Boy and a pack on his back,  
He knew there'd be trouble when the house lights went black.

But Matt's eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!  
Bobby's cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
"They seem somehow different," Dad felt his hope grow,  
"Maybe we won't be thrown out in the snow."

The boys started to wiggle, Mom gritted her teeth,  
And worry encircled her head like a wreath;  
Then out popped a giggle as Bob poked Matthew's belly,  
They were arguing who was best, Bach or Corelli.

Shostakovich or Berlioz, Strauss or Puccini,  
"Koussevitzky beats Solti, and Previn's a ninny;"  
Somehow this experience had gone to their heads,  
And she knew that the concert was nothing to dread.

They spoke not a word, as the music was played,  
But sat mesmerized, such an impression it made.  
When the final notes sounded and the audience rose,  
She saw her boys clapping, not holding their nose!

"I thought that the classics were boring," said Matt.  
As they drove from the hall, "But they're really PHAT!"  
Dad shrugged at Mom as she hummed "Clair de lune",  
"If the DSO's ready, we'll be back again soon!"