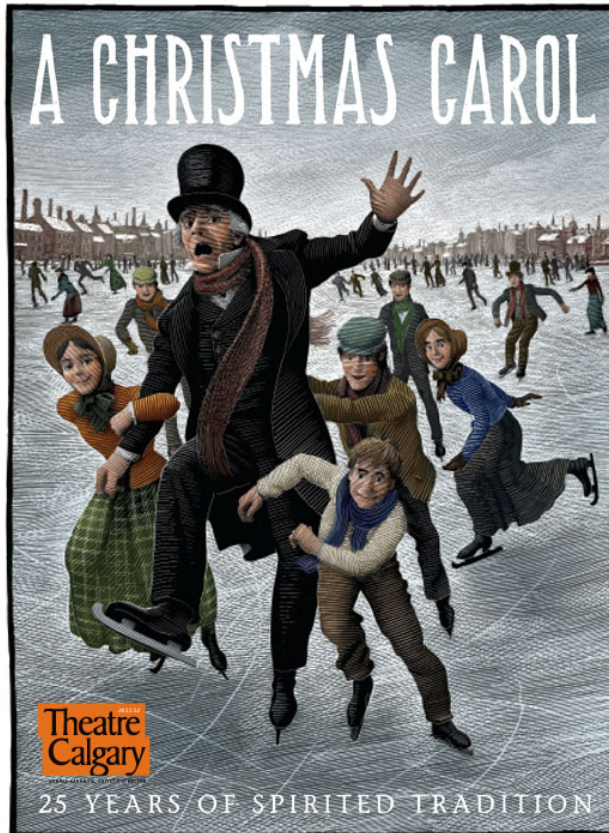


CANADA SAFEWAY PRESENTS THE THEATRE CALGARY PRODUCTION



THIS PRODUCTION IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE CAL WENZEL FAMILY FOUNDATION

By CHARLES DICKENS
Adapted for the stage by DENNIS GARNHUM
Starring STEPHEN HAIR as Ebenezer Scrooge

Enrichment Guide

Prepared by Dom Saliani
and
Shari Wattling, Artistic Associate, Theatre Calgary

THE
Great-West Life
ASSURANCE COMPANY

London
Life

Canada Life

Esso Imperial Oil
Foundation

STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER™

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Theatre Calgary	3-4
The Cast & Creative Team	5
About the Adapter – Dennis Garnhum	6
In Conversation with Dennis Garnhum	7
In Conversation with Stephen Hair	8-9
In Conversation with Set & Costume Designer Patrick Clark	10-11
Who’s Who in the Play	12
Setting of the Play	12
Plot Summary	13
Quotations about Christmas and Dickens	14
About the Author: Charles Dickens	15
Dickens and the Theatre	16
Works by Charles Dickens	17
What the Dickens!	17
Notable Adaptations of <i>A Christmas Carol</i>	18
Interesting Facts about <i>A Christmas Carol</i>	19
A Glossary of Allusions and Unfamiliar Terms	20-21
Christmas around the World	22

ABOUT THEATRE CALGARY



The Max Bell Theatre in the EPCOR Centre for the Performing Arts – Home to Theatre Calgary
Photo by David Cooper

In the 1940s, Dr. Betty Mitchell, a drama teacher at Calgary's Western Canada High School, inspired such loyalty and devotion in her students that they continued to study with her after graduating. Together they named themselves "Workshop 14" and became one of the country's finest amateur theatre companies. Two decades later, a second amateur group called the "Musicians' and Actors' Club" (MAC), composed of local business people, were staging short plays and excerpts from musicals in the old Isis movie house. MAC and Workshop 14 merged to become MAC 14 under the direction of Kenneth Dyba and mounted productions in a converted tractor house, later to be named The QR Centre. MAC 14 became Theatre Calgary, a fully professional theatre company, on July 1st, 1968.

Christopher Newton, formerly the Artistic Director of the Shaw Festival, was appointed the first Artistic Director for Theatre Calgary. A keen interest was expressed at this time to produce plays by Canadian playwrights; James Reaney's *The Three Desks* was produced during the first season, as were two others of Newton's works: *You Two Stay Here*, *The Rest Come With Me* and *Trip*. In 1971, Clark Rogers succeeded as Artistic Director, the very year a disastrous fire destroyed most of the company's archives. Harold G. Baldrbridge assumed the direction of the company in 1972, and for the next seven years presented a blend of national, international, contemporary, and classic works.

In 1977 Rick McNair joined Theatre Calgary as the director of Caravan, a touring theatre troupe that brought drama to the schools throughout Alberta. Caravan was renamed Stage Coach Players in 1979 and still exists in Calgary today as Quest Theatre, originally under the direction of Duval Lang. Mr. McNair was appointed Artistic Director for Theatre Calgary in 1979 and presented premiers by John Murrell, W.O. Mitchell, and Sharon Pollock. In 1984, Sharon Pollock became the fifth Artistic Director of the company and again a commitment to producing new Canadian work was re-established.

Martin Kinch succeeded as Artistic Director in 1985. During this time Theatre Calgary became the resident company of the state-of-the-art theatre in the Calgary Centre of Performing Arts (now known as the Epcor Centre for the Performing Arts). Designed in conjunction with Theatre Calgary, the Max Bell Theatre came to completion as a striking performance space. Every seat is within sixty feet from the stage so audiences can enjoy the kind of intimate rapport with the actors that serves to enhance the magical experience of live theatre.

In 1991, Brian Rintoul came to Theatre Calgary as Executive Producer. Mr. Rintoul had produced plays previously for Theatre Calgary in the QR Centre. In 1996, James Brewer was appointed Acting Artistic Director and Richard C. Dennison became the general manager. In 1997 Ian Prinsloo assumed the role of

Artistic Director. Prior to joining Theatre Calgary, Mr. Prinsloo was the co-founder of Orange Dog Theatre in Toronto.

In 1997, Tom E. McCabe, after a successful tenure on the Board of Directors, became General Manager (and later President). Prior to this, Mr. McCabe served as Executive Director of Tourism Alberta and held numerous positions over a 25-year career with the Bank of Montreal.

In September 2005, Dennis Garnhum was appointed the new Artistic Director. Over the past 6 years, Theatre Calgary has renewed its commitment to developing and producing new plays through FUSE: The Enbridge Play Development Program and has also nurtured and mentored a new generation of Alberta theatre artists through the FUEL Artist Development Program.



(L to R) Andrew McNee, Christian Goutsis, Jordan Schartner, Hrothgar Mathews and Erin Wells in Timothy Findley's *THE WARS*, by Dennis Garnhum, 2007.
Photo by Trudie Lee



David Fox and Aaron Stern in W.O. Mitchell's *JAKE & THE KID*, by Conni Massing, 2009.
Photo by Trudie Lee



The company of *BEYOND EDEN*, by Bruce Ruddell, 2010.
Photo by David Cooper

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

THEATRE CALGARY

Presents

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens

Adapted for the stage by Dennis Garnhum

Starring Stephen Hair as Ebenezer Scrooge

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Kendra Braun	Abigail
Erin Breen	Belle
Tyrell Crews	Fred
Robert Graham Klein	Jacob Marley
Allison Lynch	Spirit of Christmas Past
Doug McKeag	Mr. Fezziwig
Curt McKinstry	Bob Cratchit
Rebecca Northan	Mrs. Dilber
Scott Olynek	Solicitor
Graham Percy	Spirit of Christmas Present
Stafford Perry	Young Man Scrooge
Valerie Planche	Mrs. Fezziwig
Karl H. Sine	Topper
Myla Southward	Mrs. Cratchit

YOUNG COMPANY

Ben Arthurs	Boy Scrooge
Kyle Dewsnap	Peter
Emma Duke	Belinda
Grace Fedorchuk	Martha
Aidan Hamilton	Tiny Tim
Kaleigh Jo Kirk	Fan
Caoimhe Laird	Hope
Robert Morrison	Young Scrooge

Dennis Garnhum	Director
Simon Mallett	Associate Director
Shari Wattling	Dramaturg
Patrick Clark	Set and Costume Designer
Kevin Lamotte	Lighting Designer
Jeremy Spencer	Composer
Reid Spencer	Music & Vocal Director
Haysam Kadri	Fight Choreographer
Jane MacFarlane	Vocal Coach
Kelly Lunn	Stage Manager
Emma Brager	Assistant Stage Manager
Amy Jewell	Assistant Stage Manager
Kacie Killaly	Chaperone

ABOUT THE ADAPTER & DIRECTOR – DENNIS GARNHUM

Dennis was appointed Artistic Director of Theatre Calgary in September of 2005. Since then, he has directed the productions *Trying, Of Mice and Men, Enchanted April, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Much Ado About Nothing* and the 2006 – 2010 production of *A Christmas Carol*. In addition, he directed the world premiere musical production *Beyond Eden*, as well as his adaptations of *Timothy Findley's The Wars* and Cathy Ostlere's *Lost: A Memoir*. In the 2011-2012 Theatre Calgary season, Dennis will direct *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and the 25th Anniversary production of *A Christmas Carol*.



He also recently directed his first opera, *La Traviata*, for Pacific Opera, Victoria, and will direct *The Barber of Seville* for Vancouver Opera, and *Carmen* for Pacific Opera in the coming year.

Prior to his appointment at Theatre Calgary, Dennis spent three years living in New York City. While there he directed *Rat In The Skull* at the Berkshire Theatre Festival and the premiere of the musical *Two Orphans*, by Pulitzer-prize nominated playwright Theresa Rebeck in Boston. Dennis was the Special Projects Producer at the Long Wharf Theatre where he worked on the development of the opera *Brundibar* (Tony Kushner/ Maurice Sendak).

Prior to his move to New York, Dennis directed plays at most major theatre companies in Canada. For the Stratford Festival, Dennis directed *The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Scarlet Pimpernel* and premieres of two plays by Timothy Findley, *Shadows* and *The Trials of Ezra Pound*. Dennis also directed at the Shaw Festival for six seasons, including productions of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Still Life, Sorry, Wrong Number* and *S.S. Tenacity*.

In Calgary, he was part of the 2004 playRites Festival at Alberta Theatre Projects, directing *Down the Main Drag*. He was dramaturge and director of Maureen Hunter's new play *Vinci* at the National Arts Centre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, and the Canadian Stage Company in Toronto. At the Tarragon Theatre, he directed *Skylight* and *Slavs*, both productions receiving Dora nominations for best direction. For the Manitoba Theatre Centre he also directed *To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Of Mice And Men* (Both co-productions with the Citadel Theatre), *Closer* and *Three Tall Women*. *Blue/Orange* premiered at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria, B.C., before transferring to Prairie Theatre Exchange in Winnipeg. In addition, Dennis directed *Of Mice And Men* at Neptune Theatre in Halifax, *Sleuth* at the Saidye Bronfmann in Montreal, and *A Christmas Carol* at Theatre New Brunswick.

Dennis has also enjoyed working closely with theatre students, directing *The Laramie Project* at the National Theatre School of Canada, and *Arcadia* at U.B.C.

Dennis' concert versions of *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* and *Hallelujah Handel* have toured across North America. In 2002, *Beethoven Lives Upstairs* debuted internationally in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Special events which Dennis has conceived include a one-night celebration of Stephen Sondheim at Harbourfront's World Stage in Toronto, with the musical theatre legend in attendance. In Great Barrington, MA, Dennis developed a one-night celebration for the 100th anniversary of the newly restored Mahaiwe Theatre.

Dennis spent three summers in the Opera Program at the Banff School of Fine Arts, working as Assistant Director to acclaimed opera director Colin Graham. He received a BFA from the University of Victoria, and an MFA in directing from the U.B.C.

Dennis has adapted three works for the Theatre Calgary stage:

Timothy Findley's The Wars (2007)
Cathy Ostlere's Lost - A Memoir (2010)
Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol (2011)

IN CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS GARNHUM

IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS OR SO, YOU HAVE ADAPTED TWO WORKS, TIMOTHY FINDLEY'S THE WARS AND CATHY OSTLERE'S LOST: A MEMOIR, AND NOW YOU HAVE CREATED A THIRD STAGE ADAPTATION. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO ADAPT A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR THEATRE CALGARY?

Dennis: *I thought long and hard about which direction the new Christmas Carol should take - who should adapt it and who should direct it. It dawned on me, after a bit of soul-searching, that given my history with it and my history with the company, I have a lot of knowledge that I could bring forward. I thought that the best way to move this production forward would be to take all the knowledge I had from before and apply it myself.*

The way I think of adapting - because I'm a director - is that I am actually directing the book – that's how I phrase it. So I go back to the source – which is not me - it's Charles Dickens and I ask myself, "how would I direct that scene?" I always find that there is great joy in adapting. You can find a nugget of an idea that's in there and you think, "OK, we're going to run with that." This production is my imagination now running with ideas that Charles Dickens inspired.

HOW WILL THIS YEAR'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL BE DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS THEATRE CALGARY PRODUCTIONS?

Dennis: *This year's Carol will be different in many, many ways. It's going to be larger, if that's possible! Physically, it's a big, BIG production. The adaptation is more truthful to Dickens' original story than before. There's also singing - we've added about twenty Christmas carols - and I've set the entire production in what I call a "white winter wonderland." The whole set projects the idea that Scrooge is in a frozen world – his bed has icicles falling off it and everything is covered in snow. So it's going to be much more like a fantasy, similar to a ballet, or a children's story. Compared to previous productions, it's going to be visually much more colourful. The previous version, which was very important to me, was more about poverty and bleakness. This one is much more about children and joy. Given that I am a father now, I see things through those eyes.*

SO ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS CHRISTMAS MORE THAN OTHER CHRISTMASSES SEEING AS YOU ARE A FATHER NOW?

Dennis: *Absolutely! Every Christmas from now on is going to be extraordinary. I mean, a child gives you that for Christmas. That's a good question. I can't wait. I really can't wait.*

IN CONVERSATION WITH STEPHEN HAIR



STEPHEN, AS AN ACTOR, YOU ARE MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH A *CHRISTMAS CAROL*. COULD YOU SHARE WITH US HOW YOUR INVOLVEMENT FIRST BEGAN AND YOUR HISTORY WITH THE PLAY?

Stephen: *Yes. Theatre Calgary started doing A Christmas Carol before the EPCOR Centre for the Performing Arts was built. Back then, in the very first version, I played Charles Dickens, who, in that version was the narrator. This year will be my 23rd time being in the production. I've only missed two over 25 years.*

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PLAYING THE SAME ROLE FOR SO MANY YEARS? IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC THAT YOU DO TO KEEP THE ROLE FRESH FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR AUDIENCES?

Stephen: *I don't think of it as the same role. I know that the name is the same, but things happen that are different. Not only are there different actors, there are also different versions of the play and different sets. I was 44 or 43 when I started Scrooge and this year I'm going to be 60. A lot has happened to me in those 17 years and so Scrooge changes as I change. As I learn more about life and a little more about me, I try to put that kind of emotion or feeling into Scrooge. And that's what keeps it fresh. I don't want to do the same thing. I don't want to do what I did last year or the year before. You start from there in rehearsal. It's like putting on a pair of cozy slippers - that's where you start, but there has to be something more. You'll never find the true core of a human being.*

CAN YOU EXPAND UPON HOW YOU SEE THE CHARACTER OF SCROOGE AND WHAT YOU WANT THE AUDIENCES TO GET OR UNDERSTAND FROM HIM AS A CHARACTER?

Stephen: *Over the years, I find more and more that I want him to be a real human being, not the stereotyped, miserly Scrooge that we are all so familiar with. He is a human being who has gone through, as everybody does, a lot of disappointments, a lot of changes. He's come to a lot of forks in the road and he has made some very wrong choices. He doesn't see himself as a bad person. He may be stingy with his money, a bit mean and a bit cranky, but that comes from the life that he has led. So, what I want people to see is that he is a real person who made bad life choices and those lead him to where he is at the beginning of the play. But he can change. That is the nature of the story and I think that's why people keep coming and seeing it - because it's for all of us. It tells us that we can all make bad choices, but you can actually change and go to the light.*

PEOPLE DO KEEP COMING BACK, SO THERE MUST BE SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT. WHAT IMPORTANT MESSAGES DO YOU THINK AUDIENCES ARE GETTING FROM THE PLAY?

Stephen: *I think a lot of it has to do with the time of year. There's something about Christmas that brings families together from wherever they are all over the country. Everyone gets together and there's just something about it, some kind of a memory that we all have. It's a time for reconciliation; it's a time for sharing with each other and having good times. They see that on stage with Scrooge's family. I think that everyone is actually pulling for Scrooge. We know that he's going to turn into a good guy in the end but it's all about watching the journey.*

And I've had people come to me in tears saying that their lives have been just like Scrooge's and they see what can happen if they change their lives. The most important message people get is: "I can change my life if I've been a bad person. If I've made bad choices, I can change it." I think that's important. That's what they tell me they get out of it.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT A TYPICAL CHRISTMAS DAY WOULD BE LIKE IN YOUR HOME?

Stephen: *If you come to my house at Christmas, you won't see any decorations and you won't see any Christmasy stuff. We start rehearsing A Christmas Carol a month before the audience sees it, and by the time we get to Christmas Day, to be honest, I'm just plain "Christmased out." There's a lot of emotion that goes into this show and so on Christmas Day, I am usually at home, usually by myself. If it's nice out, I'll sit out on my deck, put my heater on, and maybe have a couple of drinks, but usually that's about all I do. And usually we've just come off seven shows in a row, so I'm pretty exhausted. So to me, it's a day off to just sit and relax. After Christmas, I go down east to Ontario and visit my mom for a few days and I have Christmas with her, but it's the week after. She has a little tree and all that stuff, but in my house there's no Christmas for me and it helps me to stay more Scrooge.*

SO MR. SCROOGE, WHAT IS YOUR CHRISTMAS WISH FOR THEATRE CALGARY AUDIENCES?

Stephen: *Well I wish them all the very, very best of the season. I wish them all the love and all the joy that the season can possibly bring. I hope that the time they spend with their families this Christmas, and the joy that they feel, can be carried past the holiday and kept for as long as possible throughout the year. Next year, if the Christmas feeling is a bit flagging, come back and see A Christmas Carol and we'll get the emotions roaring for you again. I wish a happy time for all.*



*Stephen Hair as Ebenezer Scrooge
2009 Theatre Calgary production*

IN CONVERSATION WITH SET & COSTUME DESIGNER – PATRICK CLARK



Patrick Clark

Award-winning set and costume designer, Patrick Clark hails from New Brunswick where he still lives in a 220 year-old house. He has been involved with theatre and teaching his craft in schools for the past thirty years. His designs have graced the stages of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, the Shaw Festival, Guthrie Theatre, Neptune Theatre and countless other venues in every Canadian province except Saskatchewan. Patrick will be back at Theatre Calgary later this season to add his creative touch to the upcoming production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's [Cats](#).

We talked with Patrick in late October, just days after he arrived in Calgary to complete his work with the sets and costumes for our all new production of Charles Dickens' [A Christmas Carol](#).

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR DESIGNS FOR THIS PRODUCTION AND A BIT OF WHAT WE CAN EXPECT?

The thing about this story is that there are many locations to represent, but it all starts with what I call a basic set, or world that we created. When Dennis Garnhum and I first talked about the play, he shared that he had an image of this one scene where the actors are able to skate and I said that is not just about snow – that's ice. So out of that idea, and after much discussion about ice and cold and Scrooge's heart being thawed, we came up with the basic imagery for the production. We created an ice world. It is very abstract in that kind of sense. And within Scrooge's world, everything has been touched by the cold like the beds, the tables, the chairs. The ice on the floor grows upwards into things.

From there, another idea or image I had is when the Spirit of Christmas Past takes Scrooge on his first journey. I said, "Let's really fly them." So we designed a little window and the window flies. As the window flies up, the little village that Scrooge remembers from his childhood will move across the stage, all lit up as it goes by. His school and the other buildings are not life-size but rather smaller replicas of real buildings. So it will be like seeing this tiny town from high up above. There's also the Spirit of Christmas Present who arrives in what I call a "steam-punk jalopy." And there's the Spirit of Christmas Future, which you just have to see.

As for costumes, we are up to about 80 so far. Since this is a new production and a completely new look, we pretty much have to start from scratch. This is because of the colour spectrum - the stage is quite bright and blue and icy and the costumes have to match that kind of striking color. The effect will be almost like going to see the ballet – it's that kind of brightness.

WHAT ASPECT OF THIS PROJECT DID YOU FIND THE MOST FUN TO WORK ON?

One of the best aspects of this production is working with Dennis because he is very open to anything and he will push it further. He's been great. It can be a challenge with A Christmas Carol as we already know what the story is. Everyone knows the story. However, because of Dennis' new take and ideas, he

has allowed me to look at it with a fresh eye – and yet respect the story. The set is very modern in a way, and yet, within it, the old story is still there and the people are dressed in a period way. It's still Victorian and it still has traditional elements that you will recognize. But it is the 21st century and we kind of changed it a little bit to give it a fresh life.

WHERE DID YOU GET THE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR DESIGNS? DID YOU GO BACK TO THE SOURCE - DICKENS?

Oh yes, you have to read the story again. As always, whenever you re-read a story, you find something new and you suddenly hear a line and you say "I never thought of that."

And I also went back to the original John Leech engravings - the illustrations in the original book. It's fascinating to see that even in the first engravings - for example in his drawings of Fezziwig - they are not really "period" in any kind of way. Everything has a general "ye old good old days" look because he wasn't slavishly trying to be exact to the clothing of the day. It's nice because you can look at that and say, "If he can do that, I can do that." I can have a silhouette that's fun but give it some colour, give it some punch. I also wanted a kind of a modern take on the overall look and we've tried to make this production quite kid-friendly. There's lots of pyro. There are bright colours. It would be safe to say that with this production, we've gone from a darker version of the story to a brighter version. They're both equally valid. They're just different interpretations.

WHEN AUDIENCES FINALLY GET TO SEE YOUR SET AND COSTUME DESIGNS ON STAGE, WHAT DO YOU HOPE THE EFFECT ON THEM WILL BE?

Well first of all, I hope that they're entertained. No matter what, that's always the prime consideration. We want them to feel the kind of sentimentality and the humour that's in Dickens. Also there is the darkness that's always in Dickens as well. He wrote dark stories. However, they do have a happy ending 90 percent of the time, which is why we love his work.

When the audience sees the sets, they'll see that they're not what one would expect, but still within the realm of the story. For instance, they'll see these little villages and they're perfect little reproductions of the nineteenth century and yet they are within this blue void that's almost like the stars at times. I think the lighting will also be very different in this show - more theatrical, less literal.

I hope audiences will come out of the theatre, going, "Wow that was great! That wasn't like any A Christmas Carol I have ever seen."

WHO'S WHO N THE PLAY?

SCROOGE AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

Ebenezer Scrooge – a miserly man

Mrs. Dilber – Scrooge's maid

The Laundress – a servant

FRED'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Fred – Scrooge's nephew

Abigail – Fred's wife

Topper – friend to Fred; owes Scrooge rent money

Friends of Fred and Abigail

Maid – to Fred and Sally

PEOPLE FROM SCROOGE'S PAST

Fan – Scrooge's sister

School Master

Young Marley – Jacob Marley as a young man

Belle – young Ebenezer's sweetheart

Mr. Fezziwig – a kind hearted, old spirits merchant
and Scrooge's mentor

Mrs. Fezziwig – his wife

Dick Wilkins – clerk to Mr. Fezziwig; eventually
marries Belle

THE CRATCHITS

Bob Cratchit - clerk to Ebenezer Scrooge

Mrs. Cratchit - wife of Bob Cratchit

The Cratchit Children:

Peter

Martha

Belinda

Tiny Tim

TOWNSPEOPLE

Carollers, musicians, street vendors etc.

Male Solicitor \ **collecting for**

Female Solicitor / **charity**

Business Men

GHOSTS/SPIRITS

Jacob Marley - Scrooge's former business
partner

Spirit of Christmas Past

Spirit of Christmas Present

Spirit of Christmas Future

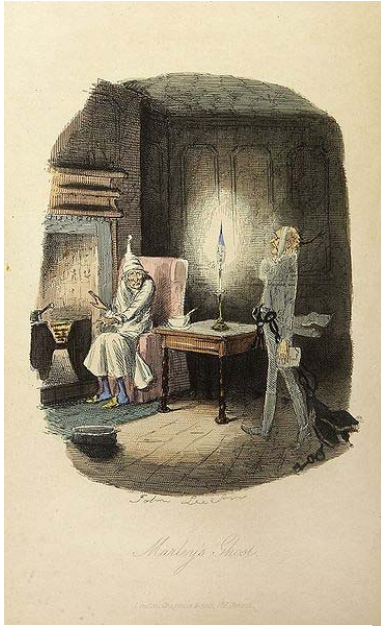
Other haunting ghosts

SETTING OF THE PLAY

Time 1843, December 24, 25 & 26

Place London, England

PLOT SUMMARY



The ghost of Jacob Marley visits Scrooge. Original illustration by John Leech from Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

The story begins with a flashback - to the funeral of Jacob Marley, where Ebenezer Scrooge is the only mourner.

Seven years later, on Christmas Eve, Scrooge is working in his office with his clerk Bob Cratchit. Two solicitors arrive asking for a donation to help the poor and needy. Scrooge flatly denies them a cent. He also declines an invitation to celebrate the season with his nephew Fred. He does reluctantly agree to give Bob Cratchit the next day off to spend with his family, as long as he comes early and stays late the next day. According to Scrooge, Christmas is a "humbug," or nonsense - a waste of time and money.

At home later 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 - to wander the earth bound by the "chains he forged in life."

The first spirit to appear, the Spirit of Christmas Past, enables Scrooge to revisit places and people of his childhood. He is reminded of the deep affection he felt for his sister, Fan, the mother of his nephew Fred. Scrooge also revisits his old employer Mr. Fezziwig, and is reminded of the joy and happiness the Fezziwigs were able to spread at Christmas time. He is also reminded of his sweetheart, Belle, and the break up of their relationship because of his pursuit of wealth and business.

The Spirit of Christmas Present is next to visit Scrooge. They first visit the family home of Scrooge's poor employee, Bob Cratchit, where Scrooge discovers that Cratchit has a very sick son - Tiny Tim. Then, while skating on the frozen river, Scrooge's nephew Fred, his wife Abigail, and their friends are playing a guessing game and Scrooge hears first-hand what others think of him.

The Spirit of Christmas Future then completes Scrooge's education. Scrooge first visits three businessmen who are coldly and callously discussing the recent death of an unnamed associate. Scrooge then sees his servants, a Laundress and his maid Mrs. Dilber, selling the belongings of someone who has also recently died. Finally, Scrooge is transported to a graveyard, where he watches the Cratchit family mourning the death of Tiny Tim. The Spirit of Christmas Future then points towards one particular tombstone. Reluctantly, Scrooge approaches and discovers the grave bears his own name. Scrooge begs for the Spirit's pity, and promises to keep the lessons he has learned, and the spirit of Christmas in his heart throughout the year.

Suddenly Scrooge is transported back to his bedroom and he is giddy to discover that it is Christmas Day. He sends Mrs. Dilber to fetch a large turkey to be delivered to the Cratchits. As he passes through the town square, he meets the two solicitors that appeared in his office the previous day. He apologizes for his behaviour and makes a sizable donation to their cause. Fred and his wife Abigail also meet Scrooge in the square, and Scrooge happily accepts his nephew's earlier invitation to dinner. The next day, Scrooge gives Bob Cratchit a raise in salary and it is clear that Scrooge will continue to be generous and that the spirit of Christmas will live inside him every day of the year.

QUOTATIONS ABOUT CHRISTMAS AND DICKENS

"I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round... as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of other people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys"

- Fred in *A Christmas Carol*

"[A Christmas Carol] is a national benefit, and to every man and woman who reads it, a personal kindness."

- William Makepeace Thackeray

"We have come to take Scrooge so much for granted that he seems practically a piece of Christmas folklore."

- Edmund Wilson

"Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveler, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home!"

- Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*

"Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful."

- Norman Vincent Peale

"If Christmas, with its ancient and hospitable customs, its social and charitable observances, were ever in danger of decay, this is the book that would give them a new lease."

- Thomas Hood on *A Christmas Carol*, 1843.

*Before the ice is in the pools,
Before the skaters go,
Or any cheek at nightfall
Is tarnished by the snow,
Before the fields have finished,
Before the Christmas tree,
Wonder upon wonder
Will arrive to me!*

- Emily Dickinson

"I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year."

- Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*

"Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart."

- Washington Irving

"Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas."

- Dale Evans

"So remember while December brings the only Christmas day, in the year let there be Christmas in the things you do and say."

- Anonymous

"Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone."

- Charles M. Schulz

"A Christmas Carol is a funny piece because it works on two levels. First, there's the spectacle of the storytelling that the children in the audience, and the child within all of us, connect to. But it's also the story of a man going through a mid-life crisis, and that's why adults connect to it."

- Dennis Garnhum

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – CHARLES DICKENS



Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on Friday, February 7, 1812 at Landport, England.

In 1814, he and his family moved to London.

Hard times fell on his family beginning in 1821 when his father lost his job. Two years later, his father was arrested and the family was sent to debtor's prison. Charles spent the next few years working in a blacking (shoe polish) factory. Dickens' father eventually received money from a relative and was released from debtor's prison. This experience would haunt Dickens for the rest of his life.

In 1827, Dickens ended his formal schooling to become an office boy at an attorney's office and eventually a journalist.

In 1833 Dickens' first attempt at fiction appeared in print when "Dinner at Poplar Walk" was published in *Monthly Magazine*.

In 1834, still working as a reporter, Dickens began publishing his stories, using the name "Boz" as a pseudonym. The first series, *Sketches by Boz*, appeared in 1836.

On April 2, 1836, Charles Dickens married Catherine Hogarth. They would have 10 children.

By this time, Dickens had become a very popular novelist & public speaker and he toured Canada and the U.S. in 1842.

The first of Dickens' Christmas books, *A Christmas Carol*, was published in December, 1843. Dickens traveled to Italy with his family in 1844. That December, he published his second Christmas story: "The Chimes."

A third Christmas book, *The Cricket and the Hearth*, was published in 1845.



Dickens in 1842

Between 1858 and 1868, Dickens conducted a series of public readings in London, Paris, Ireland and America. By the end of his American tour, his health was deteriorating.



"Charles Dickens as he appears when reading."
Wood engraving from *Harper's Weekly*, 7 Dec. 1867

In 1869, he resumed readings in England, Scotland, and Ireland despite having symptoms of a mild stroke.

On June 8, 1870, Charles Dickens suffered a stroke and died the next day.

Despite his express desire to be buried in Rochester Cathedral, Dickens was instead buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. The inscription on his tombstone reads:

"He was a sympathizer to the poor,
the suffering, and the oppressed;
and by his death, one of England's greatest writers
is lost to the world."

DICKENS AND THE THEATRE

As a boy, Dickens' first love was the theatre. Like many children, he enjoyed play acting and together with his friends formed a small dramatic company. The story is told that sometime in the 1830s he was to audition at Covent Garden Theatre, but he was prevented from doing so because of an illness. Had he attended that audition, who knows what might have happened with his life and career?



'Dickens' Dream' by Robert William Buss (1875)

"In the theatre world, Dickens was never a passive observer. Drama was in his blood. He dressed, spoke, and acted with thespian panache, and, in his imagination, shaped his reading into drama ... With characteristic thoroughness, he studied acting techniques, and considered becoming an actor."

- Paul Schlicke (*Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens*. p. 194)

His novels are filled with episodes about acting and acting companies. For example, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens lovingly relates the tale of the Crummles' traveling theatre company. Dickens also directed and performed in three plays in Montreal in 1842.

A Christmas Carol was adapted for the stage almost immediately after publication. Three productions opened in February, 1844, with one by Edward Stirling sanctioned by Dickens. By the end of the month, eight rival *Carol* theatrical productions were playing in London. Stirling's production also played New York City's Park Theater during the Christmas season of 1844 and was revived in London the same year. Since then, *A Christmas Carol* has been seen in countless stage adaptations, including 7 different adaptations appearing at Theatre Calgary over 25 years.

WORKS BY CHARLES DICKENS

1836	<i>Sketches by Boz</i>	1846	<i>The Battle of Life</i>
1836-37	<i>Pickwick Papers</i>	1846-48	<i>Dombey and Son</i>
1837-39	<i>Oliver Twist</i>	1848	<i>The Haunted Man</i>
1838	<i>The Strange Gentleman</i>	1849-50	<i>David Copperfield</i>
1838-39	<i>Nicholas Nickleby</i>	1851-53	<i>Bleak House</i>
1840-41	<i>The Old Curiosity Shop</i>	1854	<i>Hard Times</i>
1841	<i>Barnaby Rudge</i>	1855-57	<i>Little Dorrit</i>
1842	<i>American Notes</i>	1859	<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>
1843	<i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i>	1860-61	<i>Great Expectations</i>
	<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	1864-65	<i>Our Mutual Friend</i>
1844	<i>The Chimes</i>	1869-70	<i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> (unfinished)
1845	<i>The Cricket and the Hearth</i>		

Besides *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens wrote four other Christmas stories:

The Chimes

The Battle of Life

The Cricket and the Hearth

The Haunted Man

WHAT THE DICKENS?



In Shakespeare's comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mrs. Page, in being questioned about the identify of an unwelcome visitor, says the following:

I cannot tell *what the dickens* his name is, my husband had him of.
What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

During Shakespeare's day, the common expression, "What the dickens!" clearly did not refer to the famous author - who would not be born for another 212 years or so. In fact, it referred to the devil or Satan. In other words, Mrs. Page is actually saying: "*What the devil!*"

Speaking of Shakespeare, in the nearly one million words he penned, he only made two references to Christmas. The most notable occurs in the first scene of *Hamlet* when Marcellus says:

*Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.*

NOTABLE ADAPTATIONS OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Since its publication 1843, there have been countless hundreds of adaptations of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. It has been adapted to virtually every genre of literature and entertainment.

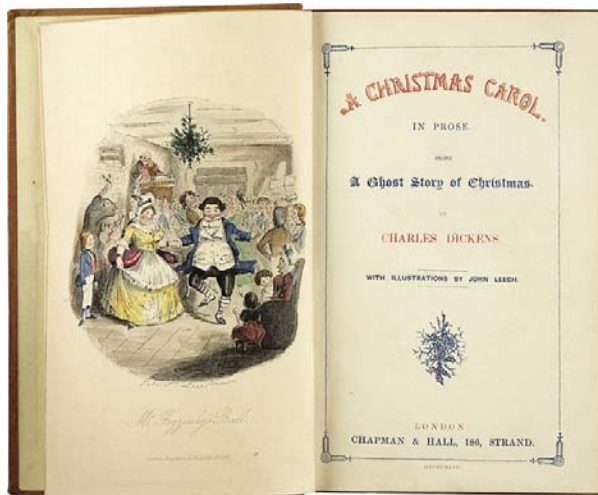
Here is a short list of the more memorable adaptations, including the first occurrence of an adaptation in a new medium.

1844	<i>A Christmas Carol; or Past, Present and Future</i>	Drama
1850	<i>Christmas Shadows. A Tale of the Times</i>	Prose Fiction
1867	<i>A Christmas Carol. As Condensed by Charles Dickens</i>	Public Reading
1901	<i>Scrooge, or, Marley's Ghost</i>	Silent film
1905	<i>The Awakening of Scrooge</i>	Sound recording
1910	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> - produced by Thomas A. Edison	Silent film
1921	<i>A Christmas Carol. Suite for piano in two parts</i>	Music
1928	<i>Scrooge</i>	Sound film
1933	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (starring Lionel Barrymore)	Radio production
1938	<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Feature Film
1946	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (BBC)	Television play
1947	<i>Men of Goodwill: Variations on "A Christmas Carol"</i>	Orchestra Music
1951	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (Starring Alastair Sim)	Feature film
1955	<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Operetta
1956	<i>The Stingiest Man in Town</i>	Animated TV Musical
1962	<i>Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol</i>	Animated film
1970	<i>Scrooge</i> (Starring Albert Finney)	Color feature film
1978	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (Marvel Comics Group)	Classics Comics
1983	<i>Mickey's Christmas Carol</i> (Disney)	Animated Film
1988	<i>Scrooged</i> (Starring Bill Murray)	Film - comedy
1988	<i>Blackadder's Christmas Carol</i>	TV Special
1992	<i>The Muppet Christmas Carol</i>	Feature Film
1997	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> - Ballet Montmartre	Ballet
2004	<i>Karroll's Christmas (the ghosts go to the wrong house)</i>	TV Movie
2004	<i>A Christmas Carol: The Musical</i>	Musical
2008	<i>A Christmas Carol: by Sean Michael Wilson & Mike Collins</i>	Graphic Novel
2009	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (Jim Carrey)	Feature Film
2011	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> (Theatre Calgary – adapted by Dennis Garnhum)	Stage Play

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT A CHRISTMAS CAROL

This story has influenced how we celebrate and think of Christmas more than any other work of fiction.

Prior to Dickens' influence, Christmas was a twelve-day religious festival celebrated by the entire community. According to G.K. Chesterton, Dickens succeeded in shifting the holiday into a more private family celebration of sharing and good will, primarily celebrated over one or two days.



First edition frontispiece and title page (1843)

A Christmas Carol was written in six weeks when Dickens was in need of some quick money to pay bills. The book was an instant success but it brought him little money due to its low selling price, high printing costs and large number of unauthorized reproductions.

In its first printed edition, the full title of Dickens book was: *A Christmas Carol in Prose: Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*

Within a year of its creation, eight different stage productions of the story were mounted. Selections from the story became a mainstay in Dickens' public appearances throughout the rest of his life.

According to a researcher with the *American Journal of Diseases of Children*, Tiny Tim most likely suffered from a kidney disease that made his blood too acidic. In Dickens' day, this could have been successfully treated with alkaline solutions which would have counteracted the excess acid and Tim's recovery would have been swift.

The first Christmas card appeared in the 1840s around the same time as this story was written.

On December 18th, 1988, in recognition of Dickens' contributions to Christmas traditions, the London *Sunday Telegraph* declared Charles Dickens to be "The Man Who Invented Christmas."

In the earliest drafts of *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge's unique phrase was "Bah Christmas" and not "Bah Humbug."



The first Christmas card (Artwork by John Callcott Horsley for Henry Cole (1843))

GLOSSARY OF ALLUSIONS AND UNFAMILIAR TERMS

The following information provides background, definitions or explanations of specific period references in the order in which they are mentioned in the play. If you would like more information, some relevant and informative websites are hyperlinked for your convenience.

Carols are traditionally associated with Christmas, however, by definition a carol is a song of joy and praise, often with a purpose to teach a specific lesson.

According to Christmas traditions, the angels were the first to sing Christmas carols when they announced the birth of baby Jesus in Bethlehem. The tradition of caroling, or going door to door and singing for the occupants, was established during the Middle Ages. Many of the carols that are still popular today were first written in the 1800s.

Money

Bob – slang for a shilling. A shilling is equal to 12 pence.

There are 20 shillings in a pound.

In a pound, also known as a quid, there are 5 crowns.

In the play, we learn that Bob Cratchit earns 15 shillings a week. This works out to less than a pound a week or about 40 pounds a year. This is considerably less than the average salary for a clerk, which would have been about 25 shillings/week.

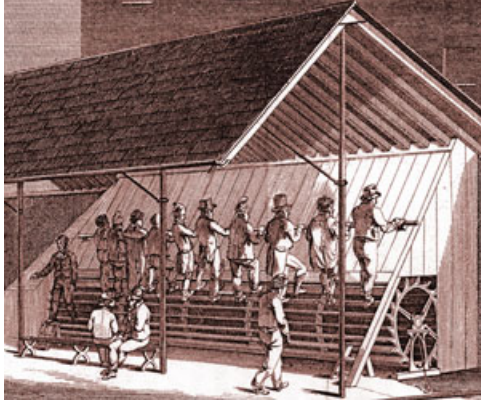
Today a pound is equivalent to about \$2.50 Canadian. Therefore, in today's terms, Cratchit's salary was about \$100 per year! Certainly in Dickens' day a hundred dollars was worth substantially more than today. Nevertheless, Cratchit's take home pay was far from sufficient to raise a family.



Bethlehem Hospital
by William Hogarth (1697–1764) from *A Rake's Progress*

Bedlam – At the beginning of the play, Scrooge states that Bob Cratchit should be sent to “[Bedlam](#).” In London, at the time, there was an insane asylum at the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem.

“Bedlam” was a commonly used contraction for Bethlehem and this hospital. As a result, the word “bedlam” has entered our vocabulary and refers to a state of utter confusion and chaos.



Treadmill at Brixton Prison, London, 1822, from *Gentleman's Magazine*.

Workhouses and the Poor Law – Scrooge suggests to the Solicitors that a solution for the misery of poor people is to send them to prison or the [workhouses](#). During Dickens' time, the British Poor Law forced poor (and often old and sick) people to enter a workhouse where they would be provided with food and shelter as payment for menial work. To discourage lazy persons from taking advantage of the workhouses, the authorities ensured conditions were terribly unpleasant.

People who could not pay their debts were thrown into debtor's prison. The "treadmill" is a reference to the practice of forcing prisoners to climb steps in a constantly rotating cylinder. This torture served not only to keep them active but also to tire them out physically.

Dickens had first-hand knowledge of debtor's prison and the workhouse, as his family was forced into a debtor's institution when he was a young boy.

The first carol sung by the Carollers includes the line: "Here we come a-wassailing." [Wassail](#) is a drink consisting of ale or wine sweetened with sugar and spices. The word derives from the Norse "ves heill" which means "be of good health." Wassailing comes from the old English tradition of house-visiting with a wassail bowl and songs wishing good fortune upon the household.

When Scrooge is shown his past as a young boy, he recalls reading about [Robinson Crusoe](#). Robinson Crusoe was the protagonist of a 1719 novel by Daniel Defoe, chronicling the adventures of a castaway marooned on an island for 28 years. In one section of the book, Crusoe, and his companion Friday, are forced to battle island cannibals.

At the Fezziwig Christmas Party, the guests sing a hearty rendition of "[The Twelve Days of Christmas](#)." This popular carol was first published in England in 1780. The first day of Christmas is December 25th (the 26th is some traditions) and the twelfth day is correspondingly January 5th or 6th.

PNC Financial Services has established and maintains "[The Christmas Price Index](#)" which keeps track of what it would cost to purchase all the items in the song. According to this index, it would cost approximately \$19,844.95 to purchase all 364 items at the lowest estimated price.

Just before the Spirit of Christmas Present departs he shows Scrooge two miserable children and calls them **Ignorance and Want**. This scene, like so many others in his various works, emphasizes Dickens' deep concern for the plight of the poor children in England. During the 1850s, the mortality rate amongst children under ten was unforgivably high. Dickens believed that the only way to break the cycle of poverty was through education. The Spirit warns Dickens that "This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased." Much of the schooling provided for poor children at that time was supported by charity. It was not till 1870 that public education became compulsory. Dickens did not live to see that day.

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

- In Bulgaria, families sit around a fire and celebrate Christmas as they eat blood sausages.
- In Finland, the traditional dish is not turkey but rather boiled codfish served with boiled potatoes and cream sauce.
- In China, Christmas trees are called "Trees of Light" and are decorated with paper ornaments which look like flowers, lanterns and chains. Jolly ol' Saint Nick is called *Dun Che Lao Ren* which translates into "Christmas Old Man."
- In Iran, among the Christian families, most of the children have no idea who Santa Claus is. Nor do they give presents at Christmas. However, the children do get new clothes which they wear during the merry holiday week.
- In Wales, where they love to sing, caroling in churches (accompanied by the harp) and at doorsteps is a favorite activity. A prize is awarded to the person who has come up with the best new music and carol.
- In Italy, children do not get their presents until January 6 (Epiphany). It is said that a kind but ugly old witch called the [Befana](#) delivers presents. According to Italian legend, she leaves presents for children because she missed out on giving the Christ child a gift when he was born because she was busy. She also leaves chunks of coal for children who have not been good.

The [Christmas Around the World](#) site or this [Wikipedia](#) site will tell you more about how the holiday season is celebrated in other countries that you may be interested in.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS:

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart.

To a customer, service.

To all, charity.

To every child, a good example.

To yourself, respect.

- Oren Arnold