Behind the Lens

Two artistic worlds collided for the making of Dickens’ *Holiday Classic*: theater and film. Instead of rehearsing together to perform from start to finish for an audience, the actors filmed their scenes solo in a series of takes that were later connected through the wonders of digital technology. Terms for stage and screen blended together to create a new lexicon. Set pieces, costumes and props were featured up close and on camera instead of viewed from a theater seat 30 feet away. Not one aspect of the production was untouched by this fusion of mediums, which created something so wonderful and new, it can only be described as pure magic.
Help Us Fight Hunger
Together with The Food Group, the Guthrie is proud to collect healthy, nonperishable food items for Minnesotans in need this holiday season.

In 2019, you helped us collect 538 pounds of food, provide 486 meals, give 14 families a three-day supply of food and support more than 250 local food banks and hunger relief organizations. The needs are even greater in 2020, so let’s come together and make an impact

Food Drive for The Food Group
December 19 – 21
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Curbside drop-off at the Guthrie Theater
just drive up and donate!

THE FOOD GROUP’S WISH LIST
● Vegetables (low-sodium canned veggies, pasta sauce, salsa, mushrooms)

● Dairy (powdered/shelf-stable milk, milk alternatives like rice, soy, almond)
- **Fruits** (canned fruit, sugar-free applesauce, dried fruit, 100% fruit juices)

- **Grains** (brown/wild rice, whole-grain pastas, low-sugar oatmeal, gluten-free options)

- **Proteins** (canned tuna/salmon/chicken, canned/dried beans, unsalted nuts, peanut butter)

- **Oils and spices** (olive/canola oil, onion/garlic powder, dried spices like basil, oregano, thyme)

- **Household items** (can openers, toilet paper, baby wipes, dish soap, hand sanitizer, face masks)

**FIGHTING HUNGER.**
**NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY.**
The Food Group works to provide good foods to those who need it most, focusing on local food access, equity and nutrition issues related to food and hunger in more than 32 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Learn more at
Dear Friends,

If this year had to be summed up in a phrase, “Bah! Humbug!” would be a top contender. And yet the story that gives us this curmudgeonly expression rings of something so hopeful and essential, even a global pandemic couldn’t silence it. After more than four decades of presenting Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* annually on the Guthrie stage, we felt an undeniable calling to keep with our tradition and reimagine the classic for virtual audiences.

What is it about Scrooge and the Cratchits and the three spirits that continue to haunt us? During my research, I discovered that Dickens first performed public readings of his novella in the U.S. in 1868, shortly after the Civil War, for an incredibly divided America that had experienced unfathomable loss. Even though Dickens wasn’t particularly loved by Americans (due to his less-than-flattering observations in *American Notes*), the lines of people hoping to hear the tale stretched for blocks. I imagine it was comforting for postwar Americans in 1868 to hear a story that reminded them, as it reminds us today, that we are not only responsible for ourselves, but also for our neighbor. Perhaps this explains why *A Christmas Carol* has been in continual adaptation from the moment it
was published in 1843. No matter the century or cultural context, it remains a powerful, relevant and valuable story.

Inspired by these popular readings of Dickens’ self edited text condensed into four parts, an idea sparked: What if we had four of our brilliant *A Christmas Carol* actors each perform one part? What if we created a modest physical environment onstage and filmed it? What if we captured each part separately to keep everyone as safe as possible? What if we made it free to K–12 schools? The ideas churned until we landed on the concept that became *Dickens’ Holiday Classic*.

The next step was to find filmmakers who could help us create this theater-cinema hybrid, and I was honored to work with my friend and co-director E.G. Bailey and collaborate with the talented crew of Freestyle Films, the production company he co-founded with Sha Cage. E.G. is a wonderful theater artist and filmmaker who has been working in the Twin Cities for 20 years, including assistant directing *Othello* and *King Lear* at the Guthrie. We spent countless hours digging into the text and imagining how it might be captured on camera. What followed was one of the most energizing and collaborative experiences I’ve had as an artist. From our outstanding actors and crew to our dedicated Health and Safety Team, everyone contributed their unique talents and perspectives in a way that brought out the best in each other, our work and
Dickens’ story. I am incredibly proud of what we created together and honored to share it with you.

During the season that would have marked our 46th consecutive staged production of *A Christmas Carol*, I’m so pleased to continue our tradition when we need it most. To our faithful patrons who join us season after season, I’m excited for you to encounter something new. And to those joining us for the first time, including 1,000+ schools from around the world, I’m thankful you’ve chosen to spend part of your holidays with us.

As I reflect on the continuous uncertainty we have faced since March, I am certain of this: The message of *A Christmas Carol* is so transcendent that nothing — not time, tradition or even the theater — can contain it. May we search our hearts as diligently as Scrooge and allow ourselves to be transformed. Thanks to Dickens, we are reminded that we can do better. We can be better.

Best wishes to you and yours this holiday season, and enjoy the show!

Yours,

Joseph Haj
Welcome to *Dickens’ Holiday Classic*! We’re thrilled that the virtual nature of this event allows us to share Charles Dickens’ wonder-filled story of *A Christmas Carol* with so many more patrons in Minnesota and beyond. If you’re new to the Guthrie, hello! Here are a few snippets about who we are and what makes this first-ever virtual production so special.

The Guthrie is considered the flagship resident theater in the U.S.

Acclaimed theater director Sir Tyrone Guthrie was so disenchanted with Broadway that he and two other colleagues dreamed about starting a theater outside of New York City. They placed a small paragraph on the drama page in *The New York Times* asking for interested cities to make their case, and the people of Minnesota
won them over. The Guthrie opened on May 7, 1963, with a production of *Hamlet*.

**We’ve called two buildings home.**

Our original building was designed by local architect Ralph Rapson and sat adjacent to the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Under the leadership of former Artistic Director Joe Dowling, the Guthrie built and opened its current three-stage facility on the Mississippi River on June 25, 2006. Designed by esteemed French architect Jean Nouvel, the Guthrie building has become an iconic shape in the city’s skyline.

**The theater was built to be a cultural resource for the community.**

In addition to producing classic and contemporary theater, the Guthrie was designed to be an artistic space for the Twin Cities community to enjoy — with or without a ticket. During non-pandemic times, our building is open to the public year-round, and visitors are invited to explore our lobbies, restaurants and stunning downtown views from multiple levels.

**The Guthrie has one of the longest occupiable cantilevers in the world.**

Most visitors don’t leave the theater without experiencing the Endless Bridge, a two-level cantilevered
lobby that stretches more than 178 feet from the building and hovers 55 feet above the parkway below. The outdoor terrace looks out over the city’s historic St. Anthony Falls and Stone Arch Bridge, making it a go-to spot for photo ops.

**Offstage, we offer education, accessibility and community engagement programs.**

We believe that theater is for everyone, which is why we create robust programming beyond what’s onstage, including classes for youth and adults; ASL-interpreted, audio-described, open-captioned and relaxed performances; events and projects created with community partners across the Twin Cities; and professional training through the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program. Many of these offerings are informed by our core values, especially Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. You can learn more about the work we’re doing in this area [here](#).

**We made *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* free to K–12 schools.**

More than 10,000 students attend the Guthrie’s production of *A Christmas Carol* annually, often at deeply reduced ticket prices, making it one of the most popular and accessible first-time theater experiences for youth in the region. As part of our ongoing commitment to engage
young people in the power of storytelling onstage, educators are invited to share Dickens’ Holiday Classic with their students at no charge.

Most of the creative elements you see on screen were made by Guthrie artists in our onsite shops. All the set pieces — plus a few emblematic costumes and props — were pulled from A Christmas Carol storage and reconfigured for the film. The remaining costumes and props were mixed and matched from various past productions with some fun new additions: The teapot belongs to Assistant Production Manager Sara L’Heureux, and one of the letters on the writer’s desk features the handwriting of Dickens himself.

A lot of local love went into this virtual production. All four actors call Minnesota home and have been regulars in the Guthrie’s staged productions of A Christmas Carol, so we were delighted to see these talented artists at work after a far-too-long hiatus. We also built a partnership with Freestyle Films, a Twin Cities production company. In other words, Dickens’ Holiday Classic was made with plenty of love from Minnesota.

The best thing about a tradition? Celebrating it with others. Thank you for joining us, and we hope this virtual event will inspire you to spread good cheer to everyone you meet.
The Guthrie Store is open!

Welcome to your one-stop holiday shop. Find thoughtfully curated gifts for everyone on your list at www.guthriestore.com.

A medley of makers

Browse stunning, handcrafted collections by artists from the Twin Cities and beyond

Open 24/7 online

An online-only store means more time to shop and add cool finds to your virtual cart

Curbside pickup available

Stop by the Guthrie and we’ll bring your order to you (check website for hours)
PlayCo and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
American Repertory Theater, Guthrie Theater
and Oregon Shakespeare Festival present

THIS IS WHO I AM
by AMIR NIZAR ZUABI
directed by EVERN ODCIKIN

Separated by continents, an estranged father and son reunite over Zoom. From their respective kitchens in Ramallah and New York City, they recreate a cherished family recipe and struggle to bridge the gap between them, one ingredient at a time.

Now – January 3 • Tickets start at $16.
For more information, visit guthrietheater.org.

Sponsored by Ameriprise Financial
The Guthrie Theater in collaboration with Freestyle Films presents

**Dickens’ Holiday Classic**

adapted and directed by E.G. Bailey and Joseph Haj

from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

**Cast** in order of appearance

**WRITER ONE**
- Charity Jones

**WRITER TWO**
- Ryan Colbert

**WRITER THREE**
- Meghan Kreidler

**WRITER FOUR**
- Nathaniel Fuller

**Creative**

**ADAPTERS/DIRECTORS**
- E.G. Bailey
- Joseph Haj

**SCENIC DESIGNER**
- Walt Spangler

**COSTUME DESIGNER**
- Amy Schmidt

**THEATRICAL LIGHTING DESIGNER**
- Tom Mays
SOUND DESIGNER/MUSIC COMPOSER
  Reid Reijsa
DRAMATURG
  Carla Steen
ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE/LINE PRODUCER
  Jennifer Liestman
COSTUME DESIGN ASSISTANT
  Lisa Jones

Film Production

PRODUCERS
  E.G. Bailey
  Sha Cage
CINEMATOGRAPHER
  Anton Shavlik
SECOND CAMERA
  Brian Few Jr
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
  Xiaolu Wang
FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERA/DIT
  Tahiel Jimenez Medina
EDITOR/CREDITS
  Neil Evans
COLORIST
  Oscar Oboza
VFX SUPERVISOR
  Daniel Saldivar
**Native Artist Fellows** in alphabetical order

**HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSISTANT**
  Ernest Briggs (White Earth Nation)

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**
  Katie “KJ” Johns (Bad River Ojibwe)

**SCRIPT SUPERVISOR**
  Sam Aros Mitchell (Yaqui, enrolled with the Texas Band of Yaqui Indians)

**Run Time**
Approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes

**Acknowledgments**
The Guthrie wishes to acknowledge that for the filming of this project, we gathered on the traditional land of the Dakota People and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations, including the Ojibwe and other Indigenous nations.

The Native artist fellowships are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.
State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

The Guthrie wishes to thank the members of the Health and Safety Team who helped create the safest possible environment on set: Ernest Briggs, Rebecca Cribbin, Sarah Gullickson, Brooke Hajinian, Sara L’Heureux and Jennifer Liestman.

Special thanks to Dr. Lisa Brosseau, Ph.D., and Dr. Zeke McKinney, M.D., for reviewing and offering recommendations to the Guthrie’s COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for *Dickens’ Holiday Classic*.

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Cast**

**Charity Jones**  
**Writer One**

GUTHRIE More than 20 productions, including *Cyrano de Bergerac, A Christmas Carol, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Hay Fever, The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide …, A Delicate Balance, Shadowlands*. THEATER History Theatre: *Gloria: A Life, Teen Idol*; Jungle Theater: *You Can’t Take...*
Ryan Colbert
Writer Two


AWARDS 2016 Ensemble Ivey Award. TRAINING University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program
Meghan Kreidler
Writer Three

GUTHRIE As You Like It, A Christmas Carol. THEATER Theater Mu: Hot Asian Doctor Husband, Two Mile Hollow, Purple Cloud, Flower Drum Song, A Little Night Music, Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals; Mixed Blood Theatre: Vietgone, Passing Strange; Children’s Theatre Company: The Lorax; 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea; Peter Pan; Ten Thousand Things: Henry IV, Part I; History Theatre: The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin; Theater Latté Da: Bernarda Alba, Man of La Mancha; The Old Globe: The Lorax. AWARDS 2017 Emerging Artist Ivey Award; 2017 Ensemble Ivey Award (Vietgone); 2017 City Pages Artist of the Year. TRAINING University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program. OTHER Fronts local rock band Kiss the Tiger. www.kissthetiger.com

Nathaniel Fuller
Writer Four

GUTHRIE More than 90 productions since 1987, including King Lear; Trouble in Mind; The Crucible; A Christmas Carol (30 seasons); Othello;
The Primrose Path; Embers; Much Ado About Nothing; M. Butterfly; A View From the Bridge; A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2008 and 1997); Jane Eyre; Boats on a River; Hamlet; As You Like It (1994, 2005 and 2019); Six Degrees of Separation; Amadeus; Ah, Wilderness!; The Magic Fire. THEATER Los Angeles Free Shakespeare Festival; Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival; Jungle Theater; Cricket Theatre; Chanhassen Dinner Theatres. TRAINING University of Southern California; B.A., Dartmouth College

Creative
E.G. Bailey
Adapter/Director/Producer

GUTHRIE Director: U/G/L/Y; Assistant Director: King Lear, Juno and the Paycock, Othello. THEATER Director: Dot (Park Square Theatre), Amiri Baraka’s Wise, Why’s, Y’s (The Southern Theater), #SayHerName (Intermedia Arts). FILM Co-founder of Freestyle Films; Film curator of America Now! (Helsinki, Latvia and Uppsala Film Festivals); Launched the streaming platform Filmstreem at www.filmstreem.com in 2020 alongside his latest film KEON, which screened at New York City’s Urbanworld Film Festival; New Neighbors, which premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, winning numerous awards
and screening at over 100 festivals worldwide; *Petting Zoo*, which debuted at the 65th International Berlin Film Festival. **WRITING** *Solid Ground, Drumvoices Revue, WarpLand, Blues Vision: African American Writing From Minnesota*. **OTHER** Co-founder of Tru Ruts, Million Artist Movement, Minnesota Spoken Word Association and *The Late Nite Series*. **AWARDS** McKnight Media Artist Fellow; Sundance Film Festival; Emmy Award; Ivey Award; One of *Filmmaker* magazine’s 25 New Faces of Independent Film

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**Joseph Haj**  
**Adapter/Director**

**GUTHRIE** *The Glass Menagerie, Cyrano de Bergerac* (adapter/director), *West Side Story, Romeo and Juliet, Sunday in the Park With George, King Lear, South Pacific, Pericles*; Artistic Director since 2015. **THEATER** Folger Theatre: *Hamlet* (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Production); Oregon Shakespeare Festival: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Henry V, Pericles*; PlayMakers Repertory Company: *The Tempest, Metamorphoses, Cabaret, Henry IV, Henry V, Nicholas Nickleby, The Illusion, Amadeus, Pericles, Big River, As You Like It, Cyrano de Bergerac* (adapter/director), *Into the Woods*; PlayMakers Repertory Company Artistic Director, 2006–2015. As an actor, he has appeared at the
Guthrie Theater, The Public Theater, Alley Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville and internationally in Salzburg, Edinburgh, Paris, Berlin, Venice and Japan. OTHER Directed projects in a maximum-security prison in Los Angeles; Batesburg-Leesville, South Carolina; the West Bank; and Gaza. AWARDS 2000 NEA Millennium Grant awarded to 50 of America’s finest artists; Named one of 25 theater artists who will have a significant impact on the field over the next quarter-century by American Theatre magazine; 2014 Zelda Fichandler Award

Walt Spangler
Scenic Designer

GUTHRIE A Christmas Carol, My Fair Lady, Time Stands Still, Arms and the Man, The Importance of Being Earnest.

THEATER Broadway: Escape to Margaritaville, Tuck Everlasting, Desire Under the Elms, Scandalous, A Christmas Story: The Musical, Hollywood Arms; Off-Broadway: Manhattan Theatre Club; The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival; Atlantic Theater Company; Playwrights Horizons; Classic Stage Company; Signature Theatre; Regional: Goodman Theatre; Steppenwolf Theatre; Shakespeare Theatre Company; American Conservatory Theater;
Actors Theatre of Louisville; Yale Repertory Theatre; Williamstown Theatre Festival; Hartford Stage; Alley Theatre; Long Wharf Theatre; Goodspeed Musicals; Mark Taper Forum; Children’s Theatre Company. OPERA Minnesota Opera: *Edward Tulane* (world premiere); San Francisco Opera; Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre; English National Opera; Lyric Opera of Chicago. TRAINING M.F.A., Yale School of Drama. www.waltspangler.com

Amy Schmidt
Costume Designer

Tom Mays
Theatrical Lighting Designer


Reid Rejsa
Sound Designer/Music Composer

Carla Steen
Dramaturg

GUTHRIE More than 60 productions since 1996, recently including *Twelfth Night*, *Noura*, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *As You Like It*, *Noises Off*, *Frankenstein – Playing With Fire*, *West Side Story*, *Familiar*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *King Lear*, *The Lion in Winter* and *Sense and Sensibility*. THEATER Dramaturgy for the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program, Hammerstein Center, NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Augsburg University (*Cymbeline* directed by Darcey Engen). PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS Member of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). TRAINING M.F.A., Columbia University; B.A., Augsburg University

Jennifer Liestman
Artistic Associate/Line Producer

GUTHRIE Member of the Artistic Team since 2003; More than 55 productions, workshops and
readings since 2015, including *Twelfth Night*, *Noura*, *Floyd’s*, *West Side Story*, *BAD NEWS! i was there…*, *Familiar* (with Seattle Rep), *Watch on the Rhine* (with Berkeley Repertory Theatre), *Native Gardens* (with Arena Stage) and *Disgraced* (with McCarter Theatre Center/Milwaukee Repertory Theater). FILM *Master Servant* (casting consultant). TEACHING Audition master classes for the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program; Macalester College; Other universities in Minnesota and the U.S. TRAINING B.A., Theatre, Minnesota State University Moorhead

**Film Production**

**Sha Cage**  
*Producer*

GUTHRIE *Familiar, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Clybourne Park, Appomattox, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, U/G/L/Y. THEATER England: Hackney Empire; Nottingham Playhouse; The Albany; Z-arts; Ten Thousand Things: The Winter’s Tale, Henry IV, Forget Me Not When Far Away; Frank Theatre: Grounded, Eclipsed, Fucking A, Venus; Park Square Theatre: The Liar, Mary T. & Lizzy K.; Penumbra Theatre: The Ballad of Emmett Till, The Amen Corner, for
colored girls … ; Mixed Blood Theatre: Ruined, Agnes Under the Big Top; Jungle Theater: The Two Gentlemen of Verona (actor), School Girls (director); Children’s Theatre Company: Three Little Birds (director); Stages Theatre Company: The Day You Begin (director); Black Lives/Black Words: Buttafly Precinct (director); UMN/Guthrie: Everybody (director). FILM Co-founder of Freestyle Films; Jasmine Star (producer), KEON (producer/actor), Black Star (writer), At the Corner Of (director), New Neighbors (producer/actor), You’re Home Now (director), 39 Seconds (producer). OTHER Producer and consultant for over 15 years with Tru Ruts and NuWay. AWARDS Regional Ivey and Emmy Awards; Fox/TGC Fellowship; McKnight Artist Fellowship; Mpls.St.Paul Magazine Mover and Maker; Minnesota Women’s Press Changemaker; City Pages and Star Tribune Artist of the Year

Anton Shavlik
Cinematographer

GUTHRIE Debut. FILM The Speech, which premiered at the 2020 Palm Springs International ShortFest and is currently playing at festivals around the world; New Neighbors, which premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, winning numerous awards and
screening at over 100 festivals worldwide. TRAINING
Hamline University; M.F.A., Cinematography, American Film Institute, Los Angeles

Brian Few Jr
Second Camera

GUTHRIE Debut. FILM North
Minneapolis-based filmmaker and graphic designer with 10 years of experience; Director of *Angels Walk*, a short film about the emotional effects of gun violence in North Minneapolis that received a Best of Festival screening at the MinneapolisSaint Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF) in 2017; Worked with Freestyle Films on several projects, and his purpose comes from his passion for his community and youth

Neil Evans
Editor/Credits

GUTHRIE Debut. FILM More than a decade working as an editor in a variety of genres, including independent scripted comedy, drama, horror and documentaries; Festivals (selected): Sundance Film Festival,
Telluride Film Festival, Los Angeles Film Festival; Networks: HBO, PBS, Oxygen and other domestic and international platforms; Prior to working as a film editor, he developed a strong sense of story and attention to detail working in feature development at Universal Pictures.

TRAINING B.A., Studio Art, Yale University

Oscar Oboza
Colorist

GUTHRIE Debut. FILM Worked as a colorist since 1992, collaborating with directors and creatives across advertising, independent films, music videos and short films; Films (selected): *Raise Your Voice, Hoop Dreams, Fritz: The Walter Mondale Story, Memorial Day, Older Than America, Time for Ilhan.* OTHER Influential in marketing many major North American brands, crafting bold, eye-catching looks that draw the attention of broadcast audiences

Freestyle Films
Founded in 2015 by E.G. Bailey and Sha Cage, Freestyle Films is a diverse production team with a track record of
short films, documentaries, music videos, series and more. Working with a wide range of filmmakers, artists and writers, their aim is to lift up underrepresented stories and create new visions, images and cultural representations not often seen on screen. Previous and forthcoming projects include *Jasmine Star* (narrative feature), *KEON* (narrative short), *New Neighbors* (narrative short), *You’re Home Now* (horror), *Our Relationship* featuring Guante (music video), *Summer of George* (documentary feature), *Black Star* (series), *39 Seconds* (documentary feature), *Cry About a Nickel* (narrative short), *I Love* featuring Truthmaze (music video) and *At the Corner Of* (experimental series). Learn more at freestylefilms.tv.

**PLAY FEATURE**

**E.G. Bailey and Joseph Haj in Conversation**

After countless weeks of dreaming about what *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* could be and 13 days of filming on the McGuire Proscenium Stage, we asked the directing duo to chat about how they met, how they worked together behind the camera and how the fusion of theater and film will give audiences an experience unlike any other.
FIRST IMPRESSIONS

E.G. BAILEY: During Joe’s second season as the Guthrie’s artistic director, the lineup included *King Lear*, which is one of my favorite Shakespeare plays. I called him up and told him I was a Twin Cities artist who had worked on past Guthrie productions with Marion McClinton and Joe Dowling. I can be unabashed at times, so I’m sure Joe was surprised when I asked to work with him. But he graciously invited me to be his assistant director, and we had a great time. Watching Joe work, I appreciated that he didn’t settle for the easy path. We spent *days* trying to achieve his vision for the eye-gouging scene. Joe had a clarity and optimism that it was going to work, and it inspired us to make it happen.
JOSEPH HAJ: I appreciate those warm words, E.G. When you make plays for a living, what becomes crucially important is who’s in the room with you. I look for great artists who are also great people. From that first conversation, it was clear that E.G. is one of those artists. As assistant director on *King Lear*, he brought such skill and creative capacity to the role that he became a key part of the playmaking process. I loved working with him, and we’ve been colleagues and friends ever since.

DEFINING THE MEDIUM

JH: When we knew the Guthrie wouldn’t be staging *A Christmas Carol* and began talking about making a film, the smartest thing I did was call E.G. So I was thrilled when he said, “I’m in.” At first, I assumed we would stage it like a play and E.G. and his crew would film it. But once we freed ourselves from the constraints of that vision, it began to take on the language of film even more than theater.

EGB: Staging a play is so 2019, Joe. [both laugh] When the pandemic began and theaters went dark, we all had questions: How will theater continue? How can we make theater if we can’t gather? In 2001, Sha Cage and I produced Zell Miller III’s play *The Evidence of Silence Broken*, and we spent a day filming the production without an audience. Since then, we’ve encouraged theaters to consider using film in this way, so when Joe called, it felt
like the perfect opportunity. *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* isn’t a play or a film. It’s a play that’s a film and a film that’s a play.

Knowing there wouldn’t be a live audience, Joe and I began to imagine what the synthesis of theater and film could be. Joe said he didn’t want it to feel like “Masterpiece Theatre” with someone reading from a big book in a big chair by the fireside. That was the catalyst for me to unmoor from what I knew theatrical films to be and see what else it could become. Much of our initial work was figuring out how Charles Dickens’ prose would live in a cinematic world and maintain the genesis of theater. In the end, it became something uniquely its own. The audience will know they’re in a theatrical world, but they will experience it in a cinematic way.

**JH:** *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* begins by acknowledging the elements of theater. We see a ghost light on an empty stage. We see vacant seats. We see the fly rails. We see tables piled with props. It’s clear that the story yearns to be told onstage, but it is about to come to life on the screen.

**A NEW WAY OF WORKING**

**JH:** Filming felt like being in tech week and JeanPaul Sartre’s play *No Exit* at the same time. It’s an incredible crucible; everyone is working to make the day. Questions
flare and unanticipated challenges arise. This is where E.G.’s experience as a filmmaker came to bear. It took time to find our rhythm, which was mainly me climbing the steep learning curve of what it means to make a film and peppering E.G. with questions. Thankfully, he is a patient collaborator and teacher.

EGB: At the same time, I knew this project had to carry the DNA of theater. I wanted to make it as cinematic as possible, but I had to let go of hiding the theatricality. Unlike a film, where you shoot on location and the majority of the production design is built into the place you’ve chosen, theater is created from the stage up. The writer’s room we created for Dickens’ Holiday Classic was only a few set pieces sitting on cobblestones. The audience has to imagine the rest. That’s the theatricality.

BRIDGING GENRES

JH: Audiences have different codes for receiving film and theater. Things that are plausible in one medium seem outlandish in the other. As E.G. noted, we accept artificiality in theater. There is a willing suspension of disbelief. In film, we expect authenticity and ask questions when things feel artificial. So this filmtheater experiment will be interesting. For example, in Dickens’ Holiday Classic, we’re using artificial snow as it exists in the theater world, but we’re capturing it in the film world.
People will know the snow is fake, and I’m eager to see how that translates for our virtual audiences.

EGB: When you experience theater, it’s from a single, distant perspective. Film gives you mobility; you can see things up close and from many perspectives. As [Head of Props] Sarah Gullickson said, the stage props finally have a chance to live and be seen. The Guthrie’s A Christmas Carol audiences have never been physically inside Scrooge’s bedroom, but Dickens’ Holiday Classic will take them there, almost as if they are Scrooge themselves. Another example is when [actor] Charity Jones walks from the writer’s room to Scrooge’s bedroom. She has to physically walk through the counting house to get there, but through cinematic tricks, we never see the counting house. It’s like that classic scene in Lawrence of Arabia where he lights a match and suddenly he’s in the desert. That’s the beauty of film editing. You can traverse landscapes.

CO-DIRECTING AND MAKING MAGIC

JH: Actors belong to a community, and you grow as an actor by working with other actors. Directing is solo work. You may admire another director’s plays, but you don’t know how they got there. The ability to co-direct is to participate in space with another maker, and working with E.G. felt iterative and alchemical. You want a world where two plus two equals five, because all too often, two plus
two equals three. Although our primary mediums are
different, we’re both storytellers. We have different skill
sets, talents and ideas, but the vision is shared. This
collaboration was thrilling, and it made me a better artist.

EGB: I loved watching Joe direct our four incredible
actors with speed, clarity and grace. It was freeing
because it allowed me to focus on the visual aesthetic.
And I loved watching this project take shape. Scripts get
written and they reside inside our heads. Then, suddenly,
they’re alive. Creating and shaping stories for others to
enjoy is a magical, sacred act. Every day I’m making
theater or film is the best day.

PLAY FEATURE

Changing Tunes in Changing Times
By Margaret Leigh Inners, Former Literary Intern
“I never beheld such a rapturous audience. And they — and the stage together: which I never can resist — made me do such a vast number of new things in the Carol, that Arthur [Smith, manager of Dickens’ reading tours] and our men stood in amazement at the Wing, and roared and stamped as if it were an entirely new book, topping all the others. You must come to some good place and hear the Carol. I think you will hardly know it again.”

So wrote Charles Dickens to a friend in 1858. After five years of performing readings of his beloved tale, Dickens was surprised and delighted to learn that a receptive audience could not merely discover for itself, but also reveal to him, a freshness in his story. How astonished Dickens would be, then, to think that more than a century and a half later, his little tale, despite being for so many something they have known for so long, still finds ways to surprise and delight!

What exactly is it in Dickens’ text that has made A Christmas Carol a holiday institution perennially met by both young and old with genuine glee, not merely with a sense of obligation? After all, since its publication in 1843, it is likely that few stories have inspired more retellings, reworkings, condensations, piracies or outright bastardizations, whether for print, film, television or stage, or told through voice, instrumental music, dance or even mime.
Perhaps Carol’s narrative simplicity has allowed it a successful evolution; readers have been able again and again to delve into the text and develop rich social and personal interpretations. Working to its advantage, too, is the story’s inherent theatricality, which lends itself to adaptation for the stage and screen. The rich interpretive possibilities of the tale, then, combined with the theatrical elements that continue to attract adapters in step with the public’s changing needs and prevailing mindset, account for its enduring popularity.

**DICKENS’ DRAMATIC READINGS**

In a sense, Dickens was one of his own earliest adapters. From his first-ever public reading in 1853 to his last in 1870, Dickens chose to regularly perform various abridged versions of *A Christmas Carol*. And “perform” was certainly the operative word. According to contemporary reviews in *The Cambridge Independent Press* and *The Times* of London, Dickens “gave to every character a different voice, a different style, a different face” and displayed in his readings a “happy blending of the narrative and dramatic style, by which the author gives additional colouring to his already highly elaborate work, and astonishes the auditor by revelations of meaning that had escaped the solitary student.” The theatrical features of Dickens’ prose — his ear for dialogue, impeccable
pacing and vivid characters as well as his ability to portray their emotional journeys — could only be enhanced by Dickens’ own formidable talent as an actor and his sensitivity to audience response.

FROM STAGE PLAY TO SACRED TEXT

Long before Dickens began his public reading tours, however, others had already glimpsed the theatrical potential in his writing. Less than two months after the December 19, 1843, publication of *A Christmas Carol*, eight dramatic adaptations were being staged around England — among them productions at Sadler’s Wells Theatre and Royal Surrey Theatre. Incidentally, they were bringing the tale to a wider audience than could have afforded the elegantly illustrated book itself.

These productions evidenced the dramatically effective structure of the story: Scrooge’s troubled journey toward self-knowledge proved as compelling onstage as in print. Scrooge’s trials and subsequent redemption
certainly have religious undertones. Nonetheless, in the context of late-Victorian British society, adapters chose primarily to emphasize the Biblical references relating to the Cratchit family. As Paul Davis states in his 1990 book *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, “In Dickens’ latter-day Christmas story, the Cratchits became the Holy Family and Scrooge a 19th-century worldly wiseman making his pilgrimage to the humble house of the ‘poor man’s child.’” Accordingly, the Cratchit Christmas dinner was the high point of late Victorian theatrical productions, while in print, the figure of Mr. Cratchit with a crutch-carrying Tiny Tim hoisted upon his shoulder became an image of iconic stature.

THE DEPRESSION AND RISE OF THE “AMERICAN” CAROL

As time went by, little could prevent eager adapters from continuing to try their hand at Dickens’ tale. The emergence of motion pictures in the late 19th century prompted the first film version of the story, titled *Scrooge; or Marley’s Ghost*, which was released in 1901. Thomas Edison produced a version in 1910. Sound recordings for the gramophone were offered to the public as well.

By the 1920s, Dickens’ story had gained wide popularity in the U.S. and was developing its own uniquely American feel. In the 1930s, the years of the Great
Depression, *A Christmas Carol* offered glimmers of hope to the American public. Listening to radio adaptations of the story became a traditional holiday pastime for families and provided a sense of community. Lionel Barrymore’s annual radio performances, in particular, established him as the first truly “American” Scrooge and comforted a nation yearning for symbols of hope and fortitude.

Depression-era Hollywood film versions of the *Carol*, developing alongside their radio counterparts, delivered to their diversion-seeking audiences a distinctly American fantasy of transcending class differences and “triumphing over impersonal economic forces,” says Davis. In the egalitarian American take on Dickens’ story, Davis continues, some adapters even went as far as transforming the mere raise that the reformed Scrooge grants Cratchit in the original into a partnership in the firm. One “equal-opportunity” *Carol*, the 1938 big-budget MGM production, is a stunning, escapist spectacle which incorporates, in typical Hollywood fashion, more romance than is present in the original text and, predictably, glosses over some of the harsher social critique in Dickens’ story.

**POST-WWII PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS**

With the arrival of the prosperous 1950s, it seemed the British and American adapters, attuned to the changing sensibilities of their audiences, were willing to
engage with the darker themes present in *A Christmas Carol*, both the economic and psychological ones. As Freudian “readings” of the story became the trend and emphasized issues of repression, dream psychology and internal conflict, popular adaptations engaged with similar themes.

The 1951 British film version, featuring Alastair Sim as Scrooge, is a fine example of postwar adapters’ interest in Scrooge as a psychologically complex character. It incorporates into his visions of the past more details about Scrooge’s troubled childhood and youth, particulars which Dickens leaves to his readers’ imaginations. The movie portrays Scrooge as a scarred, vulnerable and isolated man.

**SOCIOECONOMIC RESONANCES**

In the profit-obsessed corporate culture of the 1980s, the *Carol* took on new resonance, and adapters shifted their interest again to the socioeconomic issues
embedded in the text. The two widely known adaptations are the 1984 version starring George C. Scott and Hollywood’s 1988 darkly comic Scrooged. The former is a traditional period production, but one in which, according to Fred Guida in his 2000 book A Christmas Carol and Its Adaptations, “the spectre of economics is felt as it is in no other version.” It portrays Scrooge as particularly dense to the warnings of the spirits and unyielding in clinging to his selfish economic principles.

Scrooged is a far looser adaptation, relocating the tale to modern-day America and featuring its protagonist as a workaholic executive too caught up in producing a live, televised version of A Christmas Carol to care about the concerns of his colleagues or the struggles of his longsuffering secretary. This is perhaps the most self-consciously deconstructive version of the Carol, claims Davis, for it ends with Scrooge breaking up his broadcast of the Carol story in order to admonish his live audience for watching television on Christmas Eve instead of genuinely engaging with the community. The film works best perhaps as a polemic against the various forms of media that have made A Christmas Carol into the cultural commodity that it is, arguably, today.

Edited and adapted from the Guthrie’s 2004 A Christmas Carol program.
A 2020 Coda
By Carla Steen, Dramaturg

We currently find ourselves in a world where stages are dark, businesses have shuttered and unemployment rolls have expanded. With what ears do we hear the *Carol* today? Perhaps the resonances of the Great Depression will come to the fore for some while the profit obsession of the 1980s will ring true for others. The Guthrie isn’t the only theater finding ways to share this perennial holiday gathering with patrons who can’t walk through the theater’s doors. Dozens of productions are being filmed, livestreamed, Zoomed and otherwise made digital so thousands, or perhaps millions, of viewers and listeners can partake in a telling of *A Christmas Carol* during a global pandemic.

Dickens may never have imagined these circumstances when he wrote the tale in 1843, but the words he gives to Fred certainly capture a spirit and aspiration of our current era: “I am sure 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 people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys.”
PLAY FEATURE

Meet the Native Artist Fellows

Last March, the Guthrie received an Arts Access grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board to advance our ongoing collaboration and artmaking with the local Native community. Through this grant, and in partnership with Turtle Theater Collective, we offered paid fellowships to three Native artists who played essential roles in making Dickens’ Holiday Classic. From fun facts to future goals, get to know these amazing fellows and learn why Native representation is necessary in American theater.

Ernest Briggs
White Earth Nation
Theater Management Fellow

CITY: Minneapolis, Minnesota
YOUR PERSONALITY IN THREE WORDS: Passionate, funny, laid-back
FAVORITE WORK OF THEATER: As a director, The River Becomes Sea at Nimbus Theatre; as a producer, What Would Crazy Horse Do? for Turtle Theater Collective; as an actor, Noises Off at Artistry
DAY JOB: Father, artist, coach
DREAM JOB: Working on a sitcom
ROLE MODELS: My father and mother

FAVORITE QUOTE: “Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.” – Bruce Lee

GO-TO CATCHPHRASE: “Family forever”

GRATITUDE MOMENT: Seeing the smiles and laughter of my family and friends, especially my beautiful daughter, Gwen

FUN FACT: I have seven sisters, two brothers and 16 nieces and nephews (plus one on the way)

Why did you apply for this fellowship?
For the opportunity to learn new skills and methods of running a theater administratively to make it successful.

Why is it important for Native artists to be represented both onstage and backstage at the Guthrie?
Because the Guthrie Theater is a big part of Minneapolis and Minnesota history and the history of Native people, especially Ojibwe and Dakota People. They were part of this community before the state and the Guthrie were established, and Native people are still here.

What does post-pandemic theater look like to you?
I don’t think anyone knows the answer to this question, but I believe there will still be a need for live performance because we’ve been doing that for centuries.
One thing we will take forward is how to make theater safer for actors, production crews and patrons.

**What will this experience bring to your role as Artistic Director of Turtle Theater Collective?**

A supportive community I can reach out to for advice and ideas on how to navigate the administration of a theater.

**You’ve been teaching acting courses for Native artists through the Guthrie. What have your students taught you?**

How important it is to create community, whether in person or through online meetings.

---

Katie “KJ” Johns  
Bad River Ojibwe  
Production Management Fellow

**CITY:** Minneapolis, Minnesota  
(hometown is Ishpeming, Michigan)  
**YOUR PERSONALITY IN THREE WORDS:** Curious, engaging, fun  
**HOBBIES:** Watching television, reading, singing, hand embroidery and spending time with
friends; pre-pandemic, you could always find me at a local concert or show

**FAVORITE WORK OF THEATER:** *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play* by Anne Washburn (A post-apocalyptic play surrounding the mythology of “The Simpsons”? I love it.)

**DREAM PROJECT:** I’ve been daydreaming about working on a film or theater project with Taika Waititi and Larissa FastHorse

**ROLE MODEL:** Lisa Simpson

**FAVORITE QUOTE:** I’m always quoting lines from “Bob’s Burgers” or “The Simpsons”

**GO-TO CATCHPHRASE:** “Party!” or “Cool cool cool”

**PANDEMIC STRESS RELIEVER:** Snuggling with my cats, James and Lily, while watching comfort shows like “Bob’s Burgers” and “The Simpsons” (I’m truly obsessed.)

**FUN FACT:** I bring up fun facts in conversation — I love sharing knowledge!

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**Why did you apply for this fellowship?**

I loved working with the Guthrie team on *Stories From the Drum*, so I wanted to work with them again. I’ve mainly stage managed at smaller venues, so I also wanted to gain experience working in a large professional theater and bring the work back to my community.
Share a favorite story from working on Dickens’ *Holiday Classic*.

It was fun to watch the different pieces fall together so swiftly. We filmed an entire movie in 13 days! The actors were on point — each of them brought their A-game — and the crew worked so fast to make adjustments. It was a smooth-running machine.

You’ve worked as a stage manager in the past. What led you to take on production?

Originally, this fellowship was supposed to focus on stage management for *Cabaret*, but then the pandemic hit and everything changed. But I had an incredible mentor in [Director of Production] Rebecca Cribbin. I had the opportunity to ask questions, shadow other departments and chat with everyone. Because there were so few of us on the project and in the theater, I had many personal, one-on-one conversations that might not have happened otherwise.

Why is it important for Native artists to be represented both onstage and backstage in theater?

It’s so important to tell the right stories onstage so myths can be busted and accurate truths can be represented. Native people aren’t a monolith! It’s also critical to be backstage, because people rarely see the systemic racism and discrimination embedded in the
American theater. When there’s more representation backstage, we can work to create a safe, artistic space.

Sam Aros Mitchell
Yaqui, enrolled with the Texas Band of Yaqui Indians
Directing Fellow

CITY: Minneapolis, Minnesota
YOUR PERSONALITY IN THREE WORDS: Extremely sensitive artist
FAVORITE WORK OF THEATER: Anything by Charles Mee, especially *bobbrauschenbergamerica*

DAY JOB: Ph.D. student at the University of California, San Diego, currently writing my dissertation on Native contemporary artists

DREAM JOB: To be like filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, who made *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* with his Inuit community, or be a producer/theater artist for a Native contemporary arts institute

ROLE MODEL: Sandy White Hawk (watch the documentary *Blood Memory* that features Sandy) and filmmaker Taika Waititi

FAVORITE QUOTE: “Enjoy every sandwich.” – Warren Zevon

PANDEMIC STRESS RELIEVER: Espresso, lots of it
GRATITUDE MOMENT: My partner Rosy, who keeps me safe during this pandemic by being extra cautious

FUN FACT: I’ve moved around a lot, living in southern and northern California, including Imperial Valley, Antioch, Oakley, Marsh Creek, Oakland, San Francisco and Montecito (Oprah was my neighbor!); I’ve also lived in New York City, Miami and now Minneapolis

Why did you apply for this fellowship?

Because I knew I would be moving to Minneapolis in 2020. I’d heard a lot about the Guthrie while studying dance and theater at the University of California, San Diego.

Why is it important for Native artists to be represented both onstage and backstage at the Guthrie?

Because the Guthrie is located on Dakhóta and Anishinaabeg territory. Also, the portrayal of Native people as a contemporary people is critical. Otherwise, we are labeled as “something else” or “other.” We are still here.

What does post-pandemic theater look like to you?

Post-pandemic theater will be about making theater accessible to wider, more diverse audiences. It will work to create spaces for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) artists by lifting their voices, not exotifying and commodifying their experiences. I hope to continue to
decolonize theater in the Twin Cities and do everything I can to facilitate the voices of our Native community onstage and in film.

**What did you learn about the intersection of theater and film?**

From E.G. Bailey and his partner, Sha Cage, I learned that it takes patience, communication, and both technical and interpersonal skills to produce a film like *Dickens’ Holiday Classic*. From Joseph Haj, I learned the nuances between acting for stage and acting for camera and the importance of staging the action that happens within a scene.

**What is your greatest takeaway from this experience?**

How to work through exhaustion, how to be in more generosity and how to share my love of movement with everyone!
We saw *A Christmas Carol* during its first run in 1975. After experiencing the show, I told friends that I wouldn’t be surprised if it became an annual holiday tradition. My theater friends said no regional theater would give up the house that long for a “sentimental” 19th-century story. Ha!

**By Melba Hensel**

I’ve seen the Guthrie’s *A Christmas Carol* so many times, I’ve lost count. It has always been something I love to do at the holidays, first with my own children and now with my
grandchildren. We will still make it a special evening, watching theater at home.

**By Marilyn Mahmud**

Meeting my husband on the crew while performing as an essential in 2010!

@actbright

My parents, brothers and I were all dressed up when we arrived at the Guthrie only to find out that my mom had the wrong ticket dates. My family didn’t have a lot of money, so this was a special treat, and my mom was really upset. Thankfully, the Box Office had the holiday spirit! They changed our tickets so we could attend that day’s performance.

**By Julie Joyce**

Grandma always took us and bought us Skittles.

@a_very_lost_girl

My grandmother worked at the Guthrie, and she’d take us on occasion to see *A Christmas Carol*. My sister and I have shared this vintage Guthrie mug over the years. I don’t think often about its
significance, but coming across it as I decorate for the holidays, I’m reminded of her. This year will be different, but not without memories to guide us through the season. 

@briannakocka

In high school, I took a theater class to fulfill my electives; I was not a theater person. We would study plays and go to the Guthrie to watch the production — an easy way to get out of school. *A Christmas Carol* stays with me to this day. I remember thinking, “I will bring my children to this.” 

There was a spirit that washed over me I cannot explain. 

**By Doris Salisbury**

Since I moved to Minnesota for college, I have attended *A Christmas Carol* with friends each year. During intermission, we’d compare it with other renditions (any version that focuses on the Fezziwigs is a favorite) and talk about the differences we noticed. This year, we will be in our own homes on a video call, but this story helps us remember that it is the spirit of the season, not the physical place, that brings us together.

**By Sarah Halby**

I was lucky enough to shadow the run crew during the show last year. It was incredible!

@braden_kowalski__
A Christmas Carol has served as a date night for my wife and me for 12 years! We even saw the show when we lived in Oklahoma. It’s provided many wonderful memories, and we have started bringing other couples with us to share in the joy.

By Josh Hoffman

I was 8 the first time I saw the show. It is the reason I am an actor/acting coach today.

@stagedoorunlocked

Education for Youth and Adults at the Guthrie
6 Reasons to Take a Virtual Class
1. Moving the mind and body is a proven way to cope with stress — especially during a pandemic.

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Explore our winter lineup at www.guthrietheater.org/education and register today! Scholarships are available.

Attention educators!
Bring the Guthrie — and a whole lot of on-your-feet fun — into your virtual classroom with our new theater-based workshops for grades 3–12. Email classes@guthrietheater.org to learn more.
Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly businessman, moves through the streets of London with tight fists and a closed heart. He shuns light and love offered by those around him and greets each Christmas with a scowl and a “Bah! Humbug!”

On Christmas Eve, the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, appears before him wrapped in the chains of his own greed and callousness. He warns Scrooge of the similar fate that awaits him if he doesn’t
change his ways. Before vanishing into the darkness, Marley tells Scrooge to expect visits from three more spirits on successive nights.

As promised, when the clock strikes one, the Ghost of Christmas Past appears and draws Scrooge through past memories to recall the misfortunes, joys and mistakes of his youth. Next, Scrooge is thrown into the world around him by the Ghost of Christmas Present, who shows him the happiness and community of people in his life who celebrate the holiday with gratitude no matter their wealth or poverty. Finally, Scrooge is visited by the haunting Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, who reveals his dark fate if he remains on his current path.

Scrooge awakes to discover it’s Christmas morning, and he’s fully resolved to be a new man — a better man. He greets everyone with a positive outlook, begins to make amends to those he has wronged and embraces all the happiness his second chance brings.
A SONG FOR THE SEASON

Why did Charles Dickens title his novella *A Christmas Carol*? He meant it to be a song for the holiday season. The novella was published in 1843 with five “staves” — an archaic form of the word “staff,” which means a verse or stanza of a song. He later condensed the story into four staves for his public readings, combining the visit from Christmas Yet to Come with the ending. Much like a cherished carol sung again and again, perhaps Dickens always imagined *A Christmas Carol* being an oft-told tale, hence the musical nod in the title that has now become synonymous with the holidays.

SCROOGE’S STEPS TO REDEMPTION

Sometimes even the most beloved stories offer discoveries when seen with fresh eyes. *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* is built on the text that Dickens edited for his public readings of the novella. Because a single narrative voice tells the story, many lines that get skimmed over or discarded for a stage adaptation are given full breath here.
One of the motifs that becomes clearer in hearing this version of the story is that Scrooge’s steps to redemption begin very early in his adventures.

The story’s dramatic peak is when (spoiler alert!) the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come reveals Scrooge’s neglected gravestone, which prompts Scrooge to declare that he is not the man he was and promise “to honor Christmas in [his] heart, and try to keep it all the year.” But Scrooge takes many little steps to reach this realization.

When the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to his childhood school, the heretofore implacable Scrooge weeps — three times! Seeing Fezziwig again prompts regret over how he has treated his own clerk, Bob Cratchit. When he greets the Ghost of Christmas Present, Scrooge acknowledges that Past’s lessons are working and he hopes to learn more from Present. By the time he journeys with Yet to Come, Scrooge has already determined to make changes in his life and eagerly looks for evidence of those changes in the scenes he’s shown.

Scrooge’s transformation into “as good a man as the good old city knew” isn’t a fear-of-death jolt — it’s the result of a thorough examination of his past actions, buried memories, present joys and future possibilities. It’s an exercise from which we can all take a lesson (sans ghosts, of course).
“LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!”

As many Guthrie actors, artists and crew discovered during their time working on *Dickens’ Holiday Classic*, this nearly cliche phrase is as intrinsic to filmmaking as “the call is places” is to theatermaking. Theatrical Lighting Designer Tom Mays noted early in the process that there are two different glossaries for essentially the same technology (see his examples on the next page). Under the skillful direction of E.G. Bailey and Joseph Haj, *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* emerged as a hybrid of the disciplines. Is it cinematic theater? Or theatrical film? Call it what you will because it’s brand new for the Guthrie.

In November, our McGuire Proscenium Stage became a film set that included scenic elements and costumes familiar to audiences who have seen the Guthrie’s onstage production of *A Christmas Carol* in recent years. But rather than being in a rehearsal room, where scenes are worked, reworked and strung together until a full story unfolds over a couple hours, the actors and directors worked onstage in repeated “takes” as
master shots, pickups and inserts were filmed so the story could be assembled in an editing room in the following weeks.

Bailey and Haj conceived of Scrooge’s story being told by a writer who would be embodied on screen by four actors, each performing a stave, or chapter, of Dickens’ novella. The writer’s room has the accoutrement familiar to the type: scattered papers, ink and pens, a comforting cup of tea. From this cozy locale, the audience goes with the writer on flights of fancy into their imagination, showing various places of importance as they are described. The transitions from writer’s room to writer’s imagination are when the techniques of film come most prominently into play. For these back-and-forth moments, Bailey was inspired by the award-winning film *Birdman*, directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, which features many hidden edits that create the illusion it was filmed in one take.

Theater and film may speak different languages, or at least different dialects, but under the right circumstances, they can speak together in immensely satisfying ways.
Metal stand used to position sound, lighting or other technical equipment
  Theater term: Boom
  Film term: C-stand

Head lighting technician on a project
  Theater term: Master electrician
  Film term: Gaffer

When the audience is directly addressed
  Theater term: Breaking the fourth wall
  Film term: Crossing the line

Area for monitoring what’s happening during rehearsal or filming
  Theater term: Tech tables
  Film term: Video village

Wooden boxes used to prop up or support anything onstage or on set
  Theater term: Ned or Gebby box
  Film term: Apple box
SUPPORTERS
From the Board Chair

*A Christmas Carol* is the first theatrical production I remember seeing, and my attendance as a child sparked my lifelong patronage of the arts. Like so many of you, I am eager for the day when we can safely gather in the theater again.

When Joseph Haj first mentioned the idea of producing some version of *A Christmas Carol* this year, it immediately felt like the right decision. I appreciate the resiliency of the Guthrie to reimagine and reshape its iconic tradition into a gift of holiday cheer for the community to enjoy virtually.

Among many other things, 2020 was a year of incredible change, and Charles Dickens’ theme of transformation continues to resonate, especially now. I’m deeply grateful for the many thousands of donors whose support during these past nine months has helped us sustain the Guthrie’s future and continue inviting audiences to experience the joy and wonder of theater.

With gratitude,
James L. Chosy
CHAIR, GUTHRIE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Thank you to our Guthrie Luminaries

When the Guthrie’s stages went dark this spring and hundreds of performances were canceled, more than 2,000 patrons helped us keep the lights on by donating the value of their tickets. We call them Luminaries because they provided hope when it was in short supply. We are so grateful.

See the list

A special thanks to One Guthrie donors

In recent months, the One Guthrie campaign raised critical funds to help sustain the theater, support our artists and prepare for future seasons in the face of great uncertainty. On behalf of everyone at the Guthrie, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the generous donors who contributed.

See the list
Help us spread joy to students

When you make a tax-deductible contribution to the Guthrie this holiday season, your gift will help support free access to Dickens’ *Holiday Classic* for K–12 schools, sharing the joy of theater broadly when our community needs it most.

Text GIVE2GUTHRIE to 41444 to donate today.
GOOD TO KNOW: Virtual Viewing Guide

HOW TO WATCH

Purchase a ticket.

Go to guthrietheater.org to buy your $10 ticket to Dickens’ Holiday Classic. You will need internet access and a smartphone, tablet or computer to view the show.

Test your tech.

Ensure your smartphone, tablet or computer is set up and fully charged or plugged in. You may connect your computer or mobile device directly to a TV or projector with an HDMI or VGA cable. If you have a smart TV, Apple TV, Amazon Fire Stick, Google Chromecast or Roku, screen mirroring may also be an option.

Check your email inbox.

We'll send you an email with all the details. When you’re ready to watch, just click on the access link and enter the provided password. If you purchase a ticket after December 19, the access link and password will be in your confirmation email.

Start watching.

You’ll see a few versions of Dickens’ Holiday Classic, including options with ASL interpretation, audio description and open captioning. Press play on the video of your choice, and let the magic begin.
Enjoy the show all season long.

Watch *Dickens’ Holiday Classic* as many times as you wish until 11:59 p.m. on December 31. Check out our play guide for a deeper dive into the story.

Get social.

We’d love to see how you got festive at home. Share your photos and comments on social using @GuthrieTheater and #GuthrieDickensHolidayClassic. Thank you for joining us and happy holidays!

HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTES

As you’re watching the show, know that the Guthrie’s Health and Safety Team worked tirelessly to create a safe working environment for everyone involved with filming *Dickens’ Holiday Classic*. Here are some highlights from their preparedness plan:

- At the top of each workday, the safety plan was reviewed with the cast and production teams.
- The filming schedule was designed so only one actor was in the Guthrie building at a time.
- Three zones (A, B, C) were created, and specific protocols for COVID-19 testing, face masks,
distancing, goggles and shields were applied to each zone.

- In Zone A (stage, backstage and dressing rooms), COVID-19 testing was required three times per week. Non-actors wore filtering face respirators plus safety goggles or shields.
- Only actors and production/artistic staff were allowed on set.
- The Guthrie invested in high-efficiency MERV 13 air filters, increased fresh air intake and monitored humidity levels in the building.
- Sanitizer stations were available throughout the building.
- Common areas and frequent touch points were disinfected twice a day.

_Dickens’ Holiday Classic is sponsored by Target._

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