

Charles Dickens' **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Adapted by Edward Morgan
and Joseph Hanreddy

Music by John Tanner

NOV 21 – DEC 21

Directed by Patrick Lanczki



Jed Diamond; by Shawn Poynter

**CLARENCE
BROWN
THEATRE**
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

**AUDIENCE
ENGAGEMENT
GUIDE**



Photo by Ella Marston

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We recognize and value diversity in all forms, including age, ethnicity, family structure, gender identity, national origin, race religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and veteran status.

We believe inclusivity and diversity in our workplace should reflect the increasing multicultural and global society in which we live. We seek to foster excellent creative research, scholarship and professional practice by creating a welcoming environment, ethical recruitment practices, and a diverse student body who will have lives of awareness and understanding through their creative research, teaching, practicing and advocating for others in a diverse world.

Detailed information on our DEI initiatives can be found here:

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

A Christmas Carol is my favorite story. As a child, I saw the 1951 film adaptation "Scrooge," starring Alastair Sim, and was immediately captivated by the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and his miraculous redemption.



After stage managing CBT's production from 2016-2019 under the skillful direction of one of my favorite directors Kathleen Conklin, the cancellation of our 2020 production left a huge void in my life. I missed the tradition of collaborating with a community of artists on this story, so I took it upon myself to adapt and direct Dickens' novel for the pandemic year of 2020.

In November and December of 2020, many CBT artists, including several in tonight's cast, filmed their roles remotely via Zoom. The end result was my digital retelling of the tale I love so much, "The Hacking of Nezar Scorge."

Whether told by Mr. Magoo, Scrooge McDuck, the Muppets, or Patrick Stewart, this story just works. It works because the themes are so universal. First, it is a ghost story. But it is also a story about family, love and loss, second chances, and redemption. It reminds us of the possibility that people can change.

After the alienation and isolation of the pandemic years, I hope our audiences will find they can relate to Ebenezer Scrooge in a new and personal way. The last few years have been hugely challenging for our community and our theatre, and we have been so grateful for the support of our audiences as we continued to bring this story to the stage. We are thrilled to bring you this beloved version of the story we all cherish. Enjoy the show. ✨

Patrick Lanczki





THE CHARACTERS



JED DIAMOND
(Ebenezer Scrooge)

A miserly old man who values money over people. He embodies the Victorian belief in social responsibility and personal redemption after his transformative journey.



DAVID BRIAN ALLEY
(Jacob Marley)
A deceased business partner who appears as a ghost to warn Scrooge. He represents the consequences of a life devoted solely

to profit, reflecting the Victorian concern for morality.



GABRIELA BULKA
(Ghost of Christmas Past) This spirit takes Scrooge on a journey through his past, revealing moments of joy and regret. These scenes emphasize the influence

of childhood and early adulthood on character development.



SAMMY PONTELLO
(Understudy)



LAURA BETH WELLS
(Ghost of Christmas Present) A jolly spirit who shows Scrooge the current joys and struggles of those around him. She represents the

importance of community and empathy towards the less fortunate.



GAVIN HENSLEY
(Ghost of Christmas Future) A silent, foreboding spirit that reveals the grim fate awaiting Ebenezer if he does not change.



CHRIS MORRIS
(Mr. Fezziwig)
A former mentor of Scrooge in his early career. He represents the positive impact of a generous employer on his

employees and society.



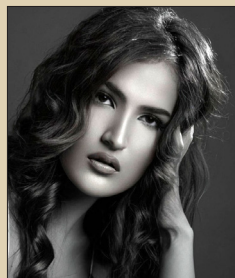
LAKE COONEY
(Mrs. Fezziwig)
Along with her husband, Mr. Fezziwig, she embraces the festivities of the season and encourages young Ebenezer to pursue

a relationship with Belle.



CLAY COOPER
(Bob Cratchit)
Scrooge's underpaid and overworked clerk. He represents the struggles of the working class. Bob also embodies the spirit of resilience and the importance

of family in the face of adversity.



YASHASHVI CHOUDHARY
(Mrs. Cratchit)
Bob's wife, who strives to keep her family happy despite financial hardships. She reflects the Victorian ideal of social connections

and the importance of celebrating togetherness during the festive season.



JOHN TAYLOR KELLY
(Tiny Tim)

Bob Cratchit's young disabled son, who symbolizes innocence and hope. More than any other character in the play, he invites us to have compassion for the vulnerable.



CORMAC MICHAEL GASKINS
(Tiny Tim)



THE CHARACTERS



DEVELYN JAYAN
(Belle) Scrooge's former fiancée. Belle represents Scrooge's loss of love and family over the pursuit of material wealth.



BROOKE PREMO
(Fan) Scrooge's younger sister. In the past, she brings about a family reconciliation between her father and brother so that everyone is home together for

Christmas. She symbolizes the importance of family and reconciliation.



JOSEPH CORAM
(Fred) Scrooge's nephew and only remaining family. The play suggests that Scrooge blames Fred for Fan's death. In marrying a woman below his station, Fred also represents

what Scrooge's life may have looked like if he had married Belle — happy.



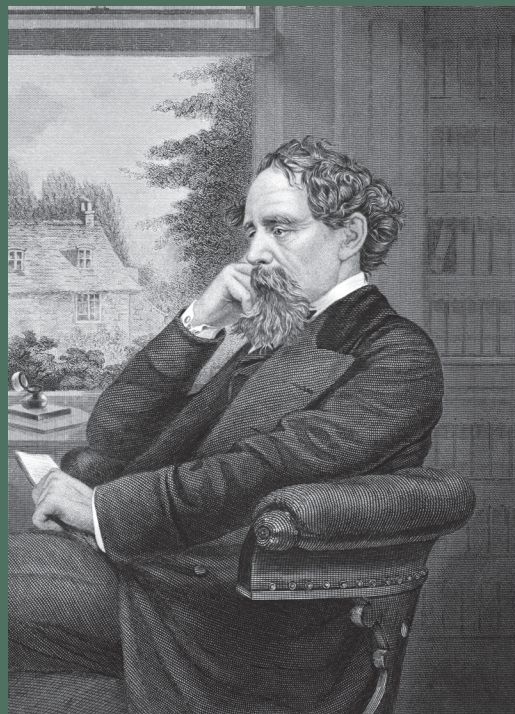
DICKENS IN POPULAR CULTURE

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* has become more than just a classic novel. It is the gift that keeps on giving, wrapped in the tinsel of modern culture. From the moment Ebenezer Scrooge grumbles, "Bah! Humbug!" at the mention of Christmas, we know we're in for a ride that blends humor with heart.

Today, Scrooge's transformation from a miserly curmudgeon to a holiday spirit icon is a plot twist so familiar it has been parodied and reimagined across countless media. We've seen him in everything from animated films to Broadway musicals. We've seen him as a grumpy old man in a contemporary office setting, grumbling about the office Christmas party. We've even seen Scrooge in a Muppet version of *A Christmas Carol* with Kermit the Frog as Bob Cratchit. Who knew that a 19th-century novella could inspire such a spectrum of interpretations!

In today's meme-driven world, Scrooge's infamous phrase has transformed into a shorthand for anyone who scorns the holiday cheer. Social media feeds are peppered with "Scrooge vibes" whenever someone opts for a quiet night in over a festive gathering.

The memes and jokes aside, the story's themes of redemption and generosity also resonate deeply in society, reminding us that it's never too late to change our ways. So, whether it's a heartfelt family gathering or a cheeky TikTok rendition, Scrooge's transformation from miserly to generous continues to inspire laughter, reflection, and a dash of holiday spirit. Dickens' message is as timeless as *A Christmas Carol* itself. ✨



Engraving of Charles Dickens (1812-1870) by unknown artist. Published in *Portrait Gallery of Eminent Men and Women with Biographies*, 1873.

A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS



On a crisp Christmas morning in Victorian England, the air was filled with anticipation and the scent of pine. Families awoke early. Their homes were adorned with holly and ivy, a celebration of the season's return. In the heart of the household, the Christmas tree stood resplendent, a new addition to Victorian traditions. The tree was decorated with candles, tinsel, and homemade ornaments, symbolizing the collective warmth and joy of the family.

As the morning sun filtered through frosted windows, children rushed to unwrap presents—small toys, books, and handmade gifts, often reflecting the economic disparities of the time. Inspired by generosity and compassion, the Victorian middle and upper classes embraced the spirit of giving. The poor were remembered with charity drives and soup kitchens. In the Victorian era, the wealthier classes took to heart the ethos of social responsibility.



By midday, families gathered around a grand feast, featuring roast turkey, plum pudding, and mincemeat pies. This communal meal was a celebration of abundance, a stark contrast to the struggles faced by many throughout the year. After dinner, the evening was often filled with carol singing and storytelling, strengthening familial bonds and reviving shared traditions.

In the dim light of the evening, as laughter echoed through the halls, the Victorian Christmas was not merely a festive holiday. It offered a moment of reflection, a time to reconnect with loved ones, and a chance to embrace the values of kindness and charity that defined the era. This day was a vivid tapestry woven with joy, nostalgia, and a deep sense of community, forever etched into the hearts of those who celebrated it.

ABOUT THE CAROLERS

A Christmas Carol features many Christmas carols, and the act of caroling is interwoven throughout the play. Carolers are a uniquely Victorian addition to our past and present holiday traditions. Carolers spread festive cheer through their songs, embodying the Victorian spirit of community and celebration. Through the uplifting power of music, they confront Scrooge with the importance of joy and sharing in traditions during the Christmas season. Their presence throughout the play highlights the Victorian belief that joy should be shared, reinforcing the transformative message of kindness and goodwill towards all. ✨



A Christmas Carol Ensemble, 2023; by Ella Marston

OTHER INCANTATIONS OF **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

***Scrooge* (1951)**

Directed by Brian Desmond Hurst, this film stars Alastair Sim as Scrooge. It is often praised for its faithful adaptation of Charles Dickens' novella and Sim's iconic portrayal of the miserly protagonist, capturing both his coldness and eventual redemption.

***A Christmas Carol* (1984)**

This made-for-TV adaptation stars George C. Scott as Scrooge. Known for its strong performances and traditional approach, it emphasizes the emotional depth of the story, bringing a classic feel to the beloved narrative.

***The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992)**

A unique twist of the classic, this musical comedy features Michael Caine as Scrooge alongside beloved Muppet characters. The film – which is now a classic in its own right – combines humor and heart, making it a family-friendly version that introduces the tale to a new generation.

***A Christmas Carol* (1999)**

Starring Sir Patrick Stewart, this adaptation is noted for its darker and more serious tone. Stewart's performance as Scrooge is both compelling and nuanced, and the film captures the gothic elements of Dickens' original story.

***Disney's A Christmas Carol* (2009)**

This animated film features Jim Carrey voicing multiple characters, including Scrooge. Utilizing cutting-edge motion capture technology, it presents a visually stunning version of the story that blends both humor and a darker atmosphere.

***A Christmas Carol* (2019)**

Starring Guy Pierce as Scrooge, this BBC miniseries version offers a fresh perspective on the classic tale. It expands on the original story with more depth by exploring Scrooge's backstory and the themes of regret and redemption in a gritty setting.



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