

2019-20

NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 28, 2019



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY CHARLES DICKENS | ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY GEOFFREY SIMON BROWN

PLAY GUIDE

theatre:
CALGARY
Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

ABOUT THIS PLAY GUIDE

Theatre Calgary's Play Guides and Interactive Learning Programs are made possible by the support of our sponsors:



Stronger
Communities
Together™



CONNECT WITH US



/THEATRECALGARY



@THEATRECALGARY



@THEATRECALGARY

#TCCAROL



theatre:
CALGARY

220 9 Ave SE
Calgary, AB T2G 5C4
theatrecalgary.com

CONTENTS

THE BASICS

- 3 **CAST & CREATIVE TEAM**
- 5 **SETTING & SYNOPSIS**
- 7 **WHO'S WHO**

EXPLORATIONS

- 8 **FABRIC AS A NARRATIVE**
- 10 **TERMS TO KNOW**
- 13 **THE SPIRIT OF GIVING**
- 14 **LET THERE BE LIGHT:
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT MAGIC LANTERNS**
- 17 **A CONVERSATION
WITH PLAYWRIGHT
GEOFFREY SIMON BROWN**

CONVERSATIONS

- 19 **A CHRISTMAS CAROL
MOVIE NIGHT**
- 20 **FURTHER READING**
- 22 **CONVERSATION STARTERS**
- 22 **MINDFULNESS EXERCISE**

THE BASICS

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

EBENEZER SCROOGE
STEPHEN HAIR

MR. FEZZIWIG, OLD JOE
MARK BELLAMY

ALICE CRATCHIT, BETHEL
ANNA CUMMER

FRED, WALTON
BRETT DAHL

BEN CRATCHIT, GEORGE
CASH DAVIS

DICK WILKINS,
TOPPER, SIMON
CHRISTOPHER DUTHIE

MARGRET CRATCHIT,
SALLY, JILL
AVA HORNUNG

BELLE, ROSE
EMMA HOUGHTON

JACOB MARLEY,
MR. CREAKLE, KOCH
BRIAN JENSEN

PENNY, MRS. DILBER,
DANCE CAPTAIN
VANESSA JETTÉ NAYA

GERTIE FEZZIWIG, ETHEL,
MRS. CHARNOCK
KAREN JOHNSON-DIAMOND

MARTHA CRATCHIT, MOLLY
MARINA KADRI

COMPOSER, MUSIC
DIRECTOR, FIDDLER
ALLISON LYNCH

YOUNG SCROOGE, SAM
DEVIN MACKINNON

PETER CRATCHIT,
STEERFORTH
JACKSON MACNEIL

ENSEMBLE, EBENEZER
SCROOGE UNDERSTUDY
DECLAN O'REILLY

EMILY, CAROLINE
GENEVIÈVE PARÉ

BOB CRATCHIT, ARNAULT
GRAHAM PERCY

FAN, PICKLE
JULIANNE SMITH

BOY SCROOGE, THOMAS
EVAN ANDERSEN STERNS

CHRISTMAS PAST
JAMIE TOGNAZZINI

CHRISTMAS PRESENT
MARSHALL VIELLE
NATAY'AO'TAKO

TINY TIM, TOMMY
OLIVER WOODRUFF

BELINDA CRATCHIT, JANE
HANNAH WU

PLAYWRIGHT
GEOFFREY SIMON BROWN

DIRECTOR
STAFFORD ARIMA

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
HAYSAM KADRI

SET & VIDEO DESIGN
SCOTT REID

COSTUME DESIGN
DEITRA KALYN

LIGHTING DESIGN
MICHAEL WALTON

ADDITIONAL
ORCHESTRATIONS
JEREMY SPENCER

CHOREOGRAPHER
JESSE ROBB

ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER
PAIGE PARKHILL

DRAMATURG
JENNA TURK

VOICE & DIALECT COACH
JANE MACFARLANE

STAGE MANAGER
EMMA BRAGER

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
KERRY JOHNSON

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
CARISSA SAMS

TC MENTORS PROGRAM -
SOUND DESIGN
IAN HEERENSPERGER

YOUNG COMPANY
CHAPERONE
ROBYN ORD

HEAD OF LIGHTING
CATHARINE CRUMB

HEAD OF SOUND
BRONWYN BOWLBY

HEAD STAGE CARPENTER
SCOTT MORRIS

HEAD DRESSER
RACHEL MICHELLE SHERIDAN

HEAD OF VIDEO
DAN PLUMTREE

RF TECHNICIAN
TRAVIS MCKINNON

ASSISTANT STAGE CARPENTER
ANDREW KERR

STAGE HANDS
MIKE BOOTH, TESS COWIE

HEAD OF WIGS
BRENDA BOUTET

DRESSERS
DEBORAH DAY,
SHANNYN DOWSETT,
MOLLIE ELIZA ROBERTSON,
CHANDLER ONTKEAN



THE BASICS

SETTING & SYNOPSIS

The action takes place London, England, 1843

The play begins with a fiddler and a magic lantern – as she speaks, the magic lantern begins to project an animated scene, and as the fiddler continues, this becomes more detailed. The audience is taken through the hustle and bustle of streets of 1843 London on Christmas Eve, until they reach the offices of ‘Scrooge & Marley’.

It’s Christmas Eve, and Scrooge is working in his office with his clerk, Bob Cratchit, when two charity workers arrive asking for a donation to help the poor and needy. Scrooge flatly refuses. He also declines an invitation to celebrate the season with his nephew Fred. He does reluctantly agree to let Cratchit spend Christmas Day with his family, as long as he comes in early the next day.

At home that evening, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of Jacob Marley. The ghost informs Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits who will help him to avoid the terrible fate that Marley is suffering – wandering the earth bound by the “chains he forged in life.”

The first spirit to appear, the Spirit of Christmas Past, takes Scrooge on a journey to see the places and people of his youth. Scrooge is reminded of the deep affection he felt for his sister Fan, the late mother of Fred. He visits his old employer Mr. Fezziwig and remembers the joy and happiness that the Fezziwigs spread at Christmas time. He also sees his former sweetheart, Belle, who broke up with him because of his single-minded pursuit of wealth.

Next, the Spirit of Christmas Present takes Scrooge to see the celebrations happening all around him. They first visit the Cratchit home, where Scrooge learns that his clerk has a very sick son, Tiny Tim. Then Scrooge visits his nephew Fred and his wife Emily, and their friends gathering for dinner. As they play a guessing game, Scrooge learns what they really think of him.

The Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come completes Scrooge’s education, showing him three businessmen callously discussing the recent death of an unnamed associate. Then, Scrooge sees his servants selling the belongings of someone who has recently died. He is then taken to the home of Cratchits, where he watches the family mourning the death of Tiny Tim. Finally, The Spirit takes Scrooge to a graveyard and points to a tombstone. Scrooge approaches it and discovers the grave bears his own name. Scrooge begs for the Spirit’s pity, and promises to keep the spirit of Christmas in his heart all the year.

Scrooge wakes up in his bedroom on Christmas Day. Full of joy, he takes to the streets, happily greeting everyone he passes. He meets the two charity workers who had appeared in his office the previous day and apologizes for his behaviour by making a sizable donation to their cause. He visits his nephew Fred’s family and friends gathering for Christmas Day, hoping to dine with them and asks for forgiveness from Fred. He then pays a visit to the Cratchit family home, gives Bob Cratchit a raise and has a turkey delivered for their family feast. Fred with his family and friends arrive at the Cratchit home to join the celebration, and the community begins to gather around.

The fiddler reappears, recounting Scrooge’s journey and his change of heart. The play finishes with a Merry Christmas, and Tiny Tim exclaims, “God bless us, every one!”



John Leech

Mr. Ferriwig's Ball.

THE BASICS

WHO'S WHO

SCROOGE

EBENEZER SCROOGE

A miser

BOY SCROOGE

A student

YOUNG SCROOGE

An apprentice

FRED'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS

FRED

Scrooge's nephew, Fan's son, Emily's husband

EMILY

Scrooge's niece, Fred's wife

PENNY, ROSE & TOPPER

Fred's friends

PEOPLE FROM SCROOGE'S PAST

FAN

Scrooge's sister

MR. CREAKLE

Scrooge's schoolmaster

MOLLY, STEERFORTH, TOMMY, GEORGE, SALLY & JANE

Scrooge's classmates

MR. FEZZIWIG

Scrooge's first employer, Gertie's husband

GERTIE FEZZIWIG

Fezziwig's wife

DICK WILKINS

Scrooge's colleague and friend, later, Belle's husband

EMILY

Scrooge's fiancée, later, Dick's wife

JILL

Dick & Belle's daughter

THE CRATCHITS

BOB CRATCHIT

Scrooge's clerk, Alice's husband

ALICE CRATCHIT

Bob's wife

MARTHA, PETER, BELINDA, MARGRET, BEN & TINY TIM

Their children

GHOSTS AND SPIRITS

JACOB MARLEY

Scrooge's late partner; a ghost

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT****GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME****FIDDLER**

A musician who steps in and out of the world of the play

TOWNSPEOPLE

ETHEL & BETHEL

Charity workers

THOMAS

A boy who sings carols

SAM

A beggar

ARNAULT, WALTON & KOCH

Bankers

OLD JOE

A merchant

MRS. CHARNOCK

A charwoman

MRS. DILBER

A laundress

CAROLINE & SIMON

A couple in debt to Scrooge

PICKLE

A girl who buys a turkey

EXPLORATIONS

FABRIC AS A NARRATIVE

BY HEATHER OLIVER

DEITRA KALYN SHOWS US HOW THE COSTUMES OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL TELL A STORY

While most of us can appreciate a pattern or the colour palette of an outfit, what we don't often think about is why that particular colour or pattern might have been chosen? What is the meaning behind it? How are colour, pattern and texture used to weave a story? Costume designers use the very same narratives as writers, they become the storytellers, and the costumes come to life.

Deitra Kalyn, the costume designer for our new adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*, tells this classic Christmas tale not through the written word, but through her creative and thoughtful process of choosing colours, patterns and textures. Working closely with the creative and design teams for nearly a year, she took inspiration from the set and script to create the new looks for the play. Deitra compartmentalized the costumes using colour and texture to define the lines of Scrooge's journey through the past, present and yet to come.



PAST

Deitra saw Scrooge's past through amber-coloured glasses. She describes the colour palette as warm and candle-lit, using sepia tones in her designs.

The costumes reflect the memories Scrooge revisits, reminding him of the wonderful people in his life who have always loved him, and who he may have forgot in the present world.

"When I think of a warm memory, I see sepia tones. Kind of washed out, like an old photograph. I wanted Scrooge's past to be this amber and candle-lit warm time."

PRESENT

To differentiate against the past, Deitra created costumes for the present that were vibrant with bold patterns. The set is very neutral and dark, so Deitra contrasted against the set with jewel tones to reflect the hustle and bustle of the streets of London during that time. There are also patterns you will only see in the present, such as plaid, solid jewel tones, furs and more textured wools, again defining the line between the past and present.

"This play is much darker than versions in the past. It truly shows the dark underbelly of London during that time, the coal city. That gave the inspiration for my designs - the dark set allowed me to really explore and research textures, colours and fabrics to contrast against it."

YET TO COME

Just how the past is portrayed in a warm light, the future is cold, dark and ominous.

Deitra and her team researched sheer fabrics to create shells of the costumes, almost like black clouds over top of the characters. The costumes create a spooky and menacing look, contributing to the mood of this time period in the play.

"You can see the seams and patterns underneath this dark, sheer fabric. For example, the Cratchit's are vibrant in the present, but in the future you'll see their original looks darkened by these fabrics," says Deitra.
"We played upon what Geoffrey wrote, creating the potential of the future, the darker, shrouded version of what might yet come." ●

EXPLORATIONS

TERMS TO KNOW

1 'DEAD AS A DOORNAIL'

The term 'dead as a doornail' dates back to as early as the 1300s. It is believed that the phrase comes from the way doornails were secured; by hammering it into a door, bending over the protruding end of the nail and hammering it into the wood. When a nail has been bent this way, it is dead because it is not easily resurrected to use again.

HUMBUG

A humbug is a person or object that behaves in a deceptive or dishonest way. In *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge refers to Christmas as a 'humbug,' because he believes Christmas to be a fraud. The term is also used in *The Wizard of Oz*, where the Scarecrow refers to the Wizard as a humbug.

2 SHILLING

A shilling is a former British coin equal to one twentieth of a pound or twelve pence. Bob Cratchit's weekly salary is 15 shillings a week which is equal to approximately \$93.66 a week, or \$2.34 a week (based on a 40-hour work week).

3 UNION WORKHOUSE

Workhouses were where poor people who had no job or home lived. They earned their keep by doing jobs in the workhouse. People that worked in these places were primarily orphaned or abandoned children, the physically or mentally ill, disabled, the elderly, and unmarried mothers.

4 MAGIC LANTERN

The magic lantern is an early type of image projector that uses painted or printed transparent plates of glass, a lense and a light source.

APPRENTICE

An apprenticeship is a kind of job training that involves following and studying a master of the trade on the job instead of in school.

5 SHUTTER

A shutter is one of a pair of hinged panels, fixed inside or outside a window that can be closed for security, privacy, or to keep out the light.

MILKSOP

A milksop refers to a person who is indecisive and lacks courage.

6 BED CURTAINS

Bed curtains are a feature that is primarily found on canopy beds. These curtains can completely enclose the bed and were primarily used by lords and noblemen in medieval Europe for warmth and privacy, as their attendants often slept in the same room.



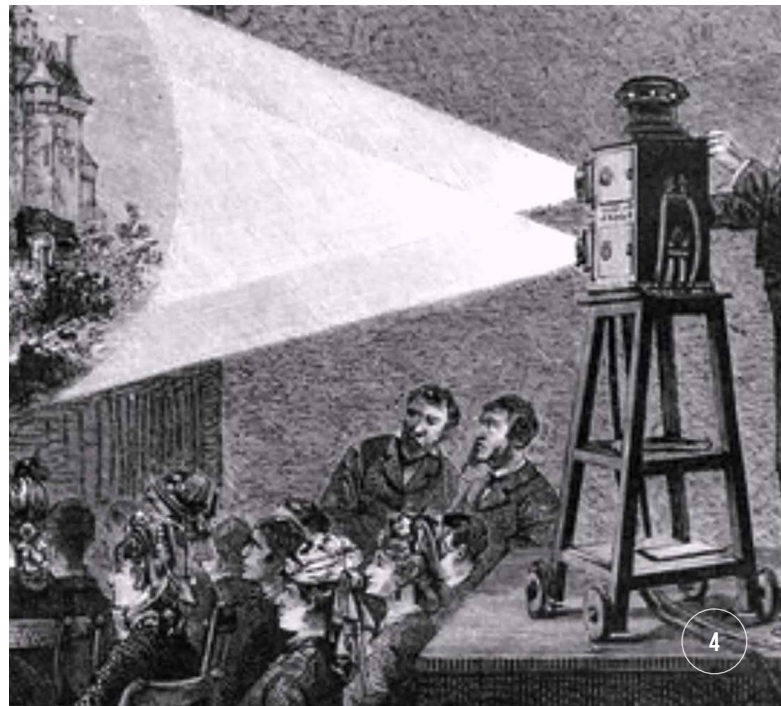
1



2



3



4



5



6

CALGARY FOOD BANK



EXPLORATIONS

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

The true lesson learned by Ebenezer in *A Christmas Carol* is that the Christmas spirit should be carried throughout all the days of the year. With the Fezziwigs and Ebenezer's nephew Fred leading by example, it seems a life of generosity and celebration is a life well lived. Theatre Calgary could not agree more!

Theatre Calgary's *A Christmas Carol* has been partnering with the Calgary Food Bank for over twenty years. Our Toonies for Turkeys fundraising campaign began in 1997 when an actor in the company, Lindsay Burns, had the thoughtful idea to collect money for the Food Bank after the show. It's these acts of kindness that James McAra, CEO of the Calgary Food Bank, appreciates most.

"Toonies for Turkeys connects the spirit of our community and our daily challenges. The awareness, the understanding, the focus on building the future all come from Theatre Calgary's Toonies for Turkeys initiative. People can have a holiday feast, break bread together, and it's more than just turkey, it is about the gift of holiday celebration and the warmth of sharing. It is the quintessential reminder that our community can care all year long."

The first year of the campaign, it was only done at a select few performances, but since then Toonies for Turkeys has grown to become an integral part of the annual *A Christmas Carol* experience. Despite the recent financial downturn, James McAra says people are still giving.

"Calgarians understand generosity. We have firsthand experience of the tragedies wrought from economic, environmental and community crisis. People give time, talent and more in proportion to their condition. Calgarians get it."

Every \$2 donated allows the Calgary Food Bank to distribute \$10 worth of food. After each performance, our patrons are invited to donate whatever they can to help those less fortunate in our community. Actors, still in costume and armed with baskets, fill the lobbies, and without fail our patrons open their hearts and give back.

Over the past year, the Food Bank served more than 190,000 people – 4 in 10 of whom were children. The Food Bank's CEO reminds us who uses its services: "Your neighbour, a family member, you." The Calgary Food Bank is an invaluable resource that provides emergency food hampers to the homeless, milk and formula to mothers and children in need, and meals and snacks to over 230 agencies and programs each year. Please consider making a donation to our Toonies for Turkeys campaign or making a donation as you do your own holiday shopping – there are nonperishable donation bins at most major grocery stores in Calgary. Also, the Calgary Food Bank welcomes donations both nonperishable and perishable made directly to their warehouse at 5000 11 Street SE (loading door 3).

TO DATE, THEATRE CALGARY STAFF, VOLUNTEERS,
AND YOU – OUR AUDIENCE – HAVE HELPED RAISE OVER

\$2 MILLION

FOOD BANK WISHLIST



- Canned Meat
- Baby Food
- Pasta & Pasta Sauce
- Canned Vegetables
- Fruit Juice
- Rice
- Canned Fruit

Additionally if you're feeling the pinch, McAra prompts us to remember the true spirit of giving, "You can volunteer, support your community (shovel snow, coach, pick up the mail, fix the leaky tap, read a good book with friends). Don't worry about going it alone, we will all help."

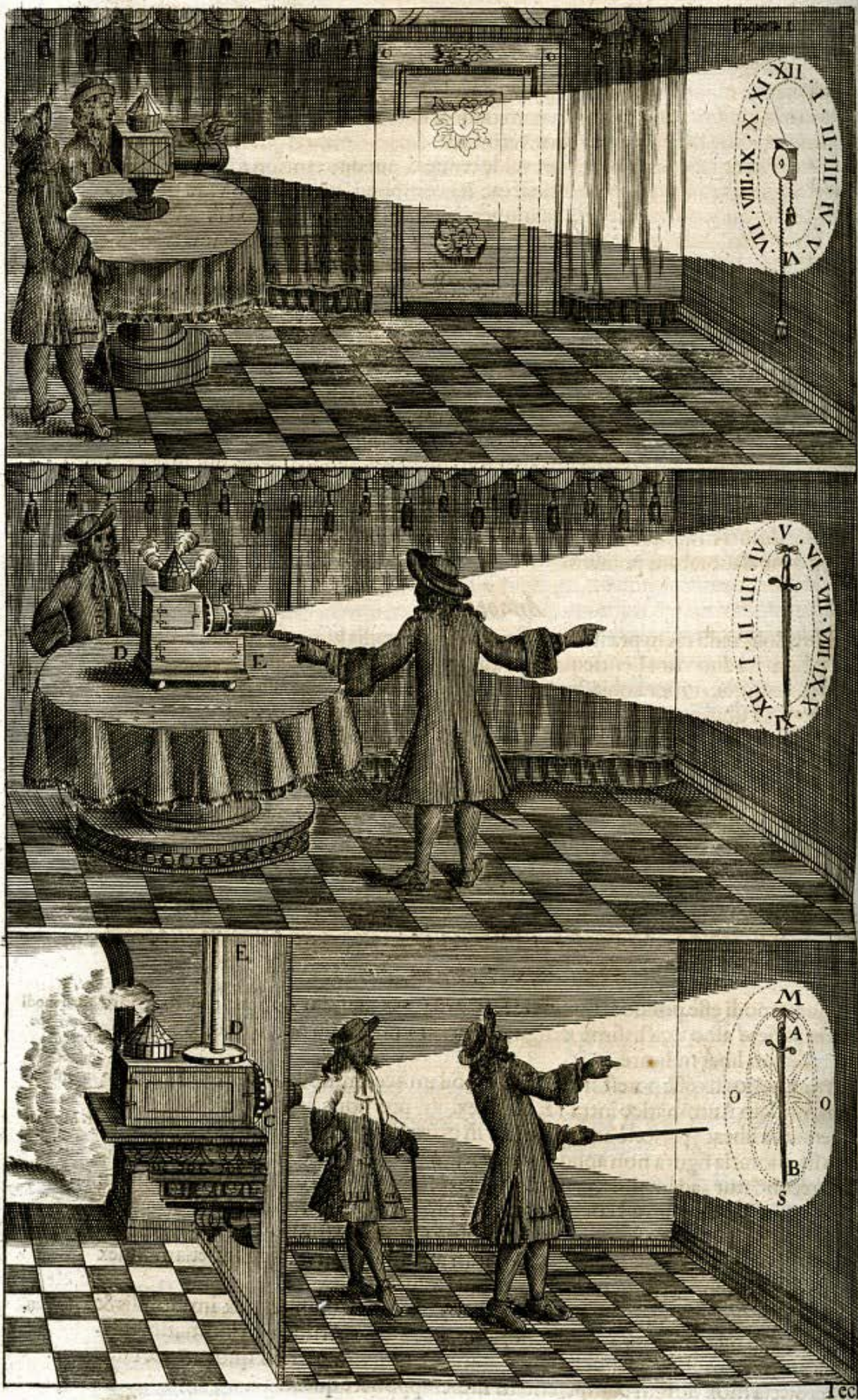
EXPLORATIONS

LET THERE BE LIGHT

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MAGIC LANTERNS

Dickens was a prodigious walker, often at night, and it was while he was walking that London, the place he called his “magic lantern”, imprinted itself on his mind and imagination.

- The invention and first public demonstration of the magic lantern has long been a subject of debate.
- Some historians maintain it was invented by Dutch physicist, Christiaan Huygens, who in around 1659 constructed the first working magic lantern.
- By the mid-seventeenth century, descriptions of prototypes and reports of demonstrations were being published throughout Europe.
- The first magic lanterns were illuminated by candles.
- It was the earliest form of slide projector and has a long and fascinating history.
- The earliest known “lanthorn show” in the U. S. was in Salem, Massachusetts, on December 3, 1743, “for the Entertainment of the Curious.”
- By the 18th century, the magic lanterns were being used as a common form of entertainment for the middle and upper classes.
- However, it was noted that the lantern had value for scientific instruction, as it could be used to show enlarged images of insects and other specimens.
- The name “magic lantern” comes from the experience of the early audiences who saw devils and angels mysteriously appear on the wall, as if by magic. Even in the earliest period, performances contained images that moved—created with moving pieces of glass.
- In the mid-19th century, two new forms of illumination were developed which led to an explosion of lantern use.
 - “Limelight” was created by heating a piece of limestone in burning gas until it became incandescent. It was dangerous, but produced a light that was strong enough to project an image before thousands of people, leading to large shows by professional showmen.
 - Kerosene lamps were not nearly as bright, but they were so safe they could be used by children, leading to wide-spread use in churches, schools, fraternal societies, and in toy lanterns.
- The Langenheims first put a positive photographic image on glass in 1848. By the 1850s they were offering photographic slides commercially along with their glass stereoviews.
- By the turn to the 20th century, electric illumination was introduced, which spread the lantern even further.
- Several hundred companies made their own brands, often in a bewildering array of different models. At the top end were the exotic “triunials” and “biunials” which were three and two-lens lanterns used by professional showmen.
- At the bottom were inexpensive single lens lanterns, and the very popular children’s lanterns which were a favourite Christmas present.



EARLY DRAWING OF A MAGIC LANTERN IN USE FROM ZAHN'S OCVLLVS ARTIFICIALIS TELEIOPTRICVS SIVE TELESCOPIVM (1702). RAKOV LIBRARY COLLECTION.

HAND PAINTED



Hand painted magic lantern slides can be recognized by the simple paint areas applied with a brush and the obvious brush strokes.

PRINTED



With the improvements of printing techniques on glass, mass produced printed slides became possible. This type of transfer slide was produced by the thousands and shipped all over the world.

DECALCOMANIA OR CHROMOLITHO



Decalcomania used a specific technique of transferring pictures from special paper to glass surfaces. Porous paper was coated with a solution of starch, albumen, and glycerin. The coloured pictures were printed, details first, background last, and finished with a coat of glue.

PHOTOGRAPHY



A simple slide consisting of two sheets of glass, one with the image and the other acting as a protective cover. The first photographic slides became available in 1848 and by 1850 they were available commercially.

SLIDES FROM DRAWINGS



Originally developed in the United States, this kind of made by using a master drawing, photographing it, and then printing slides.

HAND COLOURED BLACK AND WHITE



Since colour photography was not widely available during the time period of the magic lantern, many black and white photography slides were painted by hand to give the illusion of a colourful scene.

COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC



Early attempts were made to make coloured photographic slides with starch grains, however they did not survive in large numbers and had a tendency to be somewhat fragile.

MECHANICAL SLIDES



Eventually, the magic lantern did more than just project a static image on a wall. By sliding two images over each other, special effects could be obtained, like a girl skipping rope.

EXPLORATIONS

“WE ARE ALL CONNECTED”

GEOFFREY SIMON BROWN, CALGARY PLAYWRIGHT, TALKS HIS NEW ADAPTATION AND THE MEANING BEHIND THE PLAY

Geoffrey began his journey to bring the new adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* to life on the Theatre Calgary stage in spring of 2018.

Once he received the call for submissions from Theatre Calgary, he read the original novella by Charles Dickens. He was struck by how beautiful and theatrical of a story it is, and from there, he found it easy to imagine how to bring the story to life.

“When I began this process, I started thinking a lot about how polarized we are right now in our political views, and how they have divided us. This play is deemed as loved across the board, regardless of having a particular political standing or view. This story brings people together to talk about humanity, giving back and caring for each other, without an agenda.”

Geoffrey kept this sentiment close to his heart when he put pen to paper on his submission to Theatre Calgary. When he received the call that he was to write the new adaptation from Theatre Calgary’s Artistic Director, Stafford Arima, he worked closely with the

creative team to hone the script. The first draft took him three months to finish. Geoffrey describes that the writer’s experience can be a lonely one, spending many hours on his own, reading and rereading lines out loud. With no one to bounce ideas off of, he found himself wondering, is this funny? Will the audience enjoy this? But, throughout the journey of writing, he was able to collaborate with Stafford and the creative team at Theatre Calgary to hone the script.

“The experience working with the Theatre Calgary team has been fantastic. They’ve honoured what I imagined and found a way to bring that to life on the stage. Stafford is so amazing as a director and leader, he brings everyone together, and all of our voices are heard.”

Rehearsals for the new adaptation began in late October, bringing together 24 cast members, 13 of which have never been in *A Christmas Carol*, and nine who are making their debut on the Theatre Calgary stage. Geoffrey remarked that it was amazing to see a room full of people with ages across seven decades. There are some cast and



“WE’RE JUST SPARKS TINY PARTS OF A BIGGER CONSTELLATION.”

KATE TEMPEST, OCTOBER 2016

creative team members who have worked with Theatre Calgary for generations, and those are experiencing their first time on stage. But everyone learned from one another, regardless of their background.

“Each cast member was kind and thoughtful, and everyone took great care into how they approached a scene. We were all excited to be there and play, it was a room shared by a diverse group in a wonderfully collaborative manner.”

Audiences can expect Geoffrey’s adaptation to stay true to Dickens’ classic tale, but he did take some creative liberties with character development and modernizing some of the dialogue.

“It’s a short novella, so Dickens’ characters were not so complex. I was interested in digging into the characters more, especially some of the female characters. The play itself is set in 1843, but

our palate as a society has changed, so I made changes that would connect more with a modern audience.”

When all is said and done, Geoffrey hopes that this story and play bring people together, regardless of their political lens, their social values, and take the true spirit of the story.

“We are all connected, this is the message here. It’s important to see outside of us and ours alone, and see the larger community and world that we all belong to.” ●

BY HEATHER OLIVER

PHOTO: HAYSAM KADRI (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR) & GEOFFREY SIMON BROWN DURING REHEARSALS FOR *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*



A CHRISTMAS CAROL MOVIE NIGHT

1 THE MAN WHO INVENTED CHRISTMAS

The journey that led to Charles Dickens' creation of "A Christmas Carol," a timeless tale that would redefine Christmas.

STARRING DAN STEVENS, CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER, JONATHAN PRYCE

2017 | Feature Film | PG | 1h 44m | Director Bharat Nalluri

2 THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL

The Muppet characters tell their version of the classic tale of an old and bitter miser's redemption on Christmas Eve.

STARRING MICHAEL CAINE, KERMIT THE FROG, THE GREAT GONZO

1992 | Feature Film | G | 1h 25m | Director Brian Henson

3 SCROOGED

A selfish, cynical television executive is haunted by three spirits bearing lessons on Christmas Eve.

STARRING BILL MURRAY, KAREN ALLEN

1988 | Feature Film | PG | 1h 41m | Director Richard Donner

4 IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

An angel is sent from Heaven to help a desperately frustrated businessman by showing him what life would have been like if he had never existed.

STARRING JAMES STEWART, DONNA REED, LIONEL BARRYMORE

1946 | Feature Film | G | 2h 10m | Director Frank Capra

5 HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

On the outskirts of Whoville, there lives a green, revenge-seeking Grinch (Jim Carrey), who plans on ruining Christmas for all of the citizens of the town.

STARRING JIM CARREY, JEFFREY TAMBOR, MOLLY SHANNON

2000 | Feature Film | G | 1h 44m | Director Ron Howard

6 A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

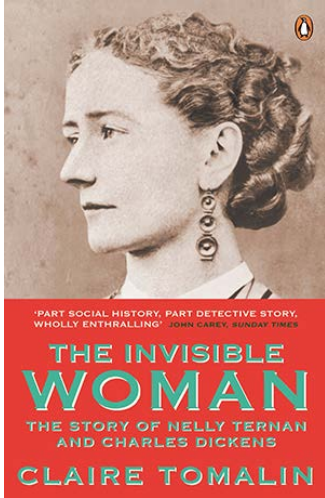
Depressed at the commercialism he sees around him, Charlie Brown tries to find a deeper meaning to Christmas.

STARRING CHARLIE BROWN, SCHROEDER, SNOOPY

1965 | TV Movie | G | 25m | Director Bill Melendez

CONVERSATIONS

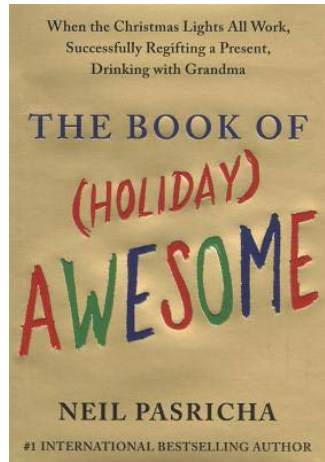
FURTHER READING



THE INVISIBLE WOMAN: THE STORY OF NELLY TERNAN AND CHARLES DICKENS BY CLAIRE TOMALIN

The captivating account of Charles Dickens' secret 13-year relationship with actress Nelly Ternan, until his death in 1870.

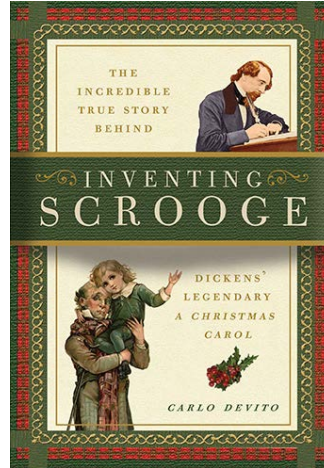
2008
Non-fiction



THE BOOK OF (HOLIDAY) AWESOME BY NEIL PASRICHA

Here's a book that puts into words what many experience during the holiday season: a love-hate relationship. And that's ok, Pasricha reassures us. Whether it's making a trip around town to gaze in wonder at twinkling Christmas lights or breathing a sigh of relief as the in-laws finally drive away, it's all awesome!

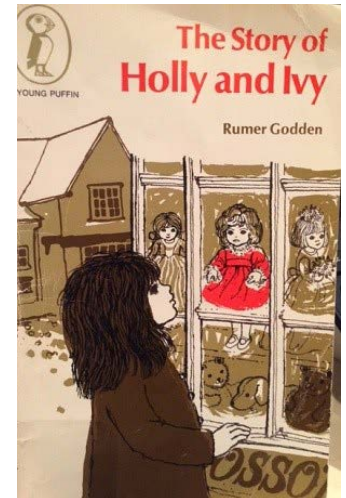
2011
Non-fiction



INVENTING SCROOGE: THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY BEHIND CHARLES DICKENS' LEGENDARY A CHRISTMAS CAROL BY CARLO DEVITO

From a graveyard in Edinburgh to Dickens' schoolboy years in Chatham, this engaging history reveals the real-life inspirations that contributed to the creation of one of the world's most beloved tales.

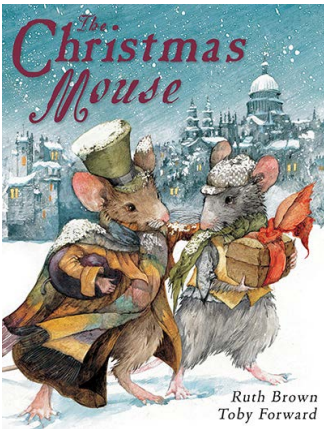
2014
Non-fiction



THE STORY OF HOLLY & IVY BY RUMER GODDEN

This beautiful children's book is perfect for the whole family. It tells the story of Ivy, an orphan in search of a family to love, and Holly, a doll who longs to belong to a girl. A heartwarming tale, filled with the Christmas spirit, which demands to be read aloud.

1985
Fiction

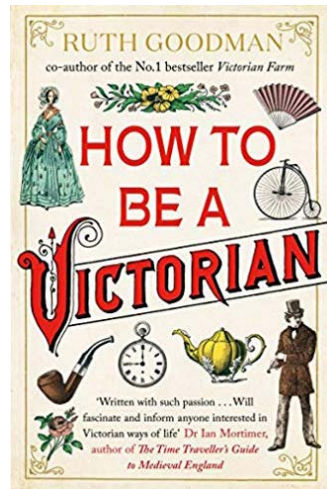


THE CHRISTMAS MOUSE

BY RUTH BROWN & TOBY FORWARD

Ben doesn't care about Christmas and he shuns the present little Tim offers him. But on Christmas Eve Ben cannot sleep. Then, a stranger appears who promises to help Ben if he will take up the stranger's challenge. Ben agrees, and so they set off on a night-time quest, which teaches Ben about the value of friendship and the true meaning of Christmas.

1988
Fiction



HOW TO BE A VICTORIAN

BY RUTH GOODMAN

It wasn't all penny-farthings and mutton chops in Victorian England. Learn about what life was like for everyone from commoners to the Queen. An enchanting manual for the insatiably curious.

2013
Non-fiction

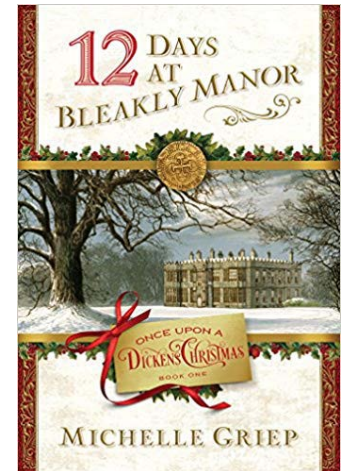


SIMPLE GIVING: EASY WAYS TO GIVE EVERY DAY

BY JENNIFER IACOVELLI

While Scrooge discovered that giving to others brings happiness, sometimes the thought of trying to make a difference can be overwhelming. This engaging guide to giving offers practical tips and shares real-life examples of how changing the world can start with something as simple as paying a compliment to a stranger.

2015
Non-fiction



12 DAYS AT BLEAKLY MANOR

BY MICHELLE GRIEP

With a nod to Dickens' Bleak House, this Victorian mystery is reminiscent of a mystery dinner theatre, with humour, romance, unexpected twists and a memorable cast of characters.

2017
Fiction

CONVERSATIONS

CONVERSATION STARTERS

How would you define Christmas spirit?

What was your first experience with *A Christmas Carol*? Was it the book? A movie? This production?

Which design choices (set, costumes, props, lighting, video) helped you understand the specific setting or location of a scene? Which choices created a particular mood or atmosphere for the scene?

Why was it important for the Ghost of Christmas Past to show Scrooge his memories?

Do you believe people can change for the better?

What are some other stories that follow this basic plot? Why is this storyline so common?

Does Scrooge's journey still resonate today? How?

Were there moments in *A Christmas Carol* where what a character *did* on stage revealed more about them than what they said?

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

Inspired by a guided meditation created by Dr. Emma Sappällä, director of science at Stanford University's Centre for Compassion and Altruism Education and Research.

Sit comfortably. Relax your whole body. Take a deep breath in. And out.

Picture someone who loves you. Perhaps it's your mum or dad, sister or brother, a dear friend. Someone who wishes you happiness, well-being, and good health. Bask in their well-wishes. You are loved.

Now bring your awareness to the person to your right. You may know them. You may not. Just like you, this person wishes to be happy. Send this person your love. Repeat the following, silently:

May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be free from pain.

May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be free from pain.

May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be free from pain.

Now focus your attention on the person to your left. Again, you may not know them. You may. Send them your love and warmth. Just like you this person wishes to have a good life. Repeat the phrases.

Bring your awareness now to the space you're in. The whole theatre. All of these people, all of these actors and ushers, and theatergoers, all of them – just like you – hope to be happy, healthy, and light. Share your warm wishes to them:

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, happiness, and good health.

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, happiness, and good health.

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, happiness, and good health.

Take a deep breath in, and let it out. Take another deep breath and then let it go. Notice your state of mind. How do you feel? Enjoy the show!

