

The Rep
MILWAUKEE
65TH ANNIVERSARY

Presented by
Jay Franke
& David Herro

A CHRISTMAS CAROL



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NOVEMBER 27
TO DECEMBER 24

Play
Guide

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
Play Guide

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A

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CHRISTMAS
CAROL

Executive Producer: **Anthony Petullo Foundation**
Associate Producers: **Molly & Tom Duffey**

A novel by **Charles Dickens** | Adapted by **Mark Clements**
Directed by **Leda Hoffmann**
Based on original direction by **Mark Clements**
November 27–December 24, 2018
Pabst Theater



MARK'S TAKE:

"A Christmas Carol is an integral part of our season each year and we are so fortunate to be able to perform it in the beautiful Pabst Theater. It warms my heart to see so many families attend this iconic holiday production, and to hear their stories of what it has meant to them over the years. It really has become Wisconsin's favorite holiday tradition."

- **Mark Clements**, Artistic Director

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Tickets: 414-224-9490
www.MilwaukeeRep.com

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The Life and Work of Charles Dickens

The son of John and Elizabeth Dickens, Charles Dickens was born on February 7th, 1812 in Portsmouth, England. Dickens' father worked as a clerk at the Navy Pay Office, but landed himself in debtors' prison when Charles was only twelve. This left Charles to provide for his family, and his experiences working in Warren's Blacking Factory haunted him for the rest of his life, influencing his later written work.

In 1829, Dickens became a reporter at Doctor's Commons Courts, and by 1832, he was a successful reporter of debates in the House of Commons. He then became a newspaper reporter. In the following year, his first short story appeared and was followed very soon thereafter by several other stories and sketches.



Charles Dickens

CHARLES DICKENS'
Most Famous Writings

The Pickwick Papers, 1836-37

Oliver Twist, 1837-39

Nicholas Nickleby, 1838-39

A Christmas Carol, 1843

David Copperfield, 1849-50

A Tale of Two Cities, 1859

Great Expectations, 1860-61

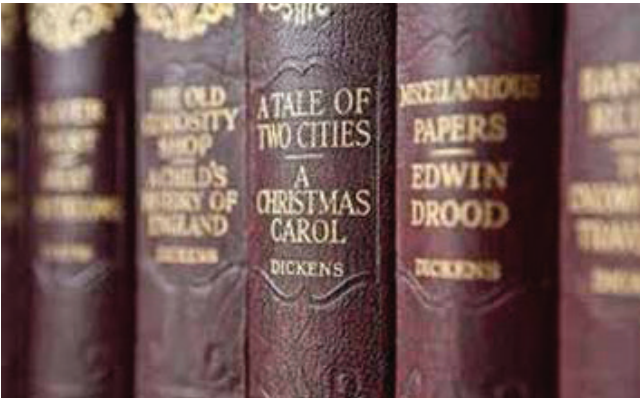
The Mystery of Edwin Drood, 1870

He met Catherine Hogarth in 1835, marrying her in 1836. He published the first series of *Sketches by Boz* in that year and then began publishing the first of his serialized novels, *The Pickwick Papers*, which appeared in monthly parts through November of 1837. *The Pickwick Papers* met great success, and Dickens embarked on a career as a full-time novelist.

During this time, Dickens produced works at a rapid pace, publishing *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and several other books in a period of just a few years. In 1842, he visited Canada and the United States, where he advocated for international copyright laws and the abolition of slavery. While Dickens found many things about the United States unfavorable, he toured his works to the U.S. again towards the end of his life.

Published in 1843 as part of a series of Christmas books, *A Christmas Carol* became an instant classic and sold 6,000 copies in less than a week. Between travels, writing, and the births of his ten children, Charles Dickens had much to occupy his time, but in 1858, he began touring public readings of his works. In that year he also separated from his wife and took up with an actress, Ellen Ternan, whom he had worked with in his theatrical company.

In the last decade of his life, Dickens embarked on several reading tours and continued to write. Incredibly unwell, Dickens continued his readings until he collapsed of a stroke in 1869. Dickens' final readings took place in London in 1870. He died in June of 1870, after suffering another stroke. His final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, remains unfinished.



A selection of Dickens' novels

SYNOPSIS



Jonathan Smoots as Jacob Marley.
Photo by Michael Brosilow. (2016)



Deborah Staples as the Ghost of Christmas Past.
Photo by Michael Brosilow. (2016)

Christmas Eve

The curtain opens to reveal the author of *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens, along with two assistants on stage. The assistants merrily greet the audience before introducing the narrator of the production. The lights fade as Dickens reads an excerpt from his novel: "Marley was dead, to begin with..." Light brings the audience outside Scrooge's counting house, where Scrooge silences a group of young carolers. You are then brought inside Scrooge & Marley's Counting house. Ebenezer Scrooge works in his cold, dim office on Christmas Eve with his clerk Bob Cratchit. The two assistants introduce Ebenezer Scrooge with every unflattering word in a thesaurus. Scrooge proves his repugnant and rapacious nature by rejecting his nephew Fred's invitation to Christmas dinner and then scorning two philanthropists visiting Scrooge who ask him to donate money to charity. Scrooge denies them any contributions, pointing out that he already pays taxes for prisons and workhouses. Scrooge resentfully grants Bob Cratchit Christmas Day off, and heads home.

Scrooge arrives home and the knocker on his front door transforms into the face of his deceased business partner, Jacob Marley. Startled, Scrooge does not trust what he sees. Later, Jacob Marley's ghost appears to Scrooge in his bedroom. Draped in shackles and chains of greed, Jacob Marley warns Scrooge that three spirits will visit him before the night is over and that Scrooge must listen to them if he hopes to escape the fate that Marley endures.

Christmas Past

As the clock strikes midnight, the Ghost of Christmas Past appears before Scrooge. The ghost transports Scrooge to the Christmases of his past. First they travel to Scrooge's old school, where he sees his 10-year-old self alone inside a classroom reading Robinson Crusoe. His friend Thomas greets him stating his family wants him to spend Christmas with them, but young Ebenezer turns down the offer in fear his father would be mad. We then meet 15-year-old Scrooge too depressed to read the aforementioned novel. He is greeted by his beloved sister, Fan, who has come to take him home for Christmas after being alone at boarding school. Next, Scrooge sees himself as a young man (20) at a company Christmas party with his old employer, Mr. Fezziwig, and remembers when he asked Belle to marry him even though they would live a hard life with little money. This moment warms Scrooge's heart until he relives the decision he made to leave behind a community of family and warmth in order to make more money. Before returning home, the Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge himself as a young man letting his fiancée, Belle, slip away because he came to value money more than her. The Ghost of Christmas past takes him 12 years later into Belle's family home, where she is surrounded by a loving husband and four charming children. Darkness fills the stage before all of the characters come out and repeat the words rattling within Ebenezer's brain. Scrooge is heartbroken, and Christmas Past finally returns him to his bedroom chamber.

Christmas Present

Back in bed, Scrooge awakens to the Ghost of Christmas Present. The ghost whisks Scrooge to the Cratchits' household as the family gathers for their humble Christmas dinner. The ghost tells Scrooge that Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchits' sick son, will die if nothing changes. The news troubles Scrooge and he demands to know what can be done to spare Tiny Tim. The ghost will not answer. Bob Cratchit proposes a toast in honor of Scrooge, saying that Scrooge is alone with no cheer in life, and therefore less fortunate than the impoverished Cratchit family. Cratchit's kindness moves Scrooge. The Ghost of Christmas Present then takes Scrooge to his nephew's house where friends and family play games and make fun of Scrooge for his cold attitude. With their time together fading into a dark void, Christmas Present reminds Scrooge of society's troubles, showing him two figures: want and ignorance.



Johnathan Wainwright as Scrooge
with Darrington Clark as the Ghost of
Christmas Future. Photo by
Michael Brosilow.

Christmas Future

The Ghost of Christmas Future appears and Scrooge and the ghost visit three businessmen in a gentleman's club discussing an old man's death. Scrooge watches and questions the ghost about what he sees, but the ghost does not respond. Instead, he shows people pawing off the property of the deceased man, one of the scavengers being his housekeeper. Scrooge realizes the dead man is himself. In agony, Ebenezer begs to see an example of someone saddened by his death. The Ghost of Christmas Future responds by showing him a family who is in debt to the Counting House. They rejoice as they will now have a few weeks to come up with the money while their debt is being transferred. Finally, the Ghost of Christmas Future shows Scrooge the death of Tiny Tim. Scrooge feels helpless, and begs for a second chance. Without a word, the ghost leaves.

Christmas Day

Scrooge awakens invigorated with a newfound Christmas spirit. Surprising everyone with Christmas cheer, Scrooge tries to hug his housekeeper, purchases a prize turkey for the Cratchit family, donates a substantial sum to charity, and tells Fred and Ellen (nephew and nephew's wife) he would like to join them for Christmas dinner. The next morning at work, Scrooge gives Bob Cratchit a raise and promises to help the Cratchit family. Scrooge regains his humanity and pledges to keep his giving spirit throughout the rest of his life.



Chiké Johnson as the Ghost of Christmas
Present. Photo by Michael Brosilow. (2016)



Johnathan Wainwright as Scrooge with Reese Madigan
as Bob Cratchit. Photo by Michael Brosilow. (2016)

Mark's Thoughts

Mark Clements realizes there will be audience members who have already seen *A Christmas Carol* a handful of times, but there will also be viewers experiencing the play for the first time. With this dynamic, Clements aims to create a shared experience that offers vintage memories while simultaneously forging new traditions.



Queen Victoria, 1887



A Court for King Cholera, political cartoon by John Leech, 1852



Illustration from Hard Times, 1854

The Victorian era is named for Queen Victoria, England's second longest reigning monarch, who ruled from 1837 to 1901. Regarded as a great monarch, Queen Victoria worked to improve the lives of the poor, expand education, and secure England's place as an economic and industrial superpower. Even though Victoria was a strong ruler, many of her subjects led difficult lives, as poverty, poor working conditions, and disease were commonplace.

During this era, Britain underwent a period of rapid urbanization, with the urban population exceeding the rural population by 1851. Much of this change was due to the industrialization of Britain's economy, leading to work for many in factories. Unfortunately, workers in the factories suffered from poor working conditions ranging from a sixty-four hour work week, measly salaries, dangerous work environments, child labor, and no repercussions for abuses.

Cities were not prepared for this amount of growth, so housing was scarce and living conditions were inadequate. London was particularly overcrowded, and many people turned to charity for assistance with housing, food, and daily needs. Public sanitation lagged behind other areas that had been modernized, so water-borne diseases like cholera were common. Lack of proper medical information and pollution of the Thames River led to the spread of disease.

Much of the working class did not have access to educational advancement, as schooling was only for those with money. Many poor children were sent to work in factories, as Victorian families were often large with many mouths to feed. For those who could afford schooling, it often took the form of boarding schools for boys and in-home governesses for girls. Boarding schools were strict, and teachers treated students with a very firm hand in order to ensure academic achievement.

Dickens criticized many of these social problems in his works. From the portrayal of the lives of the working class in *Hard Times* to the poor Cratchit family in *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens drew attention to the problems of the lower classes with his novels and stories. As a popular and prolific author, Dickens' pen gave voice to those without much power of their own.



A Victorian family making matchboxes

Memory and the Past

Through the ghosts' magic, Scrooge is able to access his past memories, as well as current scenes from the lives of those around him. Through this bit of Christmas magic, he is better able to understand his own life and choices. In the end, reliving his memories and reclaiming his past help him to create a better future.

Questions

- Which memories are most difficult for Scrooge to relive? Why?
- The audience does not get the whole story of Scrooge's family or his relationship with Belle. What do you think happened with these people in Scrooge's past?
- Do you think it is important for us reflect on our pasts? Why is it sometimes difficult to do so?

"Friends, should we ask Scrooge to take a look at another Christmas Eve past? Shall we show him the error of his ways? Make him confront his truth? Very well then, it shall be done!"

- Ghost of Christmas Past

"Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson, which I believe is starting to work for me now. Tonight, if you will teach me, let me profit by it?"

- Scrooge

Forgiveness and Redemption

In the play, Scrooge transforms from a money-pinching miser into a generous, loving person. After his experiences with the ghosts, Scrooge realizes that he can change his future by caring for and understanding others. This, however, requires forgiveness from those Scrooge has wronged.

Questions

- Why is Scrooge given a second chance to choose a different path for his life? Do you think Scrooge deserved another chance?
- Why do you think characters like Fred and the Cratchits are willing to forgive Scrooge?
- How can forgiveness impact others in our lives?

Greed and Generosity

Early in the play, Scrooge refuses to donate money to the poor and is wholly focused on his own wealth. He is selfish and uncaring towards others, even his own family. At the end of the play, he becomes a more generous man and gives of his wealth and his heart, understanding the true meaning of Christmas.

Questions

- When and why does Scrooge allow greed to overtake his life? What events in his past led to that change?
- Throughout his visits with the ghosts, Scrooge begins to feel remorse for being greedy. How does this self-realization change Scrooge as a person?
- Scrooge makes an impact in his community at the end of the play. What can you do to make a change in your own community?

"I wish to be left alone! Since you ask me what I wish gentleman, and that is my answer. I don't make myself merry at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned. They cost enough, and those who are badly off must go there."

- Scrooge

WINTER HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD



Children light the Hanukkah menorah



A Diwali celebration in Pakistan



A family lights the Kwanzaa kinara



A Chinese New Year parade

Christmas is not the only holiday people celebrate during the winter months. There are many different festivals and holidays that celebrate the season. While some traditions such as St. Lucia Day (Sweden), Las Posadas (Mexico), and St. Nicholas Day (Europe) are extensions of the Christmas celebration, holidays in the wintertime are as varied as the cultures and peoples of our world.

Hanukkah is the Jewish “festival of lights” which lasts eight days and nights. Families light a special candleholder called a menorah, eat special foods, give gifts or money to children, contribute to charity and play special games.

Diwali is a five-day festival celebrated in India and other countries, celebrating the beginning of winter and the end of the harvest season. During the festival, families light clay oil lamps, watch fireworks, create beautiful patterns on their floors with colored sand or powder (rangoli), and share time with family.

Bodhi Day is a Buddhist celebration of the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha). People observe the holiday through meditation, readings, and sometimes the eating of special foods.

Kwanzaa is a week-long African-American and Pan-African holiday derived from an ancient African harvest festival. Families decorate their homes with fruits and vegetables, wear special clothing, light candles on a special candleholder called a kinara, and spend time with family celebrating African culture.

Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year and in many parts of the world, there are celebrations ranging from parades to bonfires to candlelight rituals and a variety of other events. Solstice celebrations have endured since ancient times; many of the other holidays that are celebrated during this time originated from celebrations of this day.

New Year’s Celebrations are an important part of many cultures around the world. Whether one is celebrating by watching the ball drop in Times Square, enjoying a Chinese New Year parade, or savoring soba noodles in Japan, the New Year is a time when families and friends come together to celebrate the past and hope for good fortune in the year ahead.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL’S ENDURING LEGACY

A Christmas Carol met great success upon its publishing in 1843 and its enduring legacy has extended long past Dickens’ lifetime. Continuing as a Christmas classic for 160 years, *A Christmas Carol* has shaped our views of the Christmas holiday. Less than a year after its release as a novella, the story was turned into a stage play by multiple theater producers, and in 1853, Dickens began to tour public readings of the piece.

A Christmas Carol has had many different adaptations over the years, from films to stage plays to television show episodes to comics to other literary versions. The themes of goodwill, charity, and the power of the Christmas spirit have made *A Christmas Carol* an appealing story for many different mediums.



An American Christmas Carol, 1979



The Muppet Christmas Carol, 1992



A Flintstones' Christmas Carol, 1994



Disney's A Christmas Carol, 2009



"A Christmas Carol," Doctor Who, 2010

Film Adaptations

Scrooge, or, Marley's Ghost
(1901)

A Christmas Carol
(1935, 1938, 1984)

Scrooge
(1951, 1970: musical adaptation)

An American Christmas Carol
(1979)

Mickey's Christmas Carol
(1983)

Scrooged
(1988)

The Muppet Christmas Carol
(1992)

Disney's A Christmas Carol
(2009)



Scrooge, 1970

Television Shows Featuring A Christmas Carol Themed Episodes

Mister Magoo's Christmas Carol
(1962)

Bewitched
(1967)

The Odd Couple
(1970)

Sanford and Son
(1975)

Six Million Dollar Man
(1976)

WKRP in Cincinnati
(1980)

Family Ties
(1982)

Highway to Heaven
(1984)

The Jetsons
(1985)

Quantum Leap
(1990)

A Flintstones' Christmas Carol
(1994)

Doctor Who
(2010)

INSIDE THE REP'S PRODUCTION

Besides hundreds of props, there are over 300 lights, 60 windows that light up in different colors, and a giant turntable that will hold thousands of pounds of weight as it turns to each new scene.

This production marks the 43rd staging of *A Christmas Carol* at Milwaukee Rep, making it the 2nd longest running professional production in the country.

This production features a British Panto style of theater, which includes some audience participation and grandiose music, characters, and scenery.

Almost twenty children are part of the children's cast of this production. The child actors come from all over the Milwaukee area and are selected through an audition process at The Rep.

Award-winning composer John Tanner created an entirely new score for the play, including theme music for all of the characters!



The cast of *A Christmas Carol* will complete over 150 costume changes during each performance.



Alex Tecoma, Costume Designer, works on a costume for the production.



2017 Cast Members sing carols to promote *A Christmas Carol* in Downtown Milwaukee for "Christmas in July".

The Rep's prop shop constructed the goose and turkey featured in the Christmas feasts from scratch.

The Rep's renowned costume shop will incorporate new and fresh adaptations based from the novel's descriptions while adding modern elements. For instance, the Ghost of Christmas Past will don a head of flames and a robe that embodies a snowstorm through lighting.

The productions include a cast of more than 40 actors!

Over 150 sound cues and 24 wireless microphones are used to create the sound in *A Christmas Carol*.

Innovative snow-effect technology will be used to give the audience a realistic and immersive winter experience.



Jonathan Wainwright is the 12th actor to play Scrooge. James Pickering holds the record for playing the lead role the longest at 14 seasons.

THE PABST

A Christmas Carol is performed in the historic Pabst Theater, a City of Milwaukee Landmark, a State of Wisconsin Historical Site, and a National Historic Landmark. Built in 1895 by Captain Frederick Pabst and designed by Otto Strack, the Pabst Theater has long been a central part of the Milwaukee arts scene. The theater evokes a time when Milwaukee was known as "Deutsche Athen," or the German Athens, reflecting the era in which Milwaukee was a center of German cultural life in America.

When it was built, The Pabst was a leader in innovation for the theaters of its time, and many other playhouses used it as a technological example. In addition to advanced fireproofing techniques, the theater boasted the first steel permanent counterweight fly system in Milwaukee, the first all electrical lighting system in the country, and better views of the stage than many other theaters of the day.

In 1989, The Pabst Theater was connected to the Milwaukee Center, which houses The Rep's offices and theaters. The Pabst continues to serve as a busy concert and performing arts venue.



Interior of the Pabst Theater

FEATURED ARTIST

Sound Director Erin Paige



Whenever an audience is sitting in a theater waiting for a performance to begin, people may be excited about various theatrical elements, ranging from the acting to the costumes to the lighting. One element rarely considered is sound. And part of that is perhaps because according to Sound Director Erin Paige, “If we’ve done our job, you don’t notice.”

During college at Southern Oregon University, Paige realized acting was not the career path for her, but still wanted to be in the theater. One summer she found an internship at Sacramento Music Circus that gave her an opportunity to explore many avenues of backstage work. Paige said she had to rank which technical elements interested in most and, “I put sound first because it was the only thing I had never done before.” She then worked that entire summer in the sound department. “It was kind of what I was looking for without realizing it. I’d always been a singer or a musician and an actor, and it was a way to mush together all of those things and still be in the theater which at this point I don’t know how to be out of now.”

This is Paige’s eighth season working at Milwaukee Repertory Theater. She began as Assistant Sound Supervisor and was promoted to Sound Director in the 2013/14 Season. “I field all the designs that come from the sound designers,” explains Paige. “Their system requirements, how many speakers, how they want them routed. I make sure all of that is possible, and I interface with all the other departments to make sure all of our needs can all coalesce and exist peacefully. And then I supervise and run load in and technical rehearsal for my department.” Load in is when the set and theatrical elements are moved into the

FEATURED ARTIST

Sound Director Erin Paige

performance space, and often does not happen until shortly before the show opens. This is followed by about a week of technical rehearsals, where the technical elements – sound, light, props, costumes – and actors are all brought together for the first time. “My favorite part of my job is that it’s never boring. There’s [always] another show to do.”

One thing that rarely changes, though, is Milwaukee Repertory Theater’s production of *A Christmas Carol*. One of the benefits of that is, “we all know what we’ve signed up for,” says Paige. She is present for both the move into the Pabst Theatre, as part of her job as Sound Director, as well as for the performances, too. One of her favorite experiences with the show is, during “the first song where everybody goes on stage, ‘Good Christian Men rejoice’. We’re finally downstairs where it’s just me and the costume director and two other people. Everybody’s gone. So we would take this time to do step aerobics. It was just rejoicing and having the room all to ourselves, prancing around everywhere and the first time somebody would come downstairs it would be like, ‘we weren’t doing anything.’” When there isn’t time or space for step aerobics, she spends time with cast members. “The first year we did it, the kid playing Tiny Tim, Edward, his favorite thing in the world to do was Mad Libs. So he was the only child offstage for a lot of the show. So it would just work out that I would end up doing Mad Libs while everyone else was on stage.”

Paige is looking forward to another production of the show, especially since it is performed in the historic Pabst Theatre. “The Pabst is so beautiful and I can’t help but associate it with Christmas. Everything is red velvet, opulent chandeliers, very warm and cozy and radiator heated in there. And there’s just something magical about seeing that same story every year and knowing exactly what it is but being moved by it every time.” And what is it about this story that moves everyone and keeps audiences returning to the Pabst every year? Paige thinks it’s “because [the story] is about the true nature of forgiveness and charity and we all see ourselves in Scrooge even if we don’t want to. We all want to be forgiven for how terrible we’ve been.”





VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. *A Christmas Carol* will be held in the Pabst Theater, to the right of The Rep's Ticket Office.

THE REP VALUES YOUR SUPPORT

Financial support enables The Rep to:

- ★ Advance the art of theater with productions that inspire individuals and create community dialogue;
- ★ Provide a richer theater experience by hosting Rep-in-Depth, TalkBacks, and creating PlayGuides to better inform our audiences about our productions;
- ★ Educate over 21,000 students at 150+ schools in the greater Milwaukee area with Rep Immersion Day experiences, student matinees, workshops, tours and by making connections with their school curriculum through classroom programs such as Reading Residencies;
- ★ Maintain our commitment to audiences with special needs through our Access Services that include American Sign Language interpreted productions, captioned theater, infrared listening systems and script synopses to ensure that theater at The Rep is accessible to all;
- ★ Educate the next generation of theater professionals with our EPR Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at The Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers.

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