

A

CHRISTMAS CAROL



WELLS FARGO

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NOVEMBER 28 TO DECEMBER 24



A CHRISTMAS CAROL PLAY GUIDE

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

Mark Clements

Artistic Director

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Milwaukee Repertory Theater

108 E. Wells Street Milwaukee, WI, 53202 Wells Fargo proudly presents The Rep's production of

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens
Adapted and Directed by Mark Clements
November 28–December 24, 2017
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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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-yearold 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. He 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 pawning 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.



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



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

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.

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.

SOCIAL ISSUES IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND



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-born 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.

"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

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?

"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 moneypinching 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 selfrealization 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 Gautauma (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.



Mister Magoo's Christmas Carol (1962)

Carol Themed Episodes

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)



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

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 42nd staging of A Christmas Carol at Milwaukee Rep, making it the 2nd longest running professional production in the country.

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!



Alex Tecoma, Costume Designer, works on a costume for the 2017 Production.



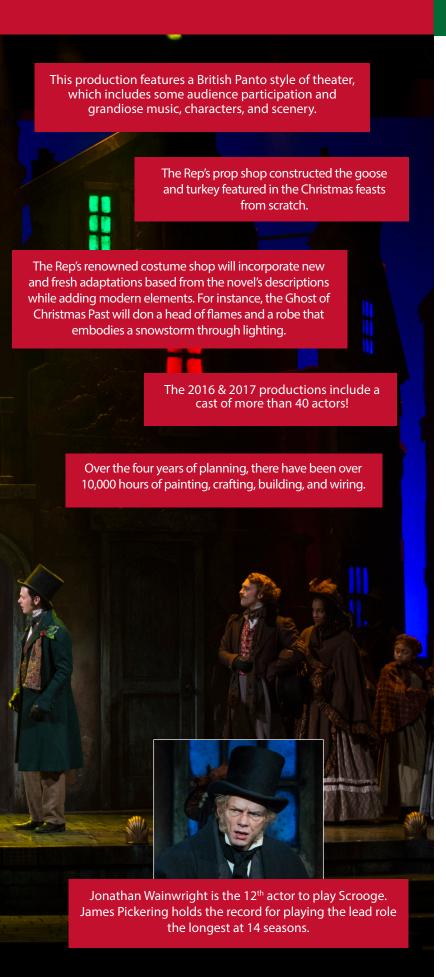
in Downtown Milwaukee for "Christmas in July".

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

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.





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

Rep Production Manager Jared Clarkin

By Sara Risley

Have you ever wondered JUST how much work goes into creating the magic we see on stage at The Rep? We visited with Rep Production Manager Jared Clarkin recently and he lifted the velvet curtain to discuss what is new in this huge new production. We should say SPOILER ALERT for those of you that want to keep the magic alive!

Jared Clarkin has worked as Production Manager at The Rep for four seasons, overseeing costumes, lighting, sound, props, scenic, and stage management. He acts as the conduit between the show's designers and the technicians and artisans that make the designers' ideas come to life.

The planning for Mark Clements' newly adapted *A Christmas Carol*, began four years ago, and Jared has been involved from the start. As one of the largest productions Jared has worked on, *A Christmas Carol* includes a cast of over 40 in multiple costumes (even some that light up!), hundreds of props, over 300 lights, 60 windows that light up in different colors, and a huge turntable that will hold thousands of pounds of weight as it turns. Over the years of planning, there has been 10,000 hours of painting, crafting, building, and wiring over 35 weeks of construction. When his crews began load in to the Pabst Theater last year, 50 stagehands prepped the space with rigging lines, laid out the skeleton of the huge turntable, hung and set the lighting, and finally loaded in the pieces of the set.

Last year, Jared had just over 12 hours to take down a set that took 2 weeks to set up and three years to plan!

Clarkin loves the Pabst as the perfect venue for *A Christmas Carol*. "The artwork, the colors, and the building itself really help take you back in time."

And don't worry about a white Christmas....Clarkin and crew make it snow.....inside the Pabst!



Scenic and lighting model for A Christmas Carol



FEATURED ARTIST

Associate Artist, John Tanner

By Sara Risley

Rep Associate Artist, John Tanner, is an award-winning composer and sound designer and one of the owners of Tanner-Monagle, Inc., a video and audio production house based in Milwaukee. He is the composer and arranger for the new version of *A Christmas Carol*.

Tanner's history with *A Christmas Carol* begins with the Violent Femmes. In 1983 he was a recording engineer working with Mark Van Hecke (then Rep resident composer) on a Violent Femmes album when he was invited by Van Hecke to play conductor of the orchestra and serve as a rehearsal pianist. Being a starving musician and recording engineer, he jumped at the chance even though he had never conducted before. "Mark told me not to worry and he spent the next 30 seconds teaching me. And that was it!"

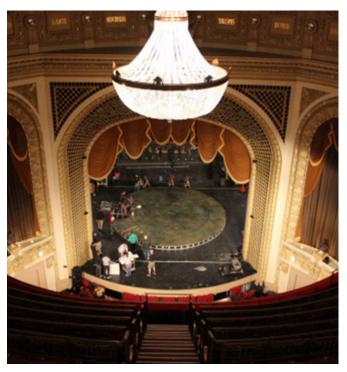


John Tanner working on the new music for A Christmas Carol.

"Music communicates directly to the heart."

-JOHN TANNER

Tanner is still amazed with the attitude and professionalism of those those involved every year with *A Christmas Carol*. "During 14 years of conducting the orchestra with 32 performances a year, what knocked me out was never, ever in any of those performances—even matinees, and the last performance of the week—did I ever see any actor on that stage ever give less than everything they had, 110% to make it the best show it could be—not the best show it could be that week. No, this is THE performance that counts and I was just blown away by that attitude, that commitment."



The Pabst Theater during load-in for A Christmas Carol November 10th, 2016. Photo: Austin Bean

When he first sat down to read over the entire script, Mark Clements shared his vision for music with Tanner—the two timed out sections for underscored music and which well-known carols would be added where and why. Then Clements told Tanner about the big anthem-like closing song he wanted. "It was to be based on Tiny Tim's iconic line, 'God Bless Us Every One!' and was to be huge and memorable and would tie together the entire show and celebrated Christmas." With a combination of thematically appropriate well-known Christmas carols and new themes written for specific characters, the new music scoring is sure to capture the hearts (and ears!) of Milwaukee audiences.

John shares his excitement for A Christmas Carol; "I think it's going to be just fabulous! I love the script. I love what Mark has done. And I love the fact that we are attempting big things."

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.



Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Photo by Michael Brosilow

The Ticket Office is to 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 Play Guides to better inform our audiences about our productions;
- Educate over 20,000 students at 200+ schools in the greater Milwaukee area with Rep Immersion Day experiences, student matinees, workshops, tours and by making connections with their school cirriculum through classroom teaching programs such as Reading Residencies and School Subscriptions;
- 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 Emerging Artists Professional Residency Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at The Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers.

We value our supporters and partnerships and hope that you will help us to expand the ways The Rep has a positive impact on theater and on our Milwaukee Community.

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