



INDIANA  
REPERTORY  
THEATRE

Charles Dickens'  
**A Christmas  
Carol**

adapted by  
**Tom Haas**

November 23 – December 26, 2021

on the OneAmerica Mainstage

## STUDY GUIDE

Indiana Repertory Theatre  
140 West Washington Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Janet Allen, Margot Lacey Eccles  
Executive Artistic Director  
Suzanne Sweeney, Managing Director

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## CHARLES DICKENS'

# ***A CHRISTMAS CAROL*** ADAPTED BY TOM HAAS

Now more than ever, we need to gather together to celebrate the joy of the season. *A Christmas Carol* shines a light on the power of kindness and love in this uplifting tale of one man's journey to redemption. As the weather turns cold, warm your heart with the IRT as we joyfully reimagine and tenderly bring this annual holiday treasure to new life.

*Recommended for students in grades 4-12*

The performance will last approximately two hours with one intermission.

## STUDY GUIDE CONTENTS

Synopsis	3
From the Artistic Director	4
Director's Note	6
A Christmas Carol on Stage	8
From the Designers	10
Author Charles Dickens	12
Playwright Tom Haas	14
Music in the Play	15
Victorian Life	18
Indiana Academic Standards	20
Resources	21
Discussion Questions	24
Writing Prompts	26
Activities	27
Game: 20 Questions	28
British Money in Scrooge's Day	31
Text Glossary	32
Going to the Theatre	35

Study Guide edited by  
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*Robert Neal in  
A Christmas Carol, 2010.*

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## THE STORY OF ***A CHRISTMAS CAROL***

*A Christmas Carol* tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a bitter, miserly man who is visited by four ghosts on Christmas Eve. The first ghost, Jacob Marley—Scrooge’s former business partner—visits Scrooge to warn him against his heartless ways. Marley tells Scrooge that if he doesn’t change his selfish behavior and tend to the needs of his fellow man, he will be doomed to an afterlife of misery. In order to redeem himself, Scrooge must accept the visitations of three spirits: the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future.

The Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge scenes from his childhood and early life. Along with such joyous events as a reunion with his sister and a lively holiday party, Scrooge relives many painful memories—including the day he lost the woman he loved.

The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge a range of Christmas gatherings. One is a lively celebration hosted by Scrooge’s nephew, where the merry group plays a word game that mocks Scrooge’s greed. Another is a modest Christmas dinner at the home of Scrooge’s employee, Bob Cratchit. The meal is meager but joyous, the only cloud being the illness of Cratchit’s son, Tiny Tim. Even Scrooge is touched by the boy’s bravery.

The Ghost of Christmas Future shows Scrooge horrifying scenes of a dark, dismal future—vagrants looting through a dead man’s stolen belongings, laughing and mocking the deceased; an un-mourned corpse, left alone in an empty room—remnants of a life whose absence from the world is no great loss, and to some a source of joy.

Scrooge’s fate depends on his response to the spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. The final moments of the story radiate a spirit of generosity and redemption, as well as sheer, giddy joyousness, which have helped to make *A Christmas Carol* one of the world’s most popular tales.

*Jennifer Johansen as the Lamplighter  
in the IRT’s 2019 production of A Christmas Carol.*



# COMMUNITY

BY JANET ALLEN, MARGOT LACY ECCLES ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

After a monumental year without it, *A Christmas Carol* seems more vital than ever: more necessary, more comforting, more chilling, more hopeful. If you had told me two years ago that we would take an 18-month break from producing live theatre due to a world-wide pandemic, I would have thought you'd been reading far too much dystopian fiction; yet that's exactly what happened. Our relationship to *A Christmas Carol* did not go away easily: until the bitter end of our season reconfiguring a year ago, we hoped against hope that we could manage some kind of stripped-down *Carol* even in the midst of the pandemic. That's how strongly we feel about the redemptive power of this story. But as union issues mounted, and the CDC and our local health authorities kept our city shut down, we realized that we were hoping in vain; and a virtual production of this piece simply didn't seem worthwhile. You just need to be in the room with it. So instead, we pivoted to make what became our joyous holiday offering, *This Wonderful Life*: a one-man retelling of the Capra film, magnificently created by this year's new Scrooge, Rob Johansen. Mercifully, that show allowed our audiences to celebrate the holiday season with theatre art—on a screen, but powerful nonetheless. Still we vowed that we'd find our way back to our beloved Dickens as quickly as we could.

Among the gifts of that first COVID summer of 2020 (who ever thought there would be a second?) was a few weeks in which our artistic staff worked on rethinking the *Carol* script. First, we focused principally on reducing the cast size: 16 actors in a rehearsal room or even onstage felt utterly unsafe. Soon, however, we began to rediscover how many hidden gifts lurk below the surface of Dickens's wonderful novella. There were bits of language, unused in the past, that seemed utterly prescient to our particular time; little shifts that we had made through the years that no longer seemed worthy; things we'd interpolated in over the years that now seemed unnecessary; gorgeous chunks of Dickens that we've never spoken on stage that we wanted to hear. When we put the novella itself



(opposite above)  
The company of the IRT's  
2015 production of  
*A Christmas Carol*.

(left)  
The company of the IRT's  
2019 production of  
*A Christmas Carol*.



under the microscope of our scrutiny, we saw how we could scrape the barnacles off a beloved text and begin to see it anew. We could see that the story was like a banked flame, springing back to life. It held, and holds, much power to move us, to shake us; to make us examine ourselves, our commitment to community, and our ability to truly see each other.

What does living in community mean? What are our obligations to one another? These questions lie at the core of the journey the ghosts take with Scrooge in an attempt to redeem him from his narrow-minded, isolated, solitary lifestyle. And these same questions are eerily prescient in our own time. We have certainly endured an unprecedented dose of isolation in the past 18 months. How has this experience made us more narrow-minded, more afraid of people unlike us, less generous to those whose needs are even greater than ours? These are the things we are deeply considering and discussing as we make a new/old *A Christmas Carol*.

I am more delighted than I can say that James Still, our playwright-in-residence, has agreed to direct this year's production. He begins this new journey with a new Scrooge, Rob Johansen. Both men have a good deal of experience with this story. James has seen every production during his 24 years with us, and has been a wise and welcome counsel. Rob has played every male role in the show except Scrooge, and probably knows all the female roles just in case! But it's Rob's spirit, his love of the story, and his immense skills that will be what we all gather to see this year. He'll be supported by a former Scrooge, Ryan Artzberger, and several other actors who have played in our *Carol* many times, as well as some exciting newcomers. The village of actors for the *Carol* has never been more important, as we return to the essence of Dickens's language and purpose.

So welcome back to *A Christmas Carol*. I imagine that you real diehards watched one of the many movie versions last year (maybe more than one); but there is no substitution for sitting in a room listening raptly to live actors speak these words and take this journey toward a healed community. Let's all take that journey seriously and emulate it in our lives, even in our times of apparently deep divisions. We all share a humanity, so let's find that common ground of good!

# CHANGE

BY JAMES STILL, DIRECTOR

“Everything changes, nothing is lost...” That phrase (roughly translated from Latin) is from Ovid’s ancient poem known as *Metamorphoses*. Ovid’s acknowledgment about the



inevitability of change and the possibility of transformation is at once wise and complex—and during these past many months of working on our new production of *A Christmas Carol*, I’ve repeated that phrase over and over. As an artist, part of my job is to keep my eyes open, to not turn away, to greet every day as an anthropologist, fortune teller, and change-maker.

For many years I’ve been a grateful audience member to the IRT’s beloved version of Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*. And while I’ve had opportunities to direct the play, I’ve never felt drawn to it as an interpreter because I was never convinced I had anything significant to bring to a production. This year is different. This year I said yes because of an intuitive desire to spend time with the story and its characters, to make meaning out of Dickens’s words and images, to contribute something hopeful even when everything feels dark. So here I am, finally, directing *A Christmas Carol*.

There are many givens that come with the IRT’s exquisite version of *A Christmas Carol*. The concept comes with the production. We are in a snowfield. We are witnesses to a story being generously shared by a company of actors. It’s a ritual and a tradition. What does tradition mean in times of uncertainty? Answers to that question have been part of what we’re exploring (again) in this year’s *Carol*. It took Charles Dickens a mere six weeks to write his novella—much less time than it takes us to make this production every year.

Even with the known givens handed to any director of the IRT’s *Carol*, there are a surprising number of unknowns that require months of meditation and inquiry. I’ve taken many long walks while in lively (imaginary) conversations with Charles Dickens. He’s been patient with me, generous with some of his responses, yet also playfully mysterious and withholding. His answers have often been questions, such as “What’s urgent about it now? What does the story mean to YOU???” And “You say you’re the director—but what’s your relationship with the collaborators and audience that will be your partners in storytelling?” I found a clue in the preface of his published novella, where Dickens refers to himself as “faithful friend and servant.” That’s not so different from how I think of myself as the director tasked with sharing this story as theatre. It’s in that humble spirit that I come to our production this year.

We are in a snowfield. We’re also very much in a theatre. Designer Russell Metheny once described his scenic design as “a theatre with a hole in the roof; the stage has filled with snow.” It’s a beautiful

image beautifully rendered by the IRT artisans who make our production possible every year. For the actors it means there is literally no place to hide. They are always on stage, often speaking directly to the audience, and always inviting us to collaborate in the unfolding of the *Carol* as a parable about the hard work of kindness and generosity.

At its heart, *A Christmas Carol* is a story about redemption. Dickens subtitled his novella “A Ghost Story of Christmas,” and as a writer, I understand that choice as subtle instruction: a ghost story can go wherever it needs to go in an instant; it is in constant motion, a story that easily moves both back and forward in time. There is something bold in the idea that it’s possible for a broken man, disconnected from his community, to CHANGE, to reset his moral compass and priorities, and to vow to start again fresh and new. The question that the story wrestles with from the beginning is whether or not Scrooge will actually have the courage to engage with his life in a meaningful way to make those difficult changes possible. It’s the ultimate story of being given a second chance.

So here I am, standing on the shoulders of all of the artists who have made meaningful versions of Dickens’s story in the past. For you, dear audience, there will be much that seems familiar: some of your favorite moments will show up right on cue. And simultaneously, there will be much that seems new—some of which I hope might become new favorite moments. “*Everything changes, nothing is lost.*” For the first time, Rob Johansen steps into the iconic role of Scrooge, which is a treat just waiting to happen. Rob will be joined by seven other brilliant actors who will gather in our snowfield as your neighbors, carolers, storytellers, and fellow humans sharing the same air. Never has that seemed so poignant to me. There are big and subtle changes in all of the designs (I’ll let you discover or guess), and designers, cast, and crew bursting with rich relationships to the IRT’s *Carol*—as well as those who are coming to it for the first time. I suspect that those circumstances will reflect the audience as well: many of you have embraced our production as part of your own family traditions; others are coming to it for the first time.

We gather to watch this story every year because we want to believe in redemption. We want to believe that if a broken man like Scrooge can experience a profound change of heart, then maybe we can too. We gather around this story because we believe there are some stories worth experiencing again and again. I need this story this year more than ever. Everything changes, nothing is lost.



**—James Still,  
a faithful friend  
and servant**

(opposite top)  
The company of  
*A Christmas Carol*, 1981

(left)  
The company of  
*A Christmas Carol*, 2019.

## ***A CHRISTMAS CAROL ON STAGE***

*A Christmas Carol*, like all of Charles Dickens's novels, contains a panorama of places and characters brilliantly described by a masterful storyteller. Bringing a novel to the stage is a challenge—the novel is primarily a narrative form and the theatre is a forum for action and dialogue—but it is a challenge the IRT embraces. Stage adaptations of novels recently produced by the IRT include *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *The Cay*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, not to mention non-fiction books *Tuesday with Morrie* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* and the upcoming *Fahrenheit 451*.

The richness of Dickens's prose makes the task of stage adaptation especially daunting. The IRT's version of *A Christmas Carol* uses Dickens's language not only as dialogue, but also as narrative, so we experience the story much as the author wrote it. This technique allows the audience to hear the original language of the novel, where Dickens makes meaning not only through story, but also through his choice of rhythms, sounds, metaphors, and narrative tone. This uniquely theatrical way of telling a story is a celebration of the craft of the actor and the power of the audience's imagination.

The IRT's adaptation of Dickens's novella was written by former IRT artistic director Tom Haas and produced at the IRT every year from 1980 through 1984. After a twelve-year hiatus, the play was brought back in 1996 and is now making its 30th appearance.



*Rob Johansen & Ryan Artzberger in A Christmas Carol, 2011. The snow is made of shredded plastic. Each 25-pound box of "snow" covers a 7-by-7-foot square. To cover the entire stage requires 23 boxes of "snow," or 575 pounds. During the full run of A Christmas Carol, the IRT uses about 40 boxes, or 1,000 pounds total. That's half a ton of snow!*



The IRT production of *A Christmas Carol* varies from year to year, but always features Dickens's wonderful storytelling, presented by actors who each play several roles. Because of safety issues due to Covid, this year's cast is eight, half of the 16 actors it has been in past years. The script has been revised as well, with some old scenes gone and new scenes added. The IRT's artistic team has gone back to the novella to find even more of Dickens's original language to bring to life on stage.

This year's production is directed for the first time by the IRT's playwright-in-residence, James Still, who most recently directed *Twelve Angry Men*. As for the cast, some are new, and some are returning in both old and new roles. Rob Johansen, who has played many different roles in the *Carol* over the years, plays Scrooge for the first time. Director and cast have collaborated to discover new staging ideas while celebrating beloved traditions. The compression of the cast size has unleashed new creativity in the rehearsal room. Costume designer Linda Pisano continues the ongoing process of designing new costumes for the production. Lighting designer Michael Lincoln has fine-tuned his lighting effects. This year's production features new music by composer Michael Keck.



*Rob Johansen as Marely's Ghost in the IRT's 2019 production of A Christmas Carol. This year Rob plays Ebenezer Scrooge.*

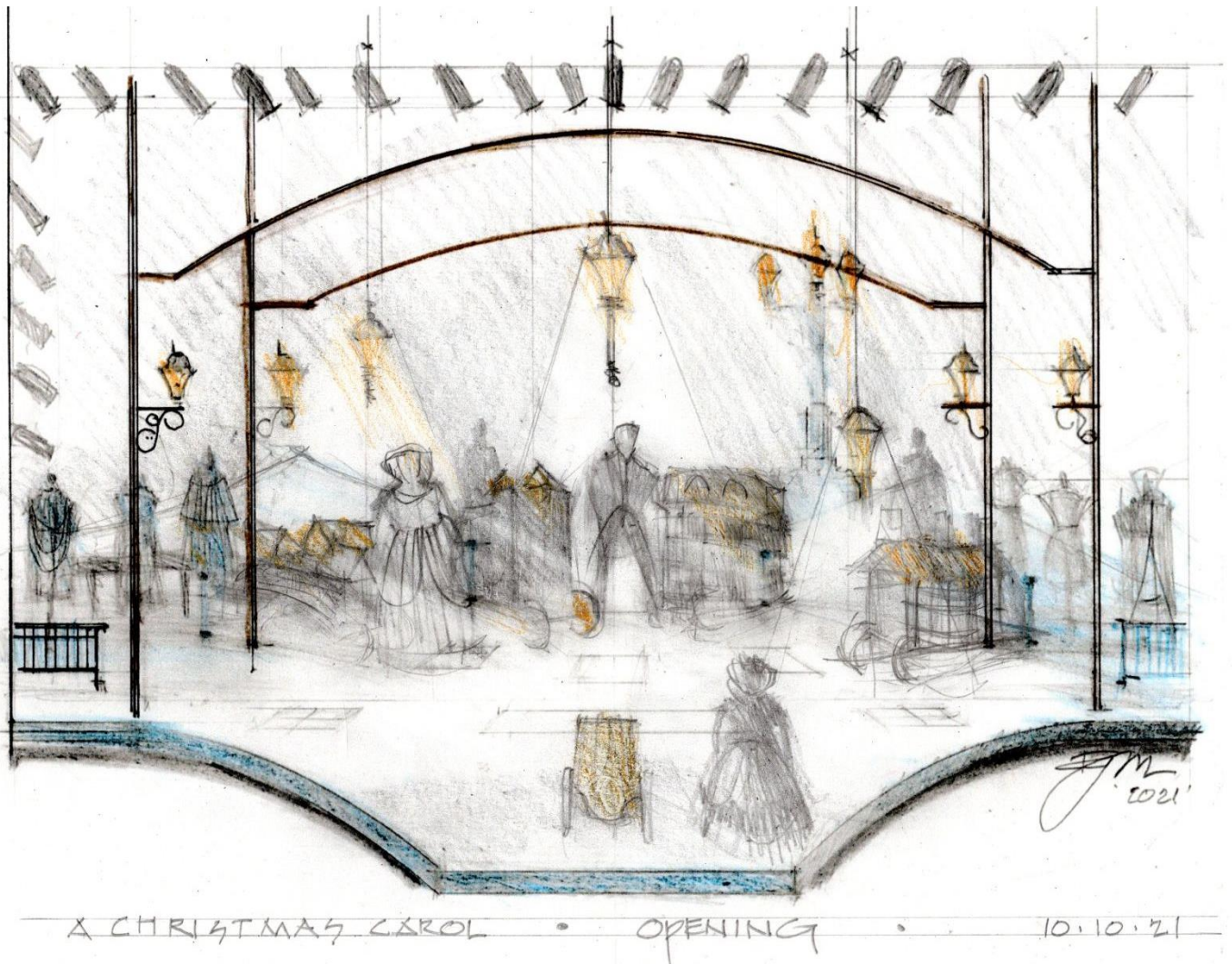
One thing that has not changed this year is the snow. Audiences and actors alike delight in this production's endless snow-covered field as envisioned by scenic designer Russell Metheny. During the performance actors make tracks through the snow, suggesting their individual journeys. Hidden objects and trap doors under the snow add to the mystery and spirit of this production. Although there are a few new scenic elements this season, the stage masking is still stripped away. The theatre's backstage area is revealed, allowing the audience to experience the magic of the story while seeing how it is created.

*A Christmas Carol* brings to mind visions of Christmas cheer and scenes of a distant past in which we wish we could participate: a merry gathering at the Christmas dinner table with roast goose and a steaming plum pudding; a lively dance of country folk on Christmas Eve; a family toast in which a poor boy calls forth the spirit of Christmas with a simple "God bless us, everyone!" These impressions of *A Christmas Carol* are the essence of its lingering charm and create moments of celebration in the theatre. The IRT's production will be filled with such visions and much more; for these visions can inspire a spirit of generosity and goodwill that we need not only at the holiday season, but all the year through.

## “THE MERRIEST TIME IN ALL THE WORLD”

### RUSSELL METHENY SCENIC DESIGNER

It's ironic, but as a scenic designer the thing I love most is great performances. I love creating an empty space in which great performances happen. That's what this set is all about: an empty field of snow in which wonderful actors tell a wonderful story. When I see something on stage that is not what it is and looks like something else—that to me is great theatre.



*Preliminary sketch by scenic designer Russell Metheny.*

### MICHAEL LINCOLN LIGHTING DESIGNER

Well of course, the first thing is the snow. That enormous field of white offers a technical challenge to a lighting designer. It's harder to create isolated lighting effects; everything just bounces all over the place. But I also have unique opportunities, such as creating silhouettes against the snow. In terms of design, the snow functions very much like a sky drop—it's a blank canvas on which I can paint any color. This production does not rely on theatrical "effects." It's all about the magic created between the actors and the audience. There are always new discoveries to make in the snow. It's an unnerving yet exhilarating process.

## LINDA PISANO COSTUME DESIGNER

This is a story that audiences know well. I re-read the novel to focus on character descriptions. Dickens's work sheds light on issues of poverty, family, loneliness, and compassion. He writes about the industrial grime and soot of London in his day. The distressing of the costumes and the overall feel of the Cratchit family reflect these conditions. Class division is clear. Mrs. Cratchit is poor, getting fabric from the *rag pickers* of the streets. She is probably quite skilled in sewing and may even use pin tucks, embroidery, and other surprising details to liven up her family's meager clothes. Our ghosts align closely with the descriptions in the novel. I also found great influence in John Leech's original illustrations. The story presents a series of emotional experiences for Scrooge: Fezziwig's party is a warm, jovial memory of the country, while Fred's more urban and sophisticated party is something Scrooge has never attended. Both occasions hit home, demonstrating that for Scrooge to have a happier future, he must first deal with the issues and problems of his past and present.



*Renderings for  
Christmas Past,  
Marley's Ghost,  
and Scrooge by  
costume designer  
Linda Pisano.*



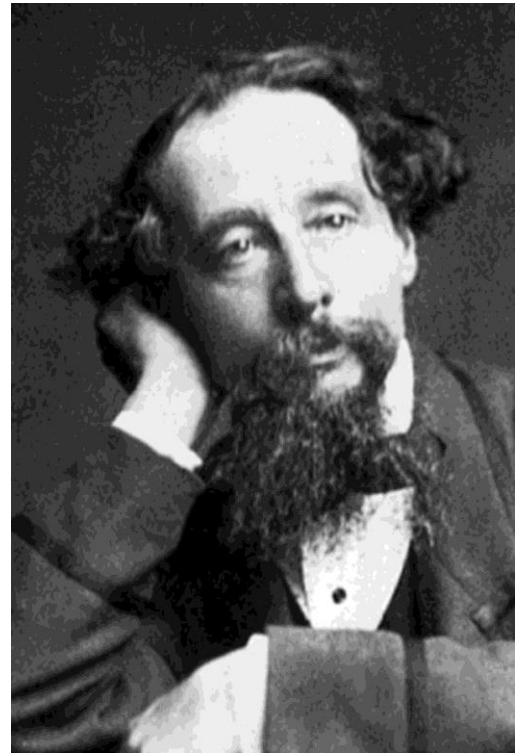
## MICHAEL KECK COMPOSER

During the holiday season, bells of every size find their rightful place in the soundtrack of our lives. Bells are everywhere, summoning and gathering people together, ringing out for donations, jingling at the end of a stocking cap, and announcing rituals and celebrations. I am fascinated by the magic and weight bells add to our experiences. Meanwhile, the holiday season also announces its arrival with familiar melodies of traditional hymns and carols. So when asked to join the Dickens creative team, two ideas emerged: the musicality of bells and the intimate sound of carolers. Together these themes might offer a positive counter-narrative for Ebenezer Scrooge in some instances, while highlighting Dickens's timeless darker themes in others. All nicely packaged in a holiday ghost story. The musicality of bells and community voices quickly became the foundation for the music I am presenting with this season/s production of *A Christmas Carol*.

## AUTHOR CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens, the great English novelist, was born February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, on the southern coast of England. His father lost his job in the Naval Pay Office when Charles was three, and the family moved to London. The Dickens family moved so often during Charles's childhood that he was unable to attend school regularly.

At the age of 12 Charles had to leave school to work in a rat-infested blacking (shoe polish) factory; two weeks later his father was sent to debtor's prison. Luckily, a small inheritance rescued the family, permitting Charles to return to school for two years; but his formal education was short-lived. At 15 he became a legal clerk, and at 18 a court reporter for the *Mirror of Parliament* and the *True Son*. Dickens quickly earned a reputation as a top reporter.



In 1834, Dickens began to publish short narrative sketches in the *Morning Chronicle* under the pseudonym "Boz." Two years later he married Catherine Hogarth, daughter of a newspaper editor. Together, they had ten children before they divorced in 1858. Shortly after marrying Catherine, Dickens resigned from the newspaper and became editor of a new monthly magazine. This new job allowed Dickens more time to focus on his writing. He explored the difficult lives of pauper orphans in his second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1838).

Although Dickens enjoyed great prosperity, the poverty of his youth left him suspicious of the ruling class and sensitive to the plight of the downtrodden. His research on the notorious living conditions in lower-class boarding schools resulted in *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), in which a youth escapes from a tyrannical schoolmaster.

Dickens held strong views about the relationship between a lack of education and social oppression. He was giving a speech on education as the solution to England's problems when he conceived the idea of *A Christmas Carol*. Shortly thereafter, in autumn 1843, he started writing the short book. He composed it in a frenzy, alternately laughing and crying at the images that occurred to him; and he polished it in his mind while walking the streets of London at night. He finished it in only six weeks. With illustrations by Dickens's friend John Leech, the book was published at Christmastime 1843.

Over the next few years, Dickens capitalized on the popularity of *A Christmas Carol* with several short Christmas stories written in haste for quick reward. Dickens was obsessed with making a sufficient living to support his large family, which included not only his ten children, but his and his wife's parents and siblings. Much of Dickens's writing was done for commercial purposes, which may surprise those who consider Dickens a writer of mythic literary greatness.

Dickens continued to incorporate his own life experiences into his works. *David Copperfield*, a semi-autobiographical novel about a young man who struggles through poverty to achieve respect, was an immediate success in 1849. The novels *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit* followed in rapid succession. Their genesis followed a similar pattern: Dickens wrote chapters of each book for publication in periodicals and later published them as complete novels. In this manner, the author was literally making up the story as he went along.

Dickens spent the last years of his life traveling throughout the world to perform public readings from his novels. He was hailed everywhere as the greatest writer of his age. Although he enjoyed traveling and exhibiting his acting skill, it was strenuous work. In 1870 he suffered a stroke and died instantly at the age of 58. For three days, thousands of citizens passed by his open casket in Westminster Abbey, paying their respects to this most beloved of English writers.

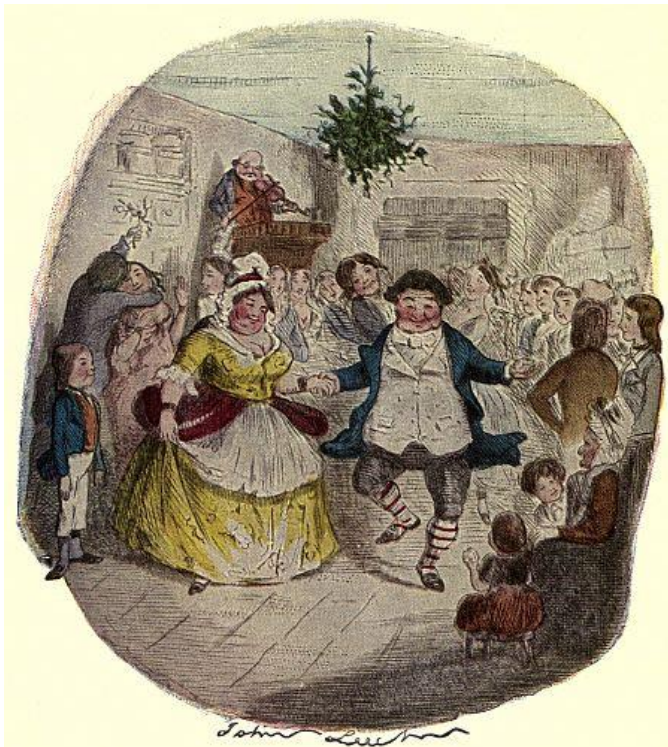
## DICKENS AND THE VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

During the nineteenth century, as England became less rural and more industrial, old Christmas customs were lost. In *A Christmas Carol*, written and published in 1843, Charles Dickens found a way to both celebrate and revitalize old country holiday traditions by transplanting them to an urban setting.

As Scrooge revisited his childhood, readers were reminded of their own childhood celebrations, or those they had heard about from their parents and grandparents. When Scrooge journeyed with the Spirit of Christmas Present, readers encountered lavish and lengthy descriptions of a wide variety of holiday celebrations, from the humblest to the most luxurious. In reality, such Christmas revelry was largely a product of Dickens's imagination. But *A Christmas Carol*, along with Dickens's other

Christmas stories, enjoyed a wide audience, and these tales inspired readers as they prepared their own holiday celebrations.

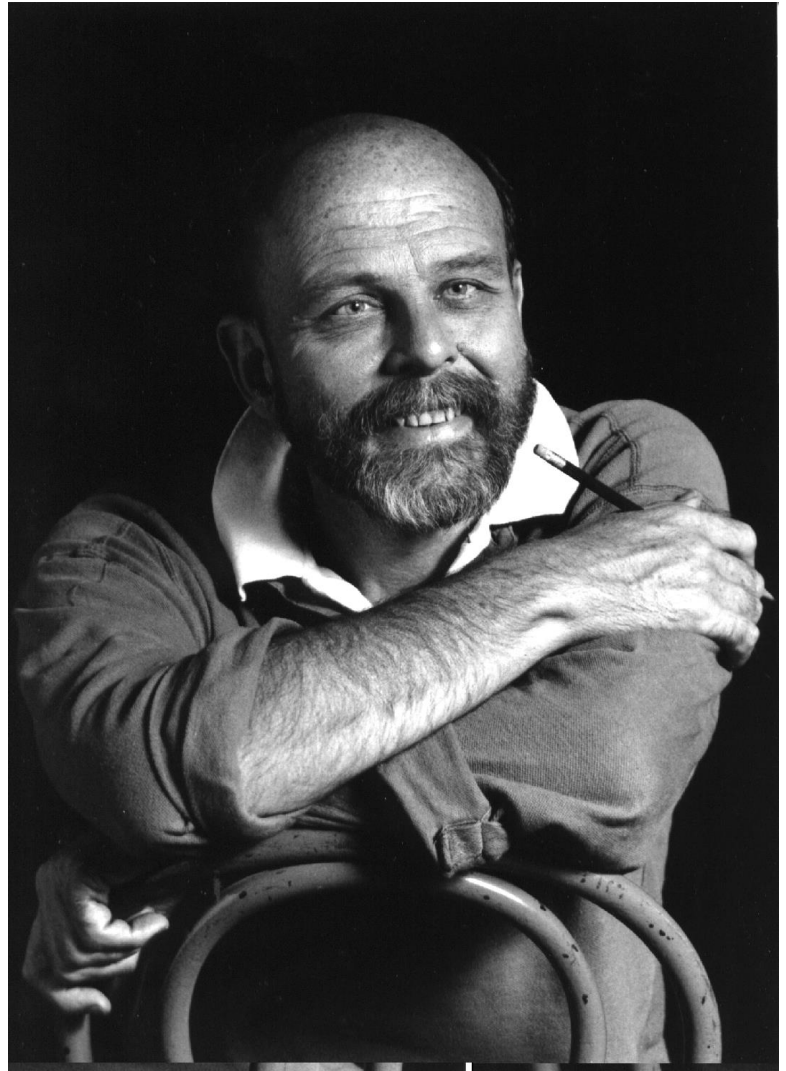
Dickens was not alone in revitalizing the holiday. The same year *A Christmas Carol* was published, the first Christmas card was printed, and three years later Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, introduced the German Christmas tree to England. But it was Dickens who became so synonymous with Christmas that, when he died in 1870, a little girl in London asked, "Mr. Dickens dead? Then will Father Christmas die too?"



*The Fezziwigs by Dickens's original illustrator, John Leech.*

# PLAYWRIGHT TOM HAAS

Tom Haas was artistic director of the IRT from 1980 until his untimely death in 1991. Prior to his association with the IRT, he was artistic director of PlayMakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He was associate director at Yale Repertory Theatre and head of the Acting-Directing Program at Yale University, where his students included Henry Winkler, Sigourney Weaver, and Meryl Streep. At the IRT, Tom directed 40 productions, including memorable renditions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *The Cocktail Party*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and, of course, *A Christmas Carol*. IRT audiences also saw his stage adaptations of *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *The Three Musketeers*, as well as the musical *Operetta*, *My Dear Watson* and dozens of Cabaret shows. Tom's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* was produced at the IRT annually from 1980 through 1984. The play returned in 1996 and has been a holiday tradition ever since.



*Elyakeem Avraham  
& Jesse Bhamrah  
in the IRT's  
2019 production of  
A Christmas Carol.*

# CAROLS OF THE CAROL

The complete title of Dickens's book, as printed on the title page of the first edition, is *A Christmas Carol in Prose (as opposed to the usual sung carol written in verse)*. Dickens extended the song metaphor by calling each chapter a "Stave," an archaic term for staff or stanza. A number of traditional holiday songs are heard in the IRT's production of *A Christmas Carol*.

## "AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD"

The text of "As with Gladness Men of Old" was written by British writer William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898) on January 6, 1859, while he was ill in bed and unable to attend Epiphany services. In 1861, organist and editor William Henry Monk (1823-1889) set the words to a tune that he adapted from one written in 1838 by German composer Konrad Kocher (1786-1872). Dix did not care for the tune, but it became very popular. The hymn is inspired by the visit of the Biblical magi on Epiphany.

The Wise Men (1900) by JC Leyendecker (1874-1951)



## "CAROL OF THE BELLS"

"Carol of the Bells" is based on a Ukrainian New Year's carol, arranged in 1916 by composer and teacher Mykola Leontovych (1877-1921). The Ukrainian song, which tells of a swallow flying into a home to herald a bountiful new year, was inspired by a traditional folk chant whose language was thought to have magical properties. The song was introduced to American audiences by the Ukrainian National Chorus at Carnegie Hall in 1921. American composer and choral conductor Peter J. Wilhousky (1902-1978), who was from a Ukrainian family, attended that concert; he later arranged the song as "Carol of the Bells" and published it in 1936. Wilhousky wrote new lyrics centered around the theme of bells because the melody reminded him of hand bells.



### “CHRISTMAS IS COMING”

“Christmas Is Coming” is a nursery rhyme and Christmas song frequently sung as a round. The melody is an old English country dance tune.

### THE “COVENTRY CAROL”

The “Coventry Carol” dates from the 16th century. It was traditionally performed in Coventry, England, as part of *The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors*, a medieval Nativity play. The song refers to the Biblical story of King Herod, who feels threatened by a prophecy of a newborn king and orders all male infants in Bethlehem to be killed. The song is a lullaby sung by mothers of the doomed children.

*A medieval pageant performance in Coventry.*

### THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE WASSAIL

The Gloucestershire Wassail (“Wassail! Wassail! All Over the Town”) is a traditional song from the county of Gloucestershire, England. It dates back at least to the 18th century, but may be even older. Wassail is a punch made of wine, beer, or cider mixed with sugar, spices, and baked apples. It is served hot in a very large bowl—the wassail bowl. The word “wassail” is derived from the Middle English “wass-heil”—a greeting that meant “be of good health.” To go wassailing is to go from door to door singing carols; hosts who receive such visitors may choose to treat them to something warm and comforting, such as wassail.



### “GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN”

The sense of this song is not “God rest ye, merry gentlemen,” but “God rest ye merry, gentlemen.” “God rest ye merry” was an old greeting, meaning literally, “sleep well,” and more generally, “May God keep you well.” The origins of this song go back to the 15th or 16th century. Some believe that it was a hymn of protest against the banning of Christmas in England in the 1640s, when England’s Puritan government saw Christmas as a pagan holiday that defiled Christianity. It is thought that the song was sung outside places where people were imprisoned for celebrating Christmas. This history might also explain the music’s minor key, which is unusual among Christmas songs.



### **“HERE WE COME A-WASSAILING”**

“Here We Come a-Wassailing” is a traditional English Christmas carol and New Year song thought to have originated in the mid-19th century. The “a-” is an archaic intensifying prefix, such as seen in the lyrics to *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (“Seven swans a-swimming,” etc.).

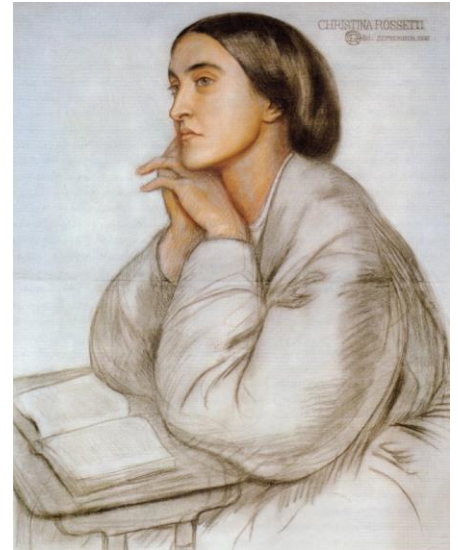
### **“I WONDER AS I WANDER”**

In 1933, folklorist and singer John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) attended an Appalachian evangelical fundraising meeting in Murphy, North Carolina. There he heard a little girl, Annie Morgan, sing one line of a folk song. After the meeting, Niles asked Annie to sing the line for him seven more times, each time paying her a quarter. Niles developed this brief fragment of words and music into the three verses of “I Wonder as I Wander.”

### **“IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER”**

The poem “In the Bleak Midwinter” was written some time before 1872 by English poet Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), sister of Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), who often used her as a model. English composer Gustav Holst (1874-1934) wrote a hymn tune for the poem that first appeared in *The English Hymnal* in 1906.

*Poet Christina Rossetti painted by her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*



### **“SILENT NIGHT”**

In late December 1818, the Salzach River flooded the small town of Oberndorf, Austria, damaging the organ at St. Nicholas parish church. On Christmas Eve, the young parish priest, Joseph Mohr (1792-1848), took a poem he had written to organist Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863) in nearby Arnsdorf. Mohr asked Gruber to set the poem to music that could be played on the guitar for that evening’s service. The man who repaired the church organ heard the song and shared it with two traveling families of folk singers, the Strassers and the Rainers, who sang “Stille Nacht” all over the world and made it famous.

*The old St. Nicholas Parish Church in Oberndorf where “Stille Nacht” was first sung in 1818.*

# WHY DID THEY SAY THAT?

## VICTORIAN LIFE AS SEEN IN *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

*Charles Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol in 1843, early in the Victorian Era (named after Queen Victoria, who reigned in the United Kingdom from 1837 to 1901). Life and social customs in this time differed greatly from today, as seen in the following quotes from the Carol.*

### **“WHY DID YOU GET MARRIED?”**

Victorian economists did not approve of those who married before they had sufficient income to support a family. To marry for love was a fairly new idea, and thought to be sentimental nonsense. Arranged marriages for economic benefit were still the norm.



*The company of the IRT's 2019 production of A Christmas Carol.*

### **“ARE THERE NO PRISONS? ARE THERE NO WORKHOUSES?”**

Prison in this context means not only incarceration as punishment for crimes, but also debtors' prison, which was designed specifically for people who could not pay their financial debts. Debtors' prisons were similar to workhouses, which were homes for the destitute that each district was required to provide through the Poor Law of 1834. In both cases, those imprisoned were required to labor in exchange for their room and board. The able-bodied were put to work breaking stones, crushing bones for fertilizer, or picking oakum (unraveling old, tarred ropes to use for caulking). Their dependents were forced to live with them in purposefully unpleasant conditions. As little as possible was spent on food and shelter. Discipline was strict; the sexes were segregated; privacy was nonexistent. Conditions were little better than prison. Once a family got into a workhouse, it was very difficult to get out because there was no way to pay off debts and no opportunity to seek employment.

### **“YOU’LL WANT ALL DAY TOMORROW, I SUPPOSE.”**

At this time, it was not uncommon for businesses such as offices, shops, and factories to operate as usual on Christmas Day.

## **“OUR CONTRACT IS AN OLD ONE.”**

Marriage in Dickens’s time was based more on economic arrangements than romantic interests. A “respectable” woman could not work for a living; therefore, if her father could not support her for life, she had no choice but to marry a man who could. Until the early 20th century, a man’s promise of engagement was considered a legally binding contract. If the man were to break the engagement, the woman’s reputation might be damaged, making it difficult or even impossible for her to find a husband to support her. The abandoned woman could therefore take him to court and sue him for “breach of promise.” It was very unusual for a woman to break an engagement; Belle’s decision to do so puts her in a precarious situation, as she has no family income to fall back upon.



*Stephenie Soohyun Park, Ryan Artzberger, & Scott Van Wye  
in the IRT’s 2019 production of A Christmas Carol.*

## **“OUTSIDE THE BAKER’S SHE HAD SMELT THE GOOSE, AND KNOWN IT FOR THEIR OWN.”**

Bakeries were forbidden by law from baking bread on Sundays and holidays. Since poor families usually had no stoves, they could take their dinner to the bakeshops on such occasions and have one hot meal a week. The young Cratchits claim to have identified their own goose from all the meals cooking at the local bakery.

## **“NOW MRS. CRATCHIT SERVED THE PUDDING”**

The English Christmas pudding is not like our modern, creamy pudding; it is more like a bread pudding. Flour, milk, and eggs are combined with dates, plums, figs, and/or nuts. (There are numerous references to plum pudding or figgy pudding at Christmastime.) The batter is placed in a lidded tin mold and immersed in simmering water to steam it. A poor family without a tin mold would use a cloth bag instead, resulting in a cannonball-shaped pudding. Traditional Christmas pudding is often presented aflame and served with a sauce. Any dessert at all would be a rare luxury for the Cratchits; pudding is quite an extravagance. (Today in Great Britain, *pudding* is a general term for dessert.)



# ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing a performance at Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

## READING - LITERATURE

- RL.1 – Read and comprehend a variety of literature independently and proficiently
- RL.2 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by analyzing, inferring, and drawing conclusions about literary elements, themes, and central ideas
  - Sample: 9-10.RL.2.2: *Analyze in detail the development of two or more themes or central ideas over the course of a work of literature, including how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details.*
- RL.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure and point of view
  - Sample: 11-12.RL.3.2: *Analyze a work of literature in which the reader must distinguish between what is directly stated and what is intended (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) in order to understand the point of view.*
- RL.4 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by connecting various literary works and analyzing how medium and interpretation impact meaning

## READING - NONFICTION

- RN.2 – Extract and construct meaning from nonfiction texts using a range of comprehension skills
  - Sample: 8.RN.2.3: *Analyze how a text makes connections and distinctions among individuals, events, and ideas.*

## READING - VOCABULARY

- RV.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
  - Sample: 9-10.RV.3.3: *Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.*



# RESOURCES

## BOOKS

Other novels by Charles Dickens:

*The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Hard Times, Great Expectations, many more*

*What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew* by Daniel Pool

*The Friendly Dickens* by Norrie Epstein

*Charles Dickens* by Jane Smiley

*Charles Dickens: An Authentic Account of His Life & Times* by Martin Fido

*Charles Dickens: A Centennial Volume* edited by E.W. F. Tomlin

*Dickens and His World* by Ivor Brown

*Dickens of London* by Wolfe Mankowitz

*Dickens's Christmas: A Victorian Celebration* by Simon Callow

*The Annotated Christmas Carol* (2004), edited by Michael Patrick Hearn

*The Dickens Encyclopedia* by Arthur L. Hayward

*The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge* by Paul Davis

*The Man Who Invented Christmas: How Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol Rescued His Career and Revived Our Holiday Spirits* by Les Standiford

*Charles Dickens: The Dickens Bicentenary 1812-2012* by Lucinda Dickens Hawksley

*Charles Dickens: England's Most Captivating Storyteller* by Catherine Wells-Cole

*Charles Dickens and the Street Children of London* by Andrea Warren

*The Financial Wisdom of Ebenezer Scrooge: Five Principles to Transform Your Relationship with Money* by Tom Klontz, Brad Klontz, & Rick Kahler

## WEBSITES

Literature, history, and culture in the age of Victoria; the section on Dickens is quite extensive

<http://www.victorianweb.org/index.html>

Charles Dickens Page, dedicated to bringing the genius of Dickens to a new generation of readers

<http://www.fidnet.com/%7Edap1955/dickens/>

Watch an animation on Dickens's life, or play the Dickens on-line game and fight your way through Dickens's London to get to the author himself.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/bleakhouse/animation.shtml>

Children in Victorian Britain—an interactive history

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/victorians/>

Websites created in celebration of Charles Dickens's Centennial (2012)

<http://charlesdickenspage.com/>

<http://www.dickens2012.org/>

[http://www.byerschoice.com/Page-Dickens>Returns\\_47.aspx](http://www.byerschoice.com/Page-Dickens>Returns_47.aspx)

<http://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/exhibition.asp?id=48>

Information about 5/3 Bank's financial empowerment programs for youth of all ages

<https://www.53.com/financial-empowerment/>

*A Christmas Carol* text online

<http://www.stormfax.com/dickens.htm>

YouTube selections

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L189MhnAloM&feature=related>

Charles Dickens biography

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEYdX5\\_U0Yg&feature=relmfu](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEYdX5_U0Yg&feature=relmfu)

Charles Dickens documentary (part 1 of 3)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c06WUYsI0ic&feature=relmfu>

"The Signal Man" – a ghost story by Charles Dickens (part 1 of 4)

## VIDEO

*A Christmas Carol* (1951) starring Alastair Sim (British title: *Scrooge*)

*Scrooge* (1970), a musical starring Albert Finney

*A Christmas Carol* starring George C. Scott (1984), an excellent TV version

*Scrooged* (1988) starring Bill Murray—a contemporary update

*The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) starring Michael Caine—surprisingly faithful to the novel

*A Christmas Carol* (1999) starring Patrick Stewart

*A Christmas Carol* (2009), Disney animated film starring Jim Carey

*The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017), about Dickens writing *A Christmas Carol*

*Doctor Who: A Christmas Carol*, the 2010 Christmas special

*The Mystery of Charles Dickens* starring Simon Callow, directed by Patrick Garland

Biography—Charles Dickens (A&E 2004 DVD Archives)

Charles Dickens

boxed set exploring the life, times, and works of Charles Dickens

DVD 1 – Uncovering the Real Dickens

DVD 2 – David Copperfield (BBC Television, 1999)

DVD 3 – *A Christmas Carol*; Songs from Grape Lane;

The Making of “Uncovering the Real Dickens”

*The Young Victoria* (2009)

*Her Majesty, Mrs. Brown* (1997)

*Becoming Jane* (2007)

*Amazing Grace* (2006)

*A Canterville Ghost* (1996), with Neve Campbell and Patrick Stewart

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why is this story still relevant today?

At the end of the play Scrooge says, “And it was always said of him [Scrooge] that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that truly be said of us, and all of us!” Keeping this line in mind, discuss how we keep Christmas in today’s world. What does this holiday mean to you and to others? What does the world do well today? How might the world do better? How might these ideas extend beyond December 25?

We live in a time of incredible and constant change in technology, medicine, the economy, society, and much more. Although today we might think of the Victorian Era as old-fashioned, it was also an era of innovation: the Industrial Revolution, advances in medicine and psychology, the rise of the middle class, and more. How do today’s changes make our lives easier? How do they make things more difficult? What technological advances and inventions made the Victorians’ lives easier? What elements of the Industrial Revolution made life more difficult? How do such issues as poverty, homelessness, health care, race relations, sexual equality, sexuality, and social class compare between the two eras?

Although he gives us scenes from Scrooge’s past, Dickens does not dwell on the motivation behind Scrooge’s dark view of the world and of Christmas in particular. What hints are included in the story that might suggest the source of his miserly attitude? Imagine other events in Scrooge’s past, not depicted in Dickens’s story, which might help explain Scrooge’s outlook.

Imagine Scrooge’s future. What would the last year of his life have been like if the ghosts had not visited him? What changes—in his workplace, in his home, in his daily life—will Scrooge make as a result of his transformation?

The IRT production of *A Christmas Carol* uses very little scenery; the audience is asked to imagine the many environments suggested. Picture a particular scene from the play in your imagination. How large or small is the space? Picture the floor surface, the walls and ceilings, the windows, the furniture. Compare and contrast your ideas with those of your classmates.

The actors in *A Christmas Carol* each play a number of different characters. Choose one actor and think about his or her performance. What acting tools did the performer use to differentiate between characters? Think about posture, voice, gesture, costuming, and make-up. How effective were the transformations between characters?

The three spirits show Scrooge scenes from the past, present, and future. Which of these visions do you think is most responsible for Scrooge’s change? Why?



Do some research to learn more about the history of child labor in America. What types of jobs did children do? Who were early advocates for children's rights? Where in the world today is child labor still practiced? How would you feel if you had to go to work in a factory instead of going to school? How would that situation affect your future opportunities?

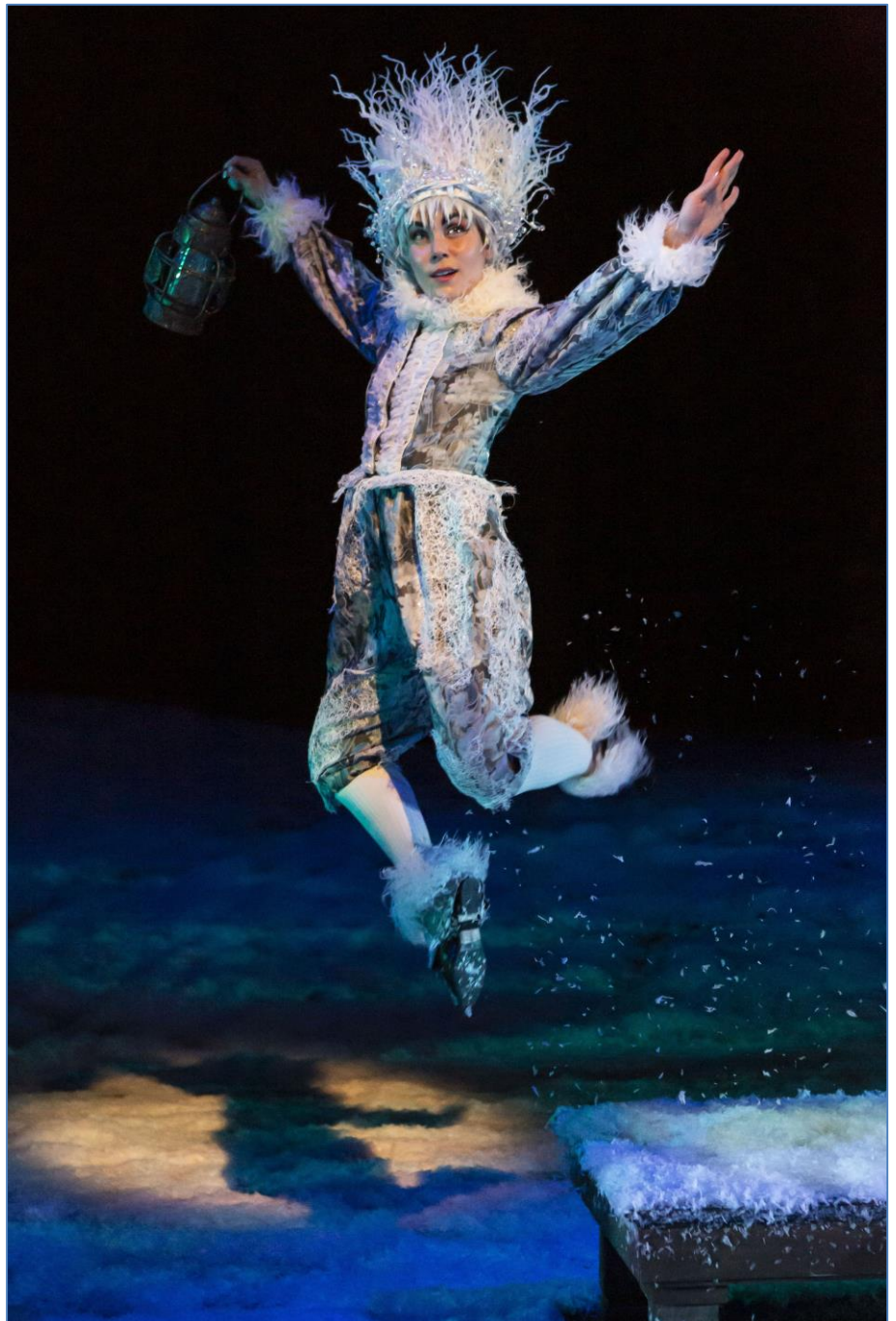
Compare the IRT production of *A Christmas Carol* to other stage or film adaptations you have seen of the same story. What scenes and elements seem to be common to all adaptations? What scenes appear in some versions and not others? What scenes have you seen that are inventions of the adaptors and not found in the original book? Why do you suppose the creators of these adaptations made the choices they did? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the IRT's use of narration?

Discuss some of the different charities in your community that help people during the holidays. Are you involved with them? What else could you do to help your community at this time?

The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge two children who represent "want" and "ignorance." Why do you think Dickens chose these two issues to highlight in this way? Why do you think he chose children to represent these issues? If you were Dickens, what two or three issues would you choose to highlight for today's readers?

Scrooge and his nephew Fred suffer similar challenges in their childhoods: the death of a mother, and a distant or absent father. How is it that the two characters' attitudes toward life are so different? Why do some people accept adversity as an obstacle while others make it an inspiration?

*Emma Rosenthal in the IRT's 2019 production of A Christmas Carol.*



# WRITING

With the theme of Christmas past and present, interview one of your elders about how Christmas was celebrated when they were a child. Write a comparison of the events of their holiday and the Christmas holiday of today. What has changed? What has remained the same? What does this person miss and cherish? What is the happiest part of the holiday for you and your interview subject?

Dickens's stories are lush with imagery. Working in pairs, each person should write three basic plain sentences on a piece of paper. Then exchange papers with your partner and expand their sentences with as much imagery and descriptive language as you can. Make use of adjectives, adverbs, alliteration, onomatopoeia, similes, and other literary devices. Read aloud to the class: first the basic sentence, and then how it has been Dickensified!

Scrooge visits Christmases from his past, the present, and the future. Write about a memorable winter celebration in your life from the past. What made it memorable? What were the sights, the sounds, and the smells? Or imagine a celebration in your future. Let your imagination run wild.

*A Christmas Carol* is a holiday story told to teach something to its readers. Write a holiday story of your own that has a moral or teaches a lesson. Share it with your class and family.

Dickens wrote most of his books because he wanted to focus attention on a particular social issue. Write your own brief version of the *Carol* story set in contemporary times. What social issue(s) in today's world do you want to highlight? In what business does Scrooge work? Who are the three ghosts? What scenes do they show him? How does he change his ways?

Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects—scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors' performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to: [education.irt@gmail.com](mailto:education.irt@gmail.com)

# ACTIVITIES

The actors of *A Christmas Carol* use Dickens's original story to help build their characters. After seeing the show, choose one of the characters, go through the story, and build a character analysis as if you were going to portray the character. Use the three big questions of character to begin your analysis: What does the character say? What does the character do? What do others say about the character? In addition, how does the author describe the character? What type of relationships does the character have with others? As an acting exercise, create physical mannerisms for your character. How does he or she move, walk, gesture, talk? Or, as a design exercise, create a visual palette for your character. Create drawings or collages of what he/she might wear, with fabric swatches to show color and texture.

The Victorians did not have TVs or computers to entertain themselves as we do today. One of their forms of entertainment was reading aloud. Choose another holiday story, perhaps one of Dickens's other Christmas stories, and take turns reading it aloud to the class. What do the actors at the IRT do with their voices that you can incorporate when you are reading?

Working in pairs or groups of three, choose one of the topics listed below to research and report on. Take your reports to the creative edge: sing a carol, make a Victorian Christmas card, create a financial game that illustrates how debtor's prison worked, etc.

England • London • Industrial Revolution • Queen Victoria  
 Debtor's Prison • British Empire • British Class System  
 Wassail • Carols • Christmas Tree • Christmas Cards • Plum Pudding

Look up holiday traditions from different religions and cultures around the world. What holiday traditions do we celebrate here in the United States that originated in other countries? Share your findings with your class.

Find the rules of Blind Man's Buff or other Victorian parlor games and play them. What similar games do we play today?

Look up recipes for a Christmas pudding or wassail and try your hand at preparing them. Ask an adult first!

## **GAME: 20 QUESTIONS ON A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

1. *In what city is A Christmas Carol set?*
  - a. New York City
  - b. Edinburgh
  - c. London
2. *How many ghosts visit Scrooge?*
  - a. Three
  - b. Four
  - c. Six
3. *Who was Scrooge's business partner?*
  - a. Jacob Marley
  - b. Bob Marley
  - c. Christopher Marlowe
4. *Who is Scrooge's employee?*
  - a. Bob Cratchit
  - b. Philip Pirrip
  - c. Fred Cheriabie
5. *What establishments does miserly Scrooge support?*
  - a. The homeless shelters
  - b. The local charities
  - c. The prisons and the workhouses
6. *Does Scrooge give Cratchit Christmas Day off work?*
  - a. No, it is too much of a financial burden
  - b. Yes, if he comes in early the following day
  - c. He is only allowed half the day off
7. *How many children do the Cratchits have?*
  - a. Four
  - b. Five
  - c. Six
8. *Which of the following is a place where the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge?*
  - a. To the local convenience store
  - b. To his childhood boarding school
  - c. To his grave
9. *Where did young Scrooge spend Christmas?*
  - a. At school alone
  - b. At home with his family
  - c. At his grandparents' home
10. *What is the name of Scrooge's sister?*
  - a. Candace
  - b. Felicity
  - c. Fan
11. *What dessert do the Cratchits eat on Christmas?*
  - a. Pudding
  - b. Cheesecake
  - c. Baked Alaska
12. *Who was Scrooge's first employer?*
  - a. Topper
  - b. Mr. Fezziwig
  - c. The Lamplighter
13. *What does Mrs. Cratchit use to decorate her dress on Christmas day?*
  - a. Ribbons
  - b. Flowers
  - c. Buttons
14. *Whose funeral do the Brokers discuss?*
  - a. Tiny Tim's
  - b. Scrooge's
  - c. One of Scrooge's business colleagues

15. Which ghost shows Scrooge Ignorance and Want?
- Christmas Past
  - Christmas Present
  - Christmas Future
16. What does Scrooge anonymously send to the Cratchits on Christmas morning?
- A prize turkey
  - A snow shovel
  - A television set
17. When Scrooge visits his nephew on Christmas Day, what game does he not want to play?
- Yes and No
  - Blind Man's Buff
  - Duck, Duck, Goose
18. When Cratchit arrives late to work the day after Christmas, what does Scrooge give him?
- A harsh reprimand
  - A whack on the hand
  - A raise
19. What is Tiny Tim's signature phrase?
- God help us.
  - God bless us, everyone.
  - God watch over the poor people.
20. Who adapted *A Christmas Carol* for the IRT stage?
- Tom Haas
  - Charles Dickens
  - J. K. Rowling

*David Alan Anderson in the IRT's  
2015 production of A Christmas Carol.*



## GAME KEY

- In what city is *A Christmas Carol* set?
  - London
- How many ghosts visit Scrooge?
  - Four
- Who was Scrooge's business partner?
  - Jacob Marley
- Who is Scrooge's employee?
  - Bob Cratchit
- What establishments does miserly Scrooge support?
  - The prisons and the workhouses
- Does Scrooge give Cratchit Christmas Day off work?
  - Yes, if he comes in early the next day
- How many children do the Cratchits have?
  - Four (on stage at the IRT)
  - Six (in Dickens's book)
- Which of the following is a place where the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge?
  - To his childhood boarding school
- Where did young Scrooge spend Christmas?
  - At school alone
- What is the name of Scrooge's sister?
  - Fan
- What dessert do the Cratchits eat on Christmas?
  - Pudding
- Who was Scrooge's first employer?
  - Mr. Fezziwig
- What does Mrs. Cratchit use to decorate her dress on Christmas day?
  - Ribbons
- Whose funeral are the Brokers discussing?
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  - A raise
- What is Tiny Tim's signature phrase?
  - God bless us, everyone.
- Who adapted *A Christmas Carol* for the IRT stage?
  - Tom Haas

# BRITISH MONEY IN SCROOGE'S DAY

The **pound** (or pound sterling) was (and still is) the official currency of Great Britain.  
The term originated when it was equal to the value of one pound (weight) of silver.  
The Bank of England began to issue paper money in 1694.

1 pound = 20 shillings      £1 = 20s

1 shilling = 12 pence (pennies)      1s = 12d (the d comes from the Roman *denarius*)

Amounts over a pound are written £2-12s-6d, etc.

Amounts below a pound can be written two ways:

12s-6d      or      12/6

4s-8d      or      4/8

Such notations would be pronounced "twelve and six" or "four and eight," etc.

**Coins** (of those listed below, only the penny is still minted today)

a **guinea** was a gold coin worth 21 shillings

guineas were used to pay gentlemen, artists, and other more genteel debts  
(pounds were used for everyday, lower-class debts to tradesmen and such)

a **sovereign** was a one-pound gold coin (equal to 20 shillings)

a **half-sovereign** was a gold coin worth 10s

a **crown** was a silver coin worth 5s

a **half-crown** was a silver coin worth 2s-6d

a **florin** was worth two shillings.

First minted in 1849, they were not as popular as half-crowns.

a **shilling** was a silver coin worth 12 pence (12d)

( a shilling was sometimes called a "bob")

a **sixpence** was a silver coin worth 6d

a **groat** was a silver coin worth 4d

a **threepence** was a silver coin worth 3d

(pronounced and sometimes spelled "thruppence")

a **penny** was a copper coin (pennies were sometimes referred to as coppers)

Small amounts involving pennies were sometimes expressed with "p"

eg: four pence might be written "4d" but spoken of as "4p"

a **halfpenny** was a copper coin worth half a penny

(pronounced *hayp-nee* and sometimes written "ha'penny")

a **farthing** was a copper coin worth a quarter of a penny

# GLOSSARY

**apparition**

something existing in perception only; a ghostly appearing figure

**bedight**

adorned, arrayed, dressed

**benevolence**

kindness, charity, an inclination to do good

**Bah!**

an exclamation expressing contempt, scorn, or disgust

**Blind Man's Buff**

a children's game, a variant of tag

**brave ("brave in ribbons")**

In this context, brightly colored or showy.

**brokers**

A broker arranges transactions between a buyer and a seller and gets a commission. An example would be a stockbroker, who makes the sale or purchase of securities on behalf of his client.

**business ("an excellent man of business")**

Scrooge is a financier, or money-lender; he does not provide any actual goods or services; he deals only in the exchange of money.

**capacious**

large in capacity; capable of containing a great deal

**charwoman**

A part-time servant hired by the day to do odd housework (as opposed to a full-time live-in maid or housekeeper). "Char" is a corruption from Middle English of "chore."

**coalscuttle**

A coalscuttle is a metal bucket with a handle and a sloped lip used for carrying coal. Here, Scrooge means buy another scuttle-full of coal.

**comforter**

scarf



**counting house**

a building, room, or office used for keeping books and transacting business

**covetous**

having or showing a great desire to possess something belonging to someone else

**Ebenezer**

from the Hebrew “stone of help”; the word can be used to describe a tombstone

**the Exchange**

the Royal Exchange, the financial center of London; the British equivalent of Wall Street

**flint**

a hard quartz that produces a spark when struck by steel; in the days before matches, this was one method of starting a fire

**half of half-a-quartern**

A quartern is a quarter of a pint, so half of half-a quartern is one ounce.

**hob**

an old-fashioned fire grate; a shelf on either side of an open fireplace where food can be kept warm

**Humbug!**

drivel, nonsense

**lamplighter**

In the 19th century, gas lights were the dominant form of street lighting. A lamplighter was a town employee who lit the street lights, generally by means of a wick or link on a long pole. (A link was a torch made of tow [short, untwisted, broken fibers of rope] daubed in pitch or tar.) At dawn, he would return and turn them off using a small hook on the same pole. Eventually systems were developed that allowed the lights to operate automatically. There is a long history in literature of the symbolic role of the lamplighter as a bringer of enlightenment.

**lowering**

scowling, frowning, glowering

**milliner**

one who makes hats

**Parliament**

the national legislative body of Great Britain; the British equivalent of the U.S. Congress

**poulterer**

a dealer in poultry: the flesh of chickens, ducks, turkeys, or geese raised for food

**Scrooge**

the colloquial expression “to scrooge” means to crowd or squeeze someone

**smoking bishop**

A hot punch made from red wine, oranges, and spices (chiefly cloves, star anise, and cinnamon). The name comes from its red color, like a bishop’s robes.

**twice-turned gown**

When a dress became worn, it could be turned inside out to get further wear from it. A twice-turned gown would be so worn on the inside that the outside is once again the best side.

**waistcoat**

vest

*David Alan Anderson  
in the IRT’s  
2015 production of  
A Christmas Carol.*



# THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

*You, the audience are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:*

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call; this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

