



Presented by

Jay Franke & David Herro

CHRISTMAS CAROL



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WELLS FARGO NOVEMBER 26 TO DECEMBER 24



A CHRISTMAS CAROL PlayGuide

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CHRISTMAS CAROL

Associate Producers: Gretta Assaly, Molly & Tom Duffey

A novel by Charles Dickens | Adapted & Directed by Mark Clements
November 26-December 24, 2019
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

The Rep

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

Mark Clements

Artistic Director

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Milwaukee Repertory Theater

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The Life and Work of Charles Dickens

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

In 1829, Dickens became a reporter at Doctors' Common Court in Parliament. By 1832, he was a successful debate reporter in the House of Commons. He then became a newspaper reporter. The following year, his first short story appeared and was followed 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

Dickens met Catherine Hogarth in 1835 and married her in 1836. He published the first series of *Sketches by Boz* in the same year. In November 1837, Dickens published the first of his serialized work, *The Pickwick Papers. The Pickwick Papers'* monthly publications were greatly successful, and Dickens embarked on his career as a full-time novelist.

Dickens began quickly producing written work with *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and several other books being published in just a few years. In 1842, he visited Canada and the United States; there he advocated for international copyright laws and the abolition of slavery. While Dickens found many things about the United States unfavorable, he toured the U.S. again with his works towards the end of his life.

In 1843, Dickens published *A Christmas Carol* as part of a Christmas book series. It was an instant classic and sold 6,000 copies in less than a week. Between travels, writing, and the births of his ten children,

Dickens had much to occupy his time, but in 1858, he began touring public readings of his works. In the same year, he separated from his wife to live with Ellen Ternan, an actress working in his theatrical company.

In the last decade of his life, Dickens embarked on several reading tours and continued to write. Despite health complications, he continued to travel until he collapsed from a stroke in 1869. Dickens' final readings took place in London in 1870. Dickens died June 9, 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 Ebenezer Scrooge's counting house, where Scrooge silences a group of young carolers. Next, the audience is inside Scrooge and Marley's Counting house. Scrooge works in his cold, dim office on Christmas Eve with his clerk, Bob Cratchit. The two assistants introduce Scrooge with every unflattering word in the dictionary. Scrooge proves his repugnant and rapacious nature by rejecting his nephew Fred's invitation to Christmas dinner and then scorning two visiting philanthropists asking 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 from work 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. Marley's ghost then appears to Scrooge in his bedroom. Draped in the shackles and chains of greed, Marley warns Scrooge that three spirits will visit him before the night is over, and 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 Scrooge 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 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 a loving husband and four charming children surround her. Darkness fills the stage before all of the characters come out and repeat the words rattling within Scrooge's brain. Scrooge is heartbroken, and the Ghost of 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, the Ghost of 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 takes Scrooge to visit three businessmen in a gentlemen'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, Scrooge 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 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 Britain's Industrial Revolution, resulting in many working class members finding jobs in factories. Unfortunately, workers in the factories suffered from poor working conditions ranging from a sixty-four hour work week, meager salaries, dangerous work environments, child labor, and no repercussions for abuses.

Cities were not prepared for this amount of growth, resulting in limited housing options and inadequate living conditions. London was particularly overcrowded, and many people turned to charity for assistance with housing, food, and daily needs. The poorest members of society such as orphans, disabled, and elderly people were sent to workhouses if they could not provide shelter and food for themselves. Conditions in the workhouses were difficult, and children were often separated from their parents. Public sanitation was insufficient making waterborne diseases like cholera 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 wealthy families. Many poor children worked in factories, as Victorian families were often large with many mouths to feed. For those who could afford an education, it was often with a boarding school for boys and in-home governesses for girls. Boarding schools were strict, and teachers disciplined students with a firm hand in order to maintain order and establish authority. 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 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

- When Fan comes to get Scrooge, it is revealed why Scrooge might have turned out to be such an angry, greedy man. What is this reason?
- How do you think the spirit of Christmas of today is different from the spirit of Christmas during Charles Dickens' life?
- Do you think it is important for us to 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 was Jacob Marley a good person to give Scrooge a second chance? Do you think Scrooge deserved a second chance?
- How can forgiveness be a part of the spirit of Christmas?
- Why were the Cratchits and Scrooge's nephew, Fred, willing to forgive Scrooge?

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

- What are the effects of Scrooge's generosity?
- What role to Ignorance and Want play in Scrooge's transformation?
- How are Belle and the Cratchits "rich" compared to Scrooge?

"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 light" 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 in India and other countries celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains alike. It celebrates 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. They light candles for thirty days in honor of Buddha's enlightenment and decorate a ficus tree with a single string to symbolize unity.

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 observed 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 up on its publishing in 1843, and its enduring legacy has extended long past Dickens' lifetime. A Christmas Carol has shaped our views of the Christmas holiday by giving us memorable characters and profound, heartfelt stories that radiate the meaning of the holiday season. Less than a year after its release as a novella, multiple theater producers turned the story into a stage play, and in 1853 Dickens toured public readings of the piece.

Continuing as a Christmas classic for 160 years, A Christmas Carol has since been adapted into multiple mediums ranging, from films, television show episodes, comics, and other literary adaptations. The themes of goodwill, charity, and the power of the Christmas spirit have made A Christmas Carol an appealing story for many different audiences and interpretations.







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 2^{nd} 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 production.

2017 Cast Members sing carols to promote *A Christmas Carol* 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.



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

Frank Honts & Teddy Anagnostopoulos





The glitter and grandeur of the Pabst Theater make for a breathtaking spectacle every Christmas when families from all over come to watch Milwaukee Rep's A Christmas Carol production. If we take away all the lights, costumes, and furniture, what are we left with? Each year a talented cast comes out to wow the audience, and each year they bring something different. Frank Honts is the Director of Artistic Personnel, and the person responsible for finding a great cast every year.

"I see it as my job to work with the directors to put the best actors into a project that we have going on so that it is in line with their vision for the show and the mission, visions, and values for Milwaukee Repertory Theater," says Honts.

One particular element of casting that Honts finds exciting is casting the Young Performers Ensemble. The Young Performers Ensemble is a group of young people ages 7-17 who act in *A Christmas Carol* along with other productions throughout the season.

"I love really looking at all of the interwoven pieces of having different individuals on stage together as part of an ensemble, as part of a group of people who are telling a story together," said Honts.

Young people interested in joining the Young Performers Ensemble or *A Christmas Carol* should check our website around April 1 for audition dates. Honts and the directors do not require anyone to having acting experience, but they are looking for a few things.

"Experience helps, but this is not a production that is about bringing in people with the longest resumes. We just want people to come in with an energy, enthusiasm, and a spirit of teamwork," said Honts.

One of the young performers Honts has worked with is Teddy Anagnostopoulos. Anagnostopoulous is 15-years-old today and has been auditioning and working with Milwaukee Rep since he was nine.

"I remember being so nervous! The audition itself did not go the greatest because I did not get in, but I learned so much from just that audition. I knew I wanted to try again next year," Anagnostopoulous said about his first audition. Third time was the charm for Anagnostopoulous when he was cast in 2015, and he is now in his fifth consecutive season.

"My favorite role that I have played would have to be Peter Cratchit because I have always loved the



spirit of the Cratchit family. They know they don't have much, but they are grateful for each other," said Anagnostopoulous. His other favorite part is getting to bond with the rest of the cast.

"You spend so much time with your cast mates that they really do become your second family. I have gained so many close friends while being a part of this production," said Anagnostopoulous. He recommends that any kid interested in becoming part of the Young Performers Ensemble come audition to be a part of this rich Milwaukee tradition.

"If you're coming to audition, be yourself, action professionally, but more importantly just enjoy it! The Young Performers Ensemble knows how to have fun and having fun is a priority. It is so important to that you take every moment and learn as much as you can while enjoying every second of it," advised Anagnostopoulous. Another thing he enjoys is just getting take part in Milwaukee Christmas every year.

"It is so special to be a part of a Christmas tradition for so many people in the area. Every year this show puts me in the Christmas spirit, and I feel lucky that I get to be a part of putting others into the Christmas Spirit too," said Anagnostopoulos. He is not the only one; Honts also thinks there is something special about the annual *A Christmas Carol* production too.

"A Christmas Carol brings out many of our shared values about charity, family, compassion, and tradition. Mixed with the magnificent performance space that is the Pabst and some of the best actors around people like seeing a top-level production. This is a story of community in a lot of ways, and theater at its best brings people together and gives them a chance to share a story in common," said Honts.

If you or someone who know would like to get involved with our production of *A Christmas Carol*, email Director of Artistic Personnel, Frank Honts, at fhonts@milwaukeerep.com.



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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