

A CHRISTMAS CAROL AT THE OLD VIC

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark top hat and a dark coat over a brown vest and white shirt with a bow tie. He is looking down and to the side with a serious expression. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or foliage.

**TEACHING
RESOURCES**

NOV 2017–JAN 2018

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All information is correct at the time of going to press, but may be subject to change

Teaching resources
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Further details of this production
oldvictheatre.com

COMPANY

Melissa Allan

Little Fan

Theatre: *Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour* (National Theatre of Scotland/National Theatre/UK tour/West End — Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, Scotsman Fringe First Award, Herald Angel Award, The Stage Ensemble Award).

Jamie Cameron

Young Ebenezer/George

Theatre: *Once The Musical* (West End/Dublin/Seoul); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (RSC); *Carmen Disruption* (Almeida). Film: *Anna Karenina*.

John Dagleish

Bob Cratchit

Theatre: *Common* (National Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Young Vic); *The Winter's Tale/Harlequinade* (Garrick); *Sunny Afternoon* — Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Musical (Hampstead/Harold Pinter Theatre); *The Mother* (Out of Joint/Royal Court). Film: *Justice League*, *Mary Poppins Returns*, *The Monuments Men*, *Snow In Paradise*, *Age of Heroes*, *Frankie Teardrop*, *The Priest*. TV: *The Moorside: The Last Dragonslayer*, *Silent Witness*, *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, *Truckers*, *Beaver Falls*, *Starlings*, *The Hollow Crown: Henry V*, *Any Human Heart*, *Very Few Fish*, *The Bill*, *Lark Rise to Candleford*.

Erin Doherty

Belle

Theatre: *The Divide* (The Old Vic/EIF); *My Name is Rachel Corrie* (Young Vic); *Junkyard* (Headlong/Rose Theatre Kingston/Bristol Old Vic/Theatr Clwyd); *The Glass Menagerie* (Headlong); *Lights Out* (Royal Court); *Wish List* (Royal Court/Royal Exchange Manchester — Manchester Theatre Awards Best Actress in a Studio Production); *Who Cares* (The Lowry); *Pink Mist* (Bristol Old Vic). TV: *Call The Midwife*. Awards include Stephen Sondheim Student of the Year Award 2015 at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

Toby Eden

Tiny Tim

Toby lives in East Sussex with his mother and brother. He joined Alphabet Kidz talent agency in August 2016, and has done extensive commercials, videos, photographs and TV programmes. He is making his professional theatre debut.

Oliver Evans

Ferdy

Theatre: *Wicked* (West End/UK tour); *The Little Beasts* (The Other Palace); *Three Witches* (Belgrade); *Clinton, the Musical* (King's Head); *Ella and the Dragophant* (George Wood Theatre); *The Most Wonderful Time of Year* (Jermyn Street); *Vice, a Jazz Opera* (Arcola/Soho); *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Hertford Theatre); *A Little Bit of Dickens* (Hertford/Dugdale Centre). Film: *The Battle of the Somme*, *Closely Watched Trains*, *59*, *Handle With Care*.

Tim van Eyken

Nicholas

Theatre: *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (The Old Vic); *Shakespeare in Love* (West End); *The Little Match Girl* (Sadler's Wells); *Easter Rising, Thereafter* (Jermyn Street); *Birdsong* (UK tour); *The Ballad of Little Musgrave* (Aldeburgh Music); *Ballroom of Joys and Sorrows* (Watford Palace); *GOOD* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *The Long Goodbye* (Hampstead); *War Horse* (National Theatre/West End). Film: *The Imitation Game*. TV: *Foyle's War*. Awards include the Imison Award — BBC Audio Drama Awards 2014, Best Traditional Track — BBC Folk Awards 2007 and BBC Young Folk Award 1998.

Grace Fincham

Tiny Tim

Grace lives in Portsmouth and attends a drama club where her most memorable production was in the Groundlings Theatre Production of *Oliver Twist*. In her spare time Grace fundraises for the charity Debra. She is making her professional theatre debut.

Alex Gaumond

Father/Marley

Theatre: *Caroline, or Change* (Chichester); *The Taming of the Shrew* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Into the Woods* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Regent's Park); *Shakespeare's Birthday Bash* (RSC); *Sweeney Todd* (ENO); *A Christmas Carol*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Matilda The Musical*, *Top Hat*, *We Will Rock You*, *Legally Blonde*, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *Sunday In The Park With George*, *Scrooge*, *Gone*, *The Full Monty* (West End); *The Trial of Jane Fonda* (Park Theatre); *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Ljubljana Festival, Slovenia); *Guys and Dolls*, *The Full Monty*, *Miss Saigon* (UK Tour). Film: *Nasty Women*, *My Dinner With Hervé*, *Hampstead*.

Rhys Ifans

Ebenezer Scrooge

Theatre: *King Lear* (The Old Vic); *Protest Song*, *Volpone*, *Under Milk Wood* (National Theatre); *Don Juan in Soho*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Donmar); *Beautiful Thing* (West End); *Thyestes* (Royal Court); *Smoke*, *Poison Pen* (Royal Exchange Manchester). Film: *Snowden*, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *Len and Company*, *Under Milk Wood*, *Serena*, *Mr Nice*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *The Five-Year Engagement*, *Anonymous*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, *Greenberg*, *The Boat That Rocked*, *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, *Twin Town*, *Hannibal Rising*, *Human Nature*, *Notting Hill*. TV: *Not Only But Always* — BAFTA for Best Actor, *A Number*, *Trial and Retribution*, *Streetlife*, *Berlin Station*.

Siena Kelly

Jess

Theatre: *On the Town* (Regent's Park); *King Kong Workshop* (Global Creatures). TV: *Vanity Fair*.
Sienna graduated from Arts Ed in 2017.

Eugene McCoy

Fred

Theatre: *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic); *American Psycho* (Almeida); *Jersey Boys*, *Mamma Mia!* (WestEnd); *The Pajama Game* (Chichester/West End); *Guys and Dolls* (Donmar/West End); *Oklahoma!* (Chichester); *They're Playing Our Song* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *Little Shop of Horrors* (UK tour); *West Side Story* (Larnaca). Film: *Paddington 2*. TV: *Little Crackers*, *Doctors*.

Myra McFadyen

Ghost of Christmas Past

Theatre: *Mamma Mia!* (West End); *Rhinoceros* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh/DOT/EIF); *Hay Fever*, *The Choir* (Citizens); *Macbeth* (National Theatre of Scotland/Lincoln Center, New York); *I Am Thomas*, *The House of Bernarda Alba* (National Theatre of Scotland); *The Cherry Orchard* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh); *Interiors* (Vanishing Point); *A Christmas Carol* (Chichester); *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Everyman*, *The Mysteries* (RSC); *Happy Days* (Tramway/Traverse); *Tartuffe* (Royal Exchange Manchester); *Out of a House Walked a Man* (National Theatre/Complicite). Film: *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again!*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Made Of Honor*, *Rob Roy*. TV: *Dracula*, *Rose and Maloney*, *Jonathan Creek*.



Grace Fincham



Toby Eden

Maria Omakinwa

Mrs Cratchit

Theatre: *The Bodyguard*, *Avenue Q* (West End); *One Love* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre); *Show Boat* (Sheffield Crucible/West End); *Philip Pullman's Grimm Tales* (The Bargehouse); *Soul Sister* (UK Tour); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Kilworth House).

Alastair Parker

Fezziwig

Theatre: *Treasure Island*, *People*, *NT: 50 Years on Stage*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Honk!*, *The Villain's Opera* (National Theatre); *Matilda The Musical* (RSC/West End); *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (National Theatre/West End/Edinburgh Festival/BAC); *Oliver!* (West End); *Bed & Sofa* (Finborough); *BBC Proms — Sondheim at 80* (Royal Albert Hall); *The Glee Club* (New Vic); *Two Women for One Ghost*, *Cymbeline*, *Twelfth Night*, *HMS Pinafore* (Regent's Park); *Jonah Boy* (Stephen Joseph); *Is There Life After High School* (Bridewell); *Oklahoma* (Perth Theatre).
Film: *The Hitman & Her*, *London Road*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hell for Leather*. TV: *Doctor Who*, *Synchronicity*, *White Teeth*, *The Vice*, *Spooks*.

Ethan Quinn

Tiny Tim

Ethan attends the British Theatre Academy.
Theatre: *13 The Musical*, *Ragtime*, *The Secret Garden* (West End); *Bugsy Malone* (Hampton Hill); *The Wizard of Oz* (Electric Theatre, Guildford); *Aladdin* (Kenton Theatre, Henley).

Golda Rosheuvel

Ghost of Christmas Present/ Mrs Fezziwig

Theatre: *Electra*, *Carmen Jones* (The Old Vic); *The Frontline*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *We Will Rock You*, *Tommy* (West End); *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Marat/Sade* (RSC); *Wonder.land*, *The Pacifist's Guide to The War on Cancer* (National Theatre); *Realism*, *Mongrel Island*, *Pure Gold* (Soho); *Porgy and Bess*, *Macbeth* (Regent's Park).
Film: *Lady Macbeth*. TV: *Luther*, *Silent Witness*, *Dead Boss*, *Rev*, *I Live With Models*, *Mr Stink*, *Holby City*, *Damned*, *Trial and Retribution*.

Lenny Rush

Tiny Tim

Lenny attends The Pauline Quirke Academy (Wickford).
Theatre: *The Lazy Ace* (Her Majesty's Theatre).
TV: *Apple Tree House*, *Our Family* (CBeebies).
He is making his professional theatre debut.



Ethan Quinn and Lenny Rush

CREATIVE TEAM

Jack Thorne

Adapter

Theatre: *Woyzeck* (The Old Vic); *Junkyard* (Headlong/Rose Theatre Kingston/Bristol Old Vic/Theatr Clwyd); *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (Sonia Freedman Productions/Harry Potter West End Theatrical); *The Solid Life of Sugarwater* (Graeae/National Theatre); *Hope* (Royal Court); *Let the Right One In* (West End/Dundee Rep/Royal Court); *Bunny* (Nabokov/UK tour); *Stacy* (Tron/Arcola/Trafalgar Studios). Film: *War Book*, *A Long Way Down* and *The Scouting Book for Boys*. Television: *Electric Dreams*, *National Treasure*, *The Last Panthers*, *Don't Take My Baby*, *This Is England*, *The Fades*, *Glue*, *Cast-Offs*. Jack's work for television has won him five BAFTAs and an RTS Television Award.

Matthew Warchus

Director

Theatre: *'Art'*, *The Caretaker*, *The Master Builder*, *Future Conditional*, *Speed-the-Plow* (The Old Vic); *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/Broadway); *Matilda The Musical* (RSC/West End/Broadway/International Tour); *Ghost The Musical*, *La Bête* (West End/Broadway); *Deathtrap* (West End); *The Norman Conquests* (The Old Vic/Broadway); *God of Carnage* (West End/Broadway); *Boeing-Boeing* (West End/Broadway/UK tour); *The Lord of the Rings* (also co-writer, Toronto/West End); *Buried Child* (National Theatre); *Endgame* (West End); *Our House* (West End); *Follies* (Broadway); *Life x 3* (National Theatre/The Old Vic/Broadway); *True West* (Donmar/Broadway); *The Unexpected Man* (RSC/West End/Broadway); *'Art'* (Broadway/West End/Los Angeles); *Hamlet*, *Henry V* (RSC); *Volpone* (National Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing* (West End); *Betrayal*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Plough and the Stars*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Opera: *Falstaff*, *Così Fan Tutte* (ENO); *The Rake's Progress* (ROH/WNO). Film: *Pride* (BIFA Best British Independent Film and Golden Globe Award nomination for Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy), *Simpatico*. Matthew was an Associate Director at the West Yorkshire Playhouse and Artistic Associate at The Old Vic before being appointed Artistic Director of the theatre in 2014.

Rob Howell

Set and Costume Designer

Theatre: Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*, *The Caretaker*, *The Master Builder*, *Future Conditional*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Speed-the-Plow*, *Complicit* (The Old Vic); *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/Broadway — two Olivier Awards); *The Norman Conquests* (The Old Vic/Broadway). Rob has also worked at the National Theatre, RSC, Royal Court, Almeida, Donmar, Young Vic, Bristol Old Vic, Chichester, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Manchester Royal Exchange, Royal Opera House, Metropolitan Opera and on Broadway. He's won three Olivier Awards for Set Design, including for *Matilda The Musical*, for which he also won a Tony Award.

Christopher Nightingale

Composer and Arranger

Theatre as Composer: *The Divide* (The Old Vic/EIF); *Future Conditional* (The Old Vic). As Orchestrator, Additional Music and Musical Supervisor: *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/Broadway — two Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical); *Matilda The Musical* (RSC/West End/Broadway/International Tour — seven Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical, and four Tony Awards). As Musical Supervisor, Arranger and Orchestrator: *Ghost The Musical* (West End/international tour). As Musical Supervisor and Orchestrator: *Bombay Dreams* (West End). As Co-Composer and Orchestrator: *The Lord of the Rings*. As Arrangements and Musical Director: *Closer to Heaven*. As Musical Director: *Whistle Down the Wind*, *Oliver!*. Film as Composer: *Pride*. As Conductor/Vocal Coach: *Evita*.

Hugh Vanstone

Lighting

Hugh has designed the lighting for over 200 productions and worked for most of the UK's national companies and extensively on Broadway. He has received many awards for his work including three Olivier Awards, a Tony and a Molière. Theatre: *'Art'*, *No's Knife*, *Groundhog Day*, *The Caretaker*, *The Master Builder*, *Future Conditional* (The Old Vic); *The Birthday Party*, *Venus in Fur*, *Dreamgirls*, *Matilda The Musical* (West End); *Welcome Home*, *Captain Fox!*, *Closer* (Donmar); *The Red Lion* (National Theatre); *An Act of God* (New York/tour); *Don Quixote* (Royal Ballet); *Tanz Der Vampire* (European tour); *Shrek the Musical* (UK tour).

Simon Baker

Sound

Theatre: *Girl from the North Country*, *The Caretaker*, *The Master Builder*, *Future Conditional*, *High Society*, *Electra*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Real Thing* (The Old Vic); *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/Broadway); *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Shakespeare in Love*, *Mojo* (West End); *Matilda The Musical* (RSC/West End/Broadway/International Tour — Olivier Award for Best Sound); *The Light Princess*, *Amen Corner* (National Theatre); *The Roaring Girl* (RSC); *The Grinning Man* (Bristol Old Vic); *Tristan & Yseult*, *Brief Encounter*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Wild Bride*, *Don John*, *Steptoe & Son*, *946*, *Rebecca*, *The Flying Lovers* (Kneehigh).

Jessica Ronane CDG

Casting Director

Theatre: *Girl from the North Country*, *Woyzeck*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *King Lear*, *The Caretaker*, *The Master Builder*, Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*, *The Hairy Ape*, *Future Conditional* (The Old Vic); *Running Wild* (Regent's Park); *Angus Thongs and Even More Snogging* (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Theatre (children casting): *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Sound of Music* (Regent's Park); *School of Rock*, *The Audience*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Made in Dagenham*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Billy Elliot the Musical* (West End); *Matilda The Musical* (RSC/West End); *Bugsy Malone* (Lyric Hammersmith); *Caroline, or Change*, *Baby Girl*, *Mrs Affleck* (National Theatre); *A Member of the Wedding* (Young Vic).

Lizzi Gee

Movement

Theatre: *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (The Old Vic); *The Girls*, *Love Story*, *Onassis*, *Daddy Cool*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *The Miser* (West End); *Million Dollar Quartet* (West End/UK tour); *Goodnight Mr Tom* (West End/Chichester); *Iolanthe* (ENO); *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *Running Wild* (Chichester); *The Jungle Book* (Royal & Derngate); *National Theatre 2017 Gala*, *A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer*, *Rocket to the Moon* (National Theatre); *The Winter's Tale* (RSC); *Vernon God Little* (Young Vic). Film: *Pride*. TV: *The Fit Farm*, *The Big Performance*, *Diddy Movies*, *The Legend of Dick and Dom*.

Will Stuart

Musical Director/Piano

Theatre as Musical Supervisor: *From Here to Eternity* (USA). As Orchestrator or Arranger: *Committee* (Donmar); *From Here to Eternity* (USA); *The West End Men* (West End); *King Pit* (Sage); *Carnival* (Bridewell). As Composer: *At First Sight* (UK Tour); *The Rise & Fall of Little Voice* (Associate, West Yorkshire Playhouse/ Birmingham Repertory Theatre); *The Royal Hunt of the*

Sun (Oxford Playhouse). As Musical Director: *The Divide* (The Old Vic/EIF); *The West End Men* (West End); *King Pit* (Sage); *Carnival* (Bridewell). As Associate or Assistant Musical Director: *Kinky Boots*, *Made in Dagenham*, *Sinatra*, *From Here to Eternity* (West End); *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory).

Charlie Hughes- D'Aeth

Voice Coach

Theatre: *Girl from the North Country*, *Woyzeck*, 'Art', *Groundhog Day*, *The Caretaker*, *The Master Builder*, *Future Conditional* (The Old Vic); *The Divide* (The Old Vic/EIF); *Matilda The Musical* (RSC); *The Gods Weep* (RSC/Hampstead); *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (RSC/Shakespeare in a Suitcase tour); *Adrian Mole the Musical* (Leicester Curve); *Jerusalem* (Northcott Exeter). Charlie is Consultant Text and Voice Coach for the RSC's *Matilda The Musical* (Resident 2010–14) and was Resident Voice Coach for *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in the West End 2013–17.

Jamie Manton

Associate Director

As Director: *The Day After* (ENO); *No Quarter*, *A Single Act*, *The Norman Conquests*, *Punk Rock* (Duelling Productions); *Home* (Arcola); *Radicchio* (RWR: Theatre503); *Our Lords and Masters*, *August: Osage County* (Exeter Northcott). As Assistant Director: *King Lear* (The Old Vic); *Aida*, *Carousel*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, *Xerxes*, *Between Worlds* (ENO). Jamie is the Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Duelling Productions.

Ben Davies

Associate Set Designer

Theatre as Associate Designer: Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*, 'Art', *Electra* (The Old Vic); *Beautiful The Carole King Musical*, *The Ferryman* (West End); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (West End/Broadway); *The Red Lion*, *Three Days in the Country*, *King Lear* (National Theatre). Theatre as Assistant Designer: *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/Broadway — two Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical); *Sweeney Todd*, *Oliver!*, *The Audience*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Hamlet*, *Betty Blue Eyes*, *The Children's Hour*, *Shrek The Musical* (West End); *Gypsy* (Chichester/West End); *God of Carnage* (West End/Broadway); *Bombay Dreams* (Broadway); *An American in Paris* (Broadway/Paris); *The Trojans* (Metropolitan Opera New York).

Irene Bohan

Associate Costume Designer

Theatre: Dr Seuss's *The Lorax*, *The Caretaker*, *Future Conditional*, *Inherit the Wind*, *The Norman Conquests* (The Old Vic); *Follies*, *Common*,

The Threepenny Opera, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Wind in the Willows (National Theatre); *The Graduate, Skylight, The Audience, The Phantom of the Opera, The Wizard of Oz, Sunset Boulevard, Priscilla Queen of the Desert, Bombay Dreams, The Lord of the Rings, Our House* (West End). Opera & Dance: *Carmen, Die Fledermaus, Werther, The Marriage of Figaro, Manon* (Metropolitan Opera New York); *Early Adventures, Edward Scissorhands, Dorian Gray* (Matthew Bourne). Film: *The Madness of King George*.

Jay Jones
Associate Sound

As Associate Sound Designer: *Girl from the North Country, Future Conditional* (The Old Vic); *Tristan & Yseult, 946, Dead Dog in a Suitcase (and other love songs)* (Kneehigh); *Boudica, Romantics Anonymous* (Shakespeare's Globe). As Sound No.1: *High Society* (The Old Vic); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Shakespeare in Love* (West End); *Brief Encounter* (USA/Australian Tour); *The Wild Bride* (Kneehigh/ Berkeley Rep/St Ann's Warehouse NYC). As Sound Designer: *Plastic* (Ustinov Studio); *Long Story Short* (Charing Cross Theatre).

Campbell Young Associates
Hair, Wigs & Make-up

Theatre: Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax, Girl from the North Country, The Master Builder, High Society, Electra,*

Clarence Darrow, Sweet Bird of Youth (The Old Vic); *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic/Broadway); *Funny Girl, Bend It Like Beckham, Made in Dagenham, Gypsy* (West End); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, American Psycho, The Cripple of Inishmaan, Matilda The Musical* (West End/Broadway); *Saint Joan, One Night in Miami* (Donmar); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Donmar/Broadway); *Hello Dolly, The Front Page, The Crucible* (Broadway); *Don Carlos, L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Bolshoi Opera); *Anna Nicole The Opera* (BAM); *Elektra* (Aix-en-Provence Festival). TV (featured wigs): *The Americans, House of Cards, Smash, Orange is the New Black*.

David Gallagher
Musicians' Contractor

Theatre as Orchestral Manager: *The Divide* (The Old Vic/ EIF); *Groundhog Day, Cinderella* (The Old Vic); *Matilda The Musical, 42nd Street, Queen Anne, From Here to Eternity* (West End); *Jackie the Musical, Bernadette Peters, Crush, Play Without Words* (UK tours); *Wolf Hall* recordings (Broadway); National Symphony Orchestra projects. Theatre as Musicians' Contractor: Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax, Girl from the North Country, Future Conditional, Richard III, The Tempest, As You Like It, The Cherry Orchard, The Winter's Tale* (The Old Vic); amfAR Gala (Cannes Film Festival). Film: *Robin Hood*. David was Music Manager at the RSC 2010–2011, and National Theatre, 2000–2010.



Alastair Parke



Rhys Ifans and Alex Gaumont

CHARACTERS

Ebenezer Scrooge

A mean spirited man who now runs Scrooge & Marley alone since the death of his business partner Jacob Marley.

Little Fan

Ebenezer's sister who collects him from boarding school and takes him home.

Young Ebenezer

The younger self of Ebenezer, shown to him by the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Bob Cratchit

A hardworking but very poor family man, who works for Scrooge.

Mrs Cratchit

Wife to Bob and mother of Tiny Tim.

Tiny Tim

The sickly son of Bob and Mrs Cratchit.

Mr Fezziwig

Scrooge's first employer. In this production he is an undertaker.

Belle

Scrooge's fiancé, and in this production, Fezziwig's daughter. Despite their engagement, Scrooge's obsession with money causes the relationship to break up.



Rhys Ifans



Tim van Eyken and Siena Kelly

Mrs Fezziwig

Wife of Mr Fezziwig.

Father

Ebenezer's father, who shows him very little paternal love. He calls Ebenezer home from boarding school in order to start his first apprenticeship.

Jacob Marley

Scrooge's late business partner, who has been dead for seven years at the beginning of the story. His ghost visits Scrooge on Christmas Eve to warn Scrooge of his need for change, and to explain the impending visits of the three spirits.

Fred

Scrooge's nephew, born to Ebenezer's late sister, Little Fan, who dies in childbirth.

Ghost of Christmas Past

The first of the three spirits to visit Scrooge.

Ghost of Christmas Present

The second of the three spirits to visit Scrooge.

Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

The third and final spirit, in this production in the guise of Scrooge's sister, Little Fan.

Nicholas

Husband of Belle, as shown to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Past.



Tim van Eyken



Siena Kelly

SYNOPSIS

Act One

It is Christmas Eve and Ebenezer Scrooge is in his counting house. Despite the excitement of Christmas Eve, Scrooge refuses to join in and instead slams the door on carol singers and people collecting for charity. Scrooge questions whether the poor houses and prisons are still in operation, as he thinks the poor should go there, rather than depending on other people's charity. Scrooge is visited by his nephew, Fred, who also encourages Scrooge to join in with the Christmas spirit but he refuses once more. After issuing lengthy instructions and errands, Scrooge finally allows his employee Bob Cratchit to go home for Christmas, but not before Scrooge has complained about Bob wishing to have the entire Christmas Day off. His parting words are a reminder not to be late back to work on Boxing Day.

The ghost of Jacob Marley, his business partner who has been dead for seven years, visits Scrooge. Marley's ghost tells Scrooge that unless he changes his ways, he too will live out his life unhappy and alone. Marley explains that Scrooge will be visited by three spirits, and encourages him to heed the warnings that they will give. Scrooge does not believe him and retires to bed.

The first spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Past, arrives at the stroke of one. She takes Scrooge back to his own past, which he recognises by the young boys playing in the street, and then the vision of himself as a young boy, alone and left at boarding school over Christmas. The boy plays with a set of toys inspired by *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *The Tales of the Arabian Nights*. In particular, he plays with a parrot, relying on his imagination to escape his loneliness. Little Fan, Ebenezer's beloved sister, arrives to take him home but once at home it is clear that he is a disappointment to his father. In order to assist with the family's financial debt, Ebenezer is to enter into employment immediately.

Scrooge finds an entirely different world in that of Mr Fezziwig, whose own attitude to life is jovial and highly charitable. Christmas with the Fezziwigs is loud, cheerful, and full of laughter, music and dancing. Before meeting him, Scrooge encounters Fezziwig's daughter, Belle, who coaches him on the way in which to reply to a conundrum. If faced with two families who have recently been bereaved, one by the death of an elderly relative, the other by the loss of a young child, who should he help first? Scrooge's initial answer is those with the most money



Alex Gaumont and Rhys Ifans

but the Fezziwigs allow him to see that there is a more kind and benevolent approach: he should prioritise the family of the small child with whom they will never share a long life, compared to the family of the elderly relative.

Scrooge falls in love with Belle, but in his quest to gain financial riches, allows himself to be distracted and they grow apart. The audience sees the life that Scrooge could have been part of, potentially even taking over the family business later on.

Scrooge returns home to his family with gifts such as ribbon and fabric. His mother is very ill, and his father rejects the gifts insisting that money would have been better. Little Fan is delighted to see her brother and has made him a scarf which he promises to wear forever.

After seeing these visions of the past, Scrooge explains to the Ghost of Christmas Past that his family experience of debt had driven him to seek riches but does not seem to take responsibility for losing Belle who eventually married another man. The Ghost of Christmas Past leaves Scrooge, and he is suddenly back in his own bed.

The Ghost of Christmas Present arrives and immediately shows him a life of misery and poverty. As a debt collector, Scrooge is responsible for some of this misery but he insists that he is simply playing his own role in society. The Ghost of Christmas Present takes Scrooge to the home of his lowly employee Bob Cratchit whose family, despite being extremely poor (as a result of the inadequate wage paid to him by Scrooge), live a life of happiness and contentment because of the love that family have for one other.

It is clear that Tiny Tim is very unwell, and he is carried by Bob at times. Upon arriving home, they play a game of hide and seek with other children in the family until Mrs Cratchit enters with the Christmas goose. It is small and will not satisfy the hunger of the family but they remain happy and grateful for what they do have. Bob toasts Scrooge as his employer, wishing him well, although Mrs Cratchit is not as enthusiastic about those well wishes.

Scrooge is then taken to the home of his nephew Fred, whose mother was Little Fan. Fred is playing a parlour game with his guests, describing an unattractive being who roams London and which can be savage and cruel. He is talking about Scrooge, much to the amusement of his guests. Scrooge is scornful and angry with the ghost, but also hears Fred admit that despite his idiosyncrasies and lack of empathy he loves him, and misses him at Christmas.

The next vision shown by the Ghost of Christmas Present is that of Belle, with her husband Nicholas. Nicholas reminds her that Fezziwig owed a financial debt to Scrooge and died as a result of the strain. Again, Scrooge refuses to take responsibility for doing anything other than his job and is reluctant to admit how much pain the loss of Belle has really caused him.

Suddenly, Bob and Mrs Cratchit reappear with Tiny Tim who is gravely ill. Despite not having the necessary money, they call for a doctor but it is too late. Act One ends with Scrooge still resisting change despite the pain and unhappiness that he has been exposed to that night, and still insisting that he is a 'great man'.

Act Two

Shaken by his previous two visitors, Scrooge is then visited by a third spirit – in this production that of his late sister, Little Fan. She shows him his own funeral, and explains that the material riches that he leaves behind will only rot or be stolen by thieves. Little Fan shows him a future in which he has been unnecessarily cruel and petty, even sacking Bob Cratchit for poor time keeping following Tiny Tim's death. Despite this, Bob is seen mourning over Scrooge's coffin, mentioning only kind and positive thoughts about his former employer. Fred, too, speaks of his uncle fondly even though Scrooge has changed the locks to his home and offices and they have not spoken for several years. Scrooge admits that he was suspicious of Fred's attempts to move Scrooge into his home with him in order to look after him: he thinks it is simply an attempt to take all of his money. In order to protect Scrooge from even more pain, Little Fan refuses to show him the funeral of Tiny Tim but she reminds him of the possibility and rewards of love and kindness. Scrooge is able to see that there were so many possibilities for the person he was to become and Little Fan takes leave of him as he experiences his enlightenment.

When Scrooge awakes, once again in his own bed, he has undergone a moral transformation. He enthusiastically gives money to charity collectors who are amazed at his generosity and change in attitude. He makes a visit to Belle, who confirms that the man whom Scrooge has become is not the man with whom she fell in love. She is happy that Scrooge is part of her story, but is also content with the family she has raised and the good life that she has lived. She wishes him happiness.

Moved by the possibilities that have been opened up to him, Scrooge runs to his nephew's house and finally accepts the invitation to share Christmas with him. However, he asks that the Christmas feast become a moveable one because he wishes to share it with the Cratchit family who welcome him wholeheartedly.

Suddenly Scrooge finds himself alone, unsure whether what he has just experienced is real or even possible. The ghost of Jacob Marley reappears and reminds him that although the path to redemption is not always easy, Scrooge has the capacity to ensure he achieves it. The three spirits also reappear, telling Scrooge honestly that he did not deserve the happiness he has just experienced but that he can make amends. Scrooge ensures that he does.



Melissa Allan and Rhys Ifans

THEMES

Scrooge's journey is one of enlightenment, addressing a host of new ideas and issues such as:

Light and enlightenment

The spirits who visit Scrooge are able to shed light on various aspects of his life, and use them to encourage him on his journey to enlightenment.

The journey of life

From the cradle to the grave.

Finding the good in life, despite its hardships

Scrooge has experienced the loss of several loved ones, which goes some way to explaining his refusal to engage with others. However, characters such as Belle allow him to see that beyond that loss also exists hope.

Christmas as a time for family

Scrooge is the only person in the story who seems to be spending Christmas alone, out of choice.

Social responsibility

At a time of year when the poor feel their poverty even more keenly, it is those people who have more who should share with those less fortunate than themselves.

Rich vs. Poor

From the unfair treatment experienced by the poor, to the ability to be happy without money, Scrooge is shown that his attitude to money and to the poor is unjust. Instead, it is his intervention which ensures that Tiny Tim is able to survive and thrive.

Generosity

Fezziwig's generous parties and Bob playing simple games with his family are examples of happiness found in places other than wealth.

The importance of forgiveness

Belle tells Scrooge that although he has caused her great pain, she sees him as an important part of her life. She does not resent or regret her relationship with him.

Man's capacity to change and reform

From the most miserly to the most generous of men.

TIMELINE

Dickens, Christmas and the Theatre

1812

Charles John Huffam Dickens is born in Portsmouth.

1820s

Christmas traditions begin to be revived in England, a spirit of nostalgia and an attempt to protect the tradition from the modernisation brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the urbanisation that it caused. This continues throughout Queen Victoria's reign as the Royal Family inspires the celebration of Christmas in old and new ways.

1824

The young Dickens is employed in a blacking factory, and for three months his father and family live in Marshalsea Debtors' Prison. This experience remains with Dickens throughout his life, and its influence can be seen frequently in his novels and short stories.

1832

Dickens misses an audition at Covent Garden due to illness. He becomes a parliamentary reporter instead. His first short story is published a year later.

1834

The Poor Law Amendment Act makes it more difficult for the poorest members of society to gain help. Those in need are now forced to go to workhouses where conditions are so bad that many see them as a final resort and are reluctant to seek help.

1836

The 'Good Humoured Christmas Chapter' of the serialised *The Pickwick Papers* is published at the end of 1836, beginning the ongoing connection between Dickens and the presentation of Christmas.

1841

The decorated Christmas tree is introduced in Britain by Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria.

1843

Dickens is appalled to read a Parliamentary Report about the working conditions endured by women and children. He addresses an audience at Manchester's Athenaeum on 5th October, and the seed is sown for a story that highlights the plight of the poor.

A Christmas Carol is published in December — the first of many of his Christmas stories. It is immediately a huge success, selling 5000 copies by Christmas Eve and being reprinted a number of times. It has never been out of print since its first publication.

1844

The Chimes is this year's Christmas story.

The 1844 Factories Act imposes a limit of 9 hours per day for children between 9 and 13 years old, for a maximum of 6 days a week.

1845

The Cricket on the Hearth is published at Christmas.

1850

Household Words begins publication, and continues as a weekly journal until 1859. It is in this journal that many of Dickens' Christmas stories and articles are first published.

1848

The Haunted Man is published at Christmas. This year, Dickens has also organised and performed in charity performances of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Everyman in His Humour*.

1851

Dickens performs in front of Queen Victoria and other audiences at the Guild of Literature and Art.

1853

Dickens gives the first charity readings of *A Christmas Carol*.

1858

Dickens gives his first readings from which he will profit financially. The readings begin in London, and Dickens then tours to provincial venues. Readings continue in various tours between 1861 and 1863.

A Christmas Carol is always a popular inclusion. Dickens edited his performance version so that it could be 'read' in 90 minutes.

Between April and November, Dickens gives 104 readings, 87 of which are in the provinces.

1859

Dickens' weekly journal *All The Year Round* (replacing *Household Words*) is first published and continues to publish Christmas stories.

1863

Mrs Lirriper's *Lodgings* is published in the Christmas edition of *All The Year Round*. Some believe that the characterisation of Mrs Lirriper is based on Dickens' own mother, who passed away during this year.

1866

Mugby Junction is published as a Christmas story in *All The Year Round*.

1870

Following increasing ill health Dickens suffers a stroke, and dies on 9th June. Dickens is buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, London.

1934

The previously unpublished Dickens book *The Life of Our Lord*, which he wrote solely for the use of his own children, is published for the first time and includes a description of the Nativity.

1988

Patrick Stewart's one man show of *A Christmas Carol* plays in London and, later, on Broadway.

1993

Charles Dickens' own great-great-grandson Gerald Charles Dickens performs a one man show, playing 26 characters in *A Christmas Carol*.

1994

Alan Menken and Lynn Ahrens write *A Christmas Carol — The Musical* which is performed annually in the USA until 2003 with high profile actors in the role of Scrooge.

2008

Bryony Lavery adapts the novella for Chichester Youth Theatre which they perform in 2008 and 2015. Birmingham Repertory Theatre also perform the adaptation in 2009 and 2013.

2011

National Theatre of Scotland perform *A Christmas Carol* which is adapted, directed and designed by Graham McLaren.

Simon Callow performs his one man show of *A Christmas Carol* based on Dickens' own performance text. This show is revived in 2012, 2016 and 2017.

2014

An opera version, with libretto by Simon Callow, is performed by Houston Grand Opera, USA.

2015

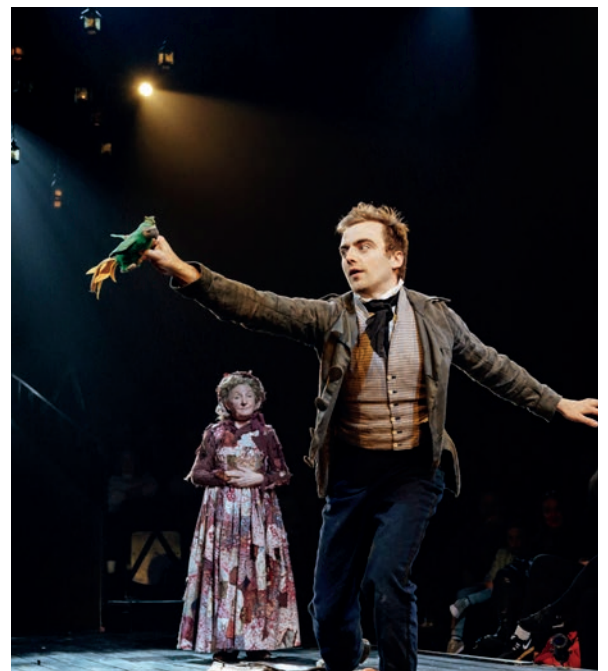
Jim Broadbent performs the lead role in Phelim McDermott's London production.

2017

New adaptations are performed at The Old Vic (adapted by Jack Thorne) and by the Royal Shakespeare Company (adapted by David Edgar).



Siena Kelly, Oliver Evans, Rhys Ifans and Eugene McCoy



Myra McFadyen and Jamie Cameron

INTERVIEW

With Matthew Warchus, Director of *A Christmas Carol*, and Artistic Director of The Old Vic

***A Christmas Carol* is currently seeing even more exposure in schools because it's on the GCSE English Literature syllabus. As a director, however, what are the opportunities and challenges in directing such a well-known and well-loved story?**

When you're directing anything — especially famous plays, Shakespeare for example — the assumption you have to make is that the story is being told for the first time. Fortunately, there will always be people in any audience who don't know the story and don't know what's going to happen. In order that the story is told in a fresh and honest way, you have to aim for those people and, also, you have to treat people who have seen the story or the play before, as though they are hearing it for the first time.

When you do that, when you treat the story not as if it's a famous story but as though it's a new story, you discover things as you're working on it, that some of the assumptions you'd made aren't necessarily true or that there are details in it that you'd overlooked previously. I think what helps that approach is that the actors are usually playing the part for the first time, certainly in this script or this production for the first time. There's a newness about their experience and what they can bring to it which helps the whole thing feel fresh.

Personally, when it comes to *A Christmas Carol*, I've never seen it onstage before so I haven't got anything in my head that I'm trying to avoid copying. My brief to Jack Thorne when he was writing an adaptation was don't strain to be different or original, just write the story in the way you want to write it and we will try to make a production staging which feels different. What we've ended up with is a script that doesn't make a big effort; to put distance between itself and the Dickens novella; it has got some new ideas and scenes in it, but by and large it's very close to the original. But we are staging it in a very unusual way and once I hit upon the idea to stage the production in this unusual way it took a lot of pressure off from needing to feel fresh in other respects. It's all about providing surprises. All stories need surprises to keep the audience interested.

Without spoiling the surprises, what has been the biggest challenge so far in directing the show?

The shape of the stage is very, very unusual. Essentially, it's one long catwalk that runs from the back of the auditorium to the back of the stage. The audience seats

have been moved to sit around that catwalk. It has a crosspiece as well, which is not used as much, but in effect the story plays out on a cross, or if you like a crossroads that reflects the crossroads in the central character's life. This means all the skills I've built up over 30 years of directing of how to use a stage are just of no use whatsoever, because there aren't any stages shaped like this. So I've been trying to work out how to throw out the rulebook and make scenes work in a unique setting like this. That's been a challenge for me.

The other thing is that I had an idea very early on that I wanted hand bell ringing in the show and I didn't know how much the actors would be able to learn in the time we had, or whether they would be able to learn it at all. So, for them, probably one of the biggest challenges is trying to learn all the hand bell music Christopher Nightingale and I threw at them, because they were all starting from scratch. But the better they did the more we gave them to do.

Music is vitally important in this production. Can you expand on how you have used music in the production, and how it has helped you achieve mood/atmosphere/a sense of community?

When I was talking to Jack Thorne about writing an adaptation, we decided that we wanted live music and singing, and landed on the idea of Christmas carols as the music throughout the show so he wrote those into the script. We changed them a little bit in the course of rehearsals but they are at the heart of the script, the idea of carols being sung in and around the story is at the heart of this adaptation. Christopher Nightingale has taken the carols and woven an entire score out of them. And we are using some traditional live instruments — penny whistle, accordion — to give the music a period authenticity. We tried to use carols which weren't anachronistic in 1843 when *A Christmas Carol* was written; we may have slightly fudged it but that was the idea.

When directing the play, what research and/or sources have you found particularly useful?

There's a good book called *Victorian London — The Life of a City 1840–1870* but the thing is, because it's a very simple production played on an empty stage, we don't really create the world in any detail. 90% of the story happens in the supernatural realm and the words in the script create the world in our imagination - we don't really show the world onstage that much. It didn't turn out to

require any social realism or anything like that. However, I did ask our Sound Designer, Simon Baker to make me a selection of Victorian sounds — steam engines, horses' hooves, cats, dogs, church bells of London — and the soundscape of the show is built from these.

What was your approach before Day 1 of the rehearsal period? How did you prepare to direct this show in particular? Are there specific things you always do before you start work on a new production?

What I always do is I spend plenty of time with the model of the set and photographs of the model, which in this case was a model of the auditorium and the performance space within the auditorium as opposed to any scenery. I work through the key moments of the story and how we're going to present them — the moments of impact for the audience, visual and emotional impact — and how we might tackle those moments using actors in a space, using lighting sometimes, using music and sound. I have lots of conversations with the Designer, Composer and Lighting Designer about ways of creating story and impact. Interestingly, in terms of the script, Jack Thorne asked me if he should write anything to do with the design into the script. I said what I'd normally say to a writer which is, 'no, write whatever's in your mind's eye' and as a result the script had a lot in it which in no way related to the production we're doing. An example is the script had a lot of descriptions of magical appearances and disappearances of ghosts which is not something I was ever going to be able to achieve in this production because of the audience surrounding the stage: it's a much more simple and stripped down production. So a good deal of my preparation time was taken up reading

the script and re-imagining the staging descriptions in this article which were impossible in our production, re-imagining them for our version, so if you like, writing a modified script in my head with stage directions which apply to this particular piece.

What I try to do in preparation is to first get to know the story very well and then create emptiness in my head, not an easy thing to do as an artistic director, but try to create a period of sustained emptiness for a few days so it's just you and the story - the story in its script form and the story in the dream-like form that's in your head — and you try and create enough emptiness so, slowly, ideas, moments, details, impressions start to just arrive and that's where you get a vision for a production. And you do a little bit of that beforehand and then you try and carry on that approach into a rehearsal room when you're surrounded by actors and you make space in your mind, in your imagination, for a production to start to turn up. That way you open the door to more surprises. And also you get to 'hear' the 'inner voice' of the story. You sense the core concerns of the story.



Erin Doherty

DIRECTING A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Jamie Manton: Associate Director

Working on *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, in a new version by Jack Thorne, has been a truly wonderful journey. With such a well renowned and celebrated story, how can one bring something new to it and all the while be faithful to Dickens' words? In our production, Matthew has achieved this by identifying the core themes and building a production around those. *A Christmas Carol* is ultimately about a blind man's journey to enlightenment and therefore this has made 'light' a key theme of the piece. Matthew and his designer Rob Howell have incorporated a sky that is flooded with Victorian lanterns.

Each ghost carries a lantern of differing sizes to light the path for Scrooge and every narrator also carries a lantern with them in order to light the subject in their narration. The other core theme that has been a big influence on the production is 'life; from cradle to grave' and this is depicted in the pram-like structures brought on by each of the ghosts. The third core theme is Scrooge's separation from life. He is trapped in his own dark world and the journey he takes is towards being set free. Identifying and building a production around these core themes has allowed us to discover a new world in which to play and ultimately avoid cliché.

Matthew and Rob wanted to create a production that allowed the audience to conjure up the world of the piece in their heads, instead of illustrating it literally through design. We are therefore in the world of the round, with four doorframes (Scrooge's 'cage') and four entrances, enabling us to use light and sound to transport us from situation to situation and location to location, all helping to inspire the audience's imagination of what this is.

Working with the themes in the rehearsal room

One rehearsal session involved a three hour workshop on tackling our various Narrator sections, of which there are many in the piece. Who is the Narrator? How does this character fit into our production? There was no such character in Dickens' novel, but this was Jack Thorne and Matthew's way of transferring Dickens' genius faithfully into his new version.

Matthew's decision was to explore the realms of Greek Chorus, making the role of Narrator an ensemble role — all in top hats, cloaks and in possession of Victorian lanterns. These are our ghosts of Victorian London, the nameless folk who would walk the misty streets, witnessing the goings-on of that world. They may even



Myra McFadyen



Rhys Ifans and the Company

be dead people. The top hats and cloaks were a great discovery as they quickly enable one of the actors to transition from their character into the nameless Narrator.

With regards to the parts of the Narrator, we began by exploring group speaking for every section, however, this quickly became predictable and repetitive. So we decided that this worked best for the opening narration where we were setting up the solemn and bold world of Scrooge. As the narrators were introducing us to this world, Matthew then asked the narrators to extract Scrooge's money boxes from the set, manipulating and building Scrooge's desk, giving us the springboard into the beginning of the narrative.

There was one real difficulty that arose with the process of this opening narration. As the production is performed in the round, our cast are always facing different directions in order to carry across the story to each bank of audience. How is it possible to then keep in time with one another? We always had to have four people speaking towards the four areas of the auditorium. To achieve this, we had to sit down and carry out studied line readings, discovering the words to emphasise, the rhythm in which sentences should flow, how to end a line with great energy in order for the next team to continue the energy on with their line that followed, diction, and the main rule of all: to never run words into the next, keeping every word specific to itself for complete clarity.

Other issues that we then had were the focus of attention on what was being discussed. If storytelling, should one always be directing their speech to the audience? We discovered that this wasn't the case. The opening narration, yes, but for others we learned that if all of the narrators were looking at our subject,

Scrooge, with their lanterns also directed in his direction that the audience would also fully focus on Scrooge and then be tuned into the words of the narrators.

As narration can often fall into the realms of spoon-feeding a story, we learnt that it was best to achieve storytelling through simplicity with carefully chosen variations between each one. For example, after the interval and in the lead up to the Ghost of Christmas Future, all of the narrators emerge draped in veils, setting up the approaching coffin. Then, on Christmas day morning when Scrooge runs out into the streets, we decided to place the cast in different areas of the auditorium, bringing the world of the play directly to the audience — creating surround sound, experience and colour.

A subsequent session became a rehearsal about how to make the worlds of the three ghosts different to one another. We had already decided not to follow the literal presentation of the ghosts in Dickens' novel. Matthew had wanted the three ghosts to all be women and all descending in age, again capturing the theme of 'life' — the process by which man ages. The Ghost of Christmas Past is a lady who has the knowledge of life and experience, presenting the stories that build the foundations of one's person. The Ghost of Christmas Present is a blind lady, opening Scrooge's eyes to what he is currently missing/avoiding. Then, the Ghost of Christmas Future in Jack's version became Scrooge's sister, Little Fan, a lady who had life taken from her too soon, someone who can encourage Scrooge to take hold of appreciating the gift and love of life. Each Ghost had to have a specific mission and purpose and Matthew's choice of core themes helped to inspire his creative decisions of the roles played by the three ghosts.



John Dagleish and Rhys Ifans

QUICK QUESTIONS

With playwright Jack Thorne

Dickens wrote the story in 1843. What were the challenges/opportunities in writing this particular adaptation?

To some degree you want to do what no-one has done before — so it's probably resisting that impulse a bit. Not trying to show off, doing due diligence by the great writer and his great story.

When I read the script, it reminded me a lot of the RSC's *Nicholas Nickleby* in its style and narration. Was this, or any other adaptation, a conscience influence on you as you wrote?

That was a huge influence. Interestingly, the RSC are currently working on *A Christmas Carol* with the writer of that - David Edgar.



Alex Gaumond

How is adapting a novel (or a play) different to writing an original script?

Your responsibility — first and foremost — is to do justice to what you're adapting. You have to ask the question all the time — is this true to the original? Now, when a novel has had a number of goes around the park it's not as important as when you're the soul chance a play or film has of existing in another medium but it still matters.

Dickens wrote a lot of Christmas stories and is often credited with 'creating' the Christmas that we celebrate now. Did you do much research when you were writing the script, or did you prefer to simply go on what his original story gave you?

I originally framed the story around Dickens and his sister Fanny — him telling it to her — so yes I did a lot of research on where he was at psychologically and physically.

In this adaptation, you've chosen to remove the moment where Scrooge sees Ignorance and Want. What was the reasoning behind that?

It was a Matthew note — it didn't fit into this telling of the story — and he was absolutely right.

Who is your favourite character in the story and why?

Little Fan. I think she's ace.

***A Christmas Carol* is one of Dickens' most well-loved and best known stories. Was it daunting adapting his words? Did you work with Matthew on the adaptation or was it presented 'fully formed'?**

I very much worked with Matthew — too daunting to do it any other way.

What do you hope the audience will take away from this particular adaptation of the story?

I wanted to humanise Scrooge. I want us to realise what of him we have inside ourselves.

MUSIC AND SOUND IN A CHRISTMAS CAROL

During the Victorian era, the middle classes were concerned that the traditional medieval carols were dying out and were at risk of being lost forever. As well as resurrecting traditional carols, new ones were written during this period, many of which have been included in some way in the score for this production of *A Christmas Carol*. The carol singers at the beginning of the story use their songs to create a sense of community. Christopher Nightingale's score for the production does the same: the hand bells played by the ensemble gently summon the audience's attention and encourage us to indulge in a sense of nostalgia. Christmas carols seem to have that power more than any other type of music, and with that nostalgia comes a willingness to accept the social message of the play. Conversely, the solo singing and the striking use of the *Coventry Carol* also elicits sympathy for the young Scrooge later in the play.

The inclusion of carols was integral in Jack Thorne's adaptation, such is the importance of music to the story. The original novella is divided into staves, each one showing a stage of Scrooge's journey to redemption. Motifs from those carols occur in the underscoring, sometimes transposed into a minor key, or stripped back to a lone voice, keyboard or violin to highlight Scrooge's isolation. At other times, the sound of familiar carols provide comfort to the audience, contrasting to the amplified shattering of a lantern as Scrooge attempts to resist the Ghost of Christmas Present. Scrooge's final monologue in Act One is made even more dramatic: the intensity of the score threatens to overwhelm both us and him, just as the truth Scrooge is exposed to threatens to smother him and his sense of self.

Carols are not the only music in the show. Ceilidh music accompanies Fezziwig's festive party and is used to particular effect when it suddenly stops and Scrooge is left alone, with only the howling of the wind or the screeching of ravens at his own funeral. There is a warmth in the timbre of the clarinet, accordion, recorder and penny whistle which contrast keenly with the sound effects of the slamming of doors and the sounds of bolts and locks that Scrooge uses to lock out the world around him. The rapidly ticking clocks also remind Scrooge that his time on earth, and therefore his opportunity for redemption, is decreasing by the second.

The use of choral singing also elevates the role of the ensemble in the creation of this Christmas story. On stage and entirely visible to the audience, the ensemble voices invoke an excitement and optimism as they sing familiar songs; many members of the audience will be tempted to join in! In strong contrast when they are concealed off stage, this unseen source of sound creates another element of Scrooge's haunting; a ghostly presence which develops into the crescendo of the finale, complete with cathedral organ, as he achieves his enlightenment.

In his introduction to the production, Matthew Warchus tells us, 'the nature of gathering together to share an experience...makes us better for it'. Music in this production is the foundation of the story, helps us track the emotion, mood and atmosphere and guides Scrooge towards the light of his new life. It is, indeed, the music that brings him those tidings of comfort. And joy.

Christmas music used in the score for this production includes:

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen	In the Bleak Midwinter
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear	Ding Dong Merrily on High
Il est né, le divin Enfant	Coventry Carol
I Saw Three Ships	See, amid the Winter's Snow
Wassail Wassail! All Over the Town	Joy to the World
O Holy Night	Silent Night

IN CONVERSATION WITH RHYS IFANS

We caught up with Rhys during rehearsals to talk about his role as Ebenezer Scrooge, Charles Dickens and the importance of drama.

A *Christmas Carol* is a well-loved and well-known story. It was being prepared for performance as a play even as Dickens was finishing the novella. Why do you think it's so popular?

Dickens' novella is small but perfectly formed, and it's very cinematic, too. It's a director and studio executive's dream! It has ghosts, horror, love, song and dance, and a beautiful character arc for Scrooge. It's brilliant!

It's as if he's writing for the theatre and performance from the start. Dickens has given us something very rare, too: *A Christmas Carol* gives us a social commentary but with fun in equal measure.

Dickens writes like a news reporter, events in the story are like headlines, and that would be a great exercise to do: take a chapter from the novel and present it as if it's a news report. Imagine: 'Marley was dead'.

Dickens originally wanted to be an actor, but missed an audition due to illness and so became a reporter instead...

Thank God he did! He does write like a journalist. He also uses alliteration, repetition and onomatopoeia, too, and in *A Christmas Carol* he creates a dreamy, almost hazy feeling — a bit like Christmas Day itself! It's like drunkenness, but the idea of being drunk on *life*. Look at his description of the banquet. The description might seem excessive. But it's excessive because the banquet *is* excessive! It makes you feel *full* by the time you've finished speaking it or listening to it.

There's one issue of the non-linear timeline in the novella and it throws us into a sort of linear vertigo. But that's exactly what happens to Scrooge so it's only right that we feel like that too.

How have you prepared for playing the role?

It is possible to be over-academic about it. I've read *A Christmas Carol* 20 to 30 times throughout my life time, and read it two or three times during rehearsal, but with a very light, and light-hearted, touch. Jack's adaptation is very faithful to the original text and Dickens gives us everything that we need, but Jack's dialogue is economic and exquisite.



Eugene McCoy and Rhys Ifans

I remember watching Alistair Sim's black and white film version, and Albert Finney's performance in *Scrooge*. A lot of my own experience of consuming stories has been through that influence. And reading *Great Expectations* was what got me into reading Charles Dickens in the first place.

The rehearsal process has been quite old fashioned — we've been putting the play on its feet and piecing it together with all of the different elements such as the music. Matthew and Christopher have created a stunning visual and sonic feast, an intricate mix of grandfather clock and advent calendar.

You obviously love playing Scrooge. Do you feel sorry for him?

No, I don't feel sorry for him, but he's a great character. For me playing Scrooge, this is an exercise in reacting rather than acting. Things happen to Scrooge, and it's those things that take him on the path to enlightenment. As time passes, small windows open and Scrooge's true nature is revealed bit by bit.

I find it incredible that Scrooge can, and does change. If you read the descriptions in the novel, they are very judgmental: they are things that people would say if they were talking about him. But Dickens is showing us a great duality in all of us — we can be tremendously fond of people who have hurt us but if we learn to let go, make amends and forgive, then finding happiness is possible. The important thing is that we have a choice. Much as we don't like to admit it, there's a bit of Scrooge in all of us, even though we might try and distance ourselves from that idea.

There are several scenes that really move me — I've got so many favourite moments in the play.

There have been a lot of famous performances of Scrooge over the years: you're in good company with actors such as Simon Callow, Jim Broadbent and Michael Caine. Is that intimidating?

No, not at all, it's an honour to be in such salubrious company. It's like Shakespeare which is performed over and over again. Every production and performance is different and reflects the mood and feeling of that particular time. This year has been a very sad year in London, and at times it has felt very Victorian with people's attitudes to the poor not really changing from Scrooge's time. That's certainly something I've been thinking about.

There are various ways to play him. For me, Scrooge is an extreme representation of all of us and it's important not to lose that everyman-ness. We're all miserly at times and so there's the opportunity to show this huge transformation in Scrooge's attitudes.

The challenge has been finding a place for Scrooge to 'sit'. A lot of the descriptions aren't particularly visual and we haven't really done much work on his emotions yet — that will come during the run-throughs when the shorter scenes all start to come together. In the past he's sometimes been played as a bit of a caricature and I want to avoid that so I'm still exploring it.

Music and dancing are obviously very important in this production of *A Christmas Carol*.

Well, there are various different carols and songs in the show, as well as the beautiful music that's been composed by Christopher Nightingale. Music is an integral part of the story.

Sometimes it's easy to get carried away with the underscoring and you have to work against it at times. At other times, though, you have to succumb to it. And when there's no music, it's even more effective.

We did a *Ceilidh* in rehearsal this morning — a great way to start a Monday! It's very life affirming.

What advice would you give to students studying drama, both in school and possibly beyond?

I'd say use all the resources available to you particularly if you're lucky enough to live in London. A theatre opened up in my home town when I was at school and so I spent most of the year preparing and rehearsing for plays. It often meant late nights and weekend rehearsals and you soon see how much of your own free time you're willing to commit to it. Use the opportunities available to you at school but don't depend solely on them: working on drama outside school makes you take on responsibility and commit to being part of the community.

I would say that as well as the creative element of acting (which I love), its equal is the feeling of being part of a group. You're in an environment where what you do is not judged and that makes you brave and courageous. Approach it with curiosity. Be curious about everything. That will always be your friend.

PERFORMING THE CAROL

By Susie Ferguson

Even if they have not read Charles Dickens' 1843 novella themselves, very few people will not recognise Scrooge's exclamation of 'Bah! Humbug!' or be able to loosely tell the story of *A Christmas Carol*. It has been passed down through the generations through oral retelling, as well as popular theatre productions and movie adaptations. When the story first hit the stands in 1843, people clamoured for their own copies of the illustrated, gold edged editions of Dickens' most famous tale. Five productions of the story were performed in theatres that Christmas and its popularity has not waned since. This year (2017), both The Old Vic and the Royal Shakespeare Company are premiering new adaptations of the novella, and Gad's Hills School — the school that is now based in Charles Dickens' former home in Kent — is also sharing a production of the story.

A Christmas Carol tapped into several Victorian preoccupations. Ghosts and the supernatural were a popular topic in stories, despite the scientific and industrial revolutions that were happening at the same time. The differences between rich and poor were also becoming increasingly apparent. As more workers migrated to the cities, poverty and disease were widespread and people dreaded being forced into the workhouses from which they were unlikely to re-emerge.

Dickens used *A Christmas Carol* to express his concerns about society and therefore created the version of Christmas that many of us still share today. By placing the focus on the importance of family, Victorians were able to reinforce their own beliefs and reassure themselves that the social, industrial and scientific changes going on around them would not threaten their own sense of wellbeing. *A Christmas Carol* was instrumental in providing that comfort, and made the festive season more child-focussed — inspired by the new monarch's emerging family traditions — when previously it had been a more adult festival.

Dickens himself gave readings of *A Christmas Carol* throughout his lifetime, initially for charity and then for his own commercial gain. He read from a lectern, but used the book in front of him as a prop, rather than a prompt for he knew the words by heart and they are naturally theatrical. They appeal to the senses and evoke a vision of Christmas with such ease that Dickens' audiences were drawn in immediately, and shouted for more. Dickens' great-great-grandson, Gerald, also gave performances of a one man show based on the tale, assuming all 26 characters himself.



Rhys Ifans and Melissa Allan

But why is the story still so relevant now? Fewer of us believe in ghosts and spirits, and our vision of Christmas is as confident as it has ever been. The key is the way in which Scrooge is finally able to see through the façade of gifts, banquets and money. Christmas is about the opportunities to appreciate family and to make amends to those we may have hurt or with whom we have lost touch. At a time when charity, poverty, food banks and child welfare remain upmost in our minds, it is no surprise that we look to *A Christmas Carol* for hope. The differences between each production, however, are how that hope is created.

In Phelim McDermott's 2015 production, Patrick Barlow's adaptation created a play within a play. The Cratchit family were represented with puppets, and a pop-up Victorian theatre (as part of the design by Tom Pye) was the dominant element of the set. The ensemble of five actors were supported by two puppeteers and the production therefore required multi-roling of up to seven characters each. In this performance style, the pace must be rapid and even slightly chaotic, making it slightly more akin to a pantomime piece than an intellectual literary retelling.

Pye's set design also exploited the idea of two-dimensional props and cardboard cut-out scenery, including a faux proscenium arch and theatre curtain. Consequently, the production was more than a little tongue in cheek. However, it could still make important points about modern day society, but in a way that ditched sentimentality in favour of irony and what Dominic Cavendish described as, 'more lark-filled playhouse than begrimed workhouse'. As Lyn Gardner points out, by using photographs of the poor of the 19th century gathered together on Kennington Common, and presenting the bankers and politicians of London using puppet heads, the audience had no choice but to make uncomfortable comparisons between Dickens' time and our own period of austerity.

The tone of the production was markedly more jovial than the darkness that is often suggested by Dickens' original text. Whilst light is often cast by the spirits, Scrooge himself is described as having a 'cold within him [which] froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue...' In this production, Jim Broadbent's portrayal of Scrooge was as a man much more indifferent to those around him rather than deliberately cruel.

Dickens himself wrote plays, sometimes working alongside fellow author Wilkie Collins. He performed in plays which he himself produced and directed, and family theatricals were an important element of Christmas for the family he raised. His theatricality and sense of character is apparent in all of his novels, however, and his daughter recalled seeing him acting

out his characters and their dialogue before committing them to paper. It is therefore unsurprising that many playwrights prefer to retain as much of Dickens' own words as possible — words that he himself performed to paying audiences 104 times in 1858 alone.

The ensemble in this new Old Vic production is a key element to its success. The set demands that the ensemble faces a number of different directions. In order to emphasis what Rhys Ifans describes as 'the everyman-ness of Scrooge' the audience needs to feel that the chorus are indeed addressing every man. With the ensemble also multi-roling as major characters in the story, the audience is reminded that all of us have the capacity to be an important part of someone's story at vital moments.

This production takes light, and enlightenment, as its key themes, as shown in the design which is dominated by the Victorian lanterns above the stage. At key moments they flicker, burn brighter or even plunge us into complete darkness to ensure that the audience experiences Scrooge's journey as viscerally as possible.

The staging and design of the production means that Scrooge is often left alone in the very centre of the stage. He is quite literally returned to various crossroads at which he has made poor choices, but now has an opportunity to redeem himself, and those for whom he is morally responsible. At the end of the show, he is instead surrounded by people, and by love. Just as Dickens hoped for his audiences in 1843, our modern audience will hopefully leave the theatre more open to looking out for the people around them, strangers though they may be.

Both this production and McDermott's break the fourth wall in some way. In The Old Vic version, the use of the auditorium is a key element of ensuring that the audience don't lose the key messages of the play. Sometimes dialogue is played across the space, whilst at other points a haunting lone singer in the circle creates a sombre mood and atmosphere as Scrooge fights his inner battles. There is an element of Scrooge in all of us, and by using the auditorium in this way, we are complicit in his journey. By the time the bells ring out at the close of the show, no man is left behind in his support for Scrooge and his new found charity, generosity and honesty. Most importantly, the audience has a sense of being one, as opposed to the strangers with whom they sat down at the beginning of the performance.

As Fred himself says,
'Christmas is the only time you know, 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.'

PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR THE DRAMA STUDIO AND ENGLISH CLASSROOM

1. Chorus work

Choral work is very important in this production of *A Christmas Carol*. Effective choral devices rely on timing, synchronicity and focus. The audience also needs help knowing who to listen to, and who to watch, particularly if the narration takes place alongside a lot of action.

Using the following text from the novella, experiment with sharing the narration, using choral devices such as:

- Unison speech
- One person speaking with others echoing, repeating or whispering certain key words that you have identified as important
- Variation in pace, pitch, volume and tone. Think carefully about how you might create mood and atmosphere for this opening section of the text
- Moving towards the end of a phrase so that the energy is maintained when one speaker finishes and another begins

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it; and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail...'

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge and sometimes Marley, but he answers to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

Once you have rehearsed, one or two members of the ensemble should step out and watch from an objective point of view. In particular, are you overusing a particular device? In *The Old Vic* production, one of the challenges with sharing the narration between the different members of the ensemble was ensuring that it didn't become repetitive or predictable. What changes can you make to sustain your audience's attention?

2. Passing the Focus

The ability to pass an audience's attention and focus is extremely important, particularly if there is a lot of action on stage, and/or you are sharing narration between various different performers. In *A Christmas Carol* there are a number of moments where the actors have to signpost very clearly where the audience should focus their attention.

In groups of 5, stand shoulder to shoulder in a straight line. Number yourselves in order from one end of the line, 1,2,3,4 and 5.

Person 1 should imagine they have just been given a present (which should be mimed). They should look at the audience, and the remaining 4 people in the line should look at Person 1. However, they should do so in a dynamic way – thinking about levels, height, stepping forward, stepping back, standing on tiptoe etc. So, although it is a fairly static image, it has a sense of depth and energy to it.

Person 1 should then hand the imaginary present to person 2, who looks at the audience. The present should be a little bigger and more exciting than it was for person 1, and as the rest of the ensemble (Person 1,3 4 & 5) should respond accordingly. Person 2 should then pass to person 3 – each time this 'present' is handed on, the reactions should be bigger and the way in which the line is formed should also change.

When person 5 has received the present, they should hand it back to Person 4, who amplifies the reaction to the increasingly exciting present even further. 4 should hand it 3, 3 to 2 and then 2 to 1, who should show the most extreme reaction of all.

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage the ensemble to 'pass the focus' and also create a strong sense of energy and dynamic in the tableaux. Experimenting with different heights and groupings ensures that the ensemble work does not become too repetitive or predictable. In terms of mime, it should be clear to the audience what each gift is, whether it's a teaspoon, a watch, or even a puppy! Everyone in the ensemble should have consistent and believable reactions to what they can 'see'.

Now return back to the text in task 1 and apply this idea of passing focus. How does this affect and improve the way in which the text is received by the audience?

2b. Passing the focus throughout the performance space

Scrooge's journey through London requires the ensemble to present a sense of his movement, despite a minimal set and limited space. By using their eyes and faces, as well as simple gesture such as pointing, they create a sense of the speed and distance of his trip across London.

Stand in a group of 8–10, in a tight circle, facing various different directions. Using the text below, work together to create a choral performance which encourages us to imagine the different sights, smells and sounds as well as the sense that Scrooge is travelling. Try not to move from the spot but you can turn in different directions, vary levels, point, look in particular directions etc.

And Scrooge ran out into Christmas Day morning and he was a very different Scrooge than the one who left his door the morning before.

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk – that anything – could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

3: Using Minimal Set & Costume

In this production, the use of minimal set allows the actors to conjure up London around us, and to move quickly from one setting to the next, just as the spirits transport Scrooge across great distances. It is up to the ensemble to encourage the audience to use their imagination, rather than simply being too literal in the use of set.

Make a list of the different locations in the story, and note carefully which ones are only seen once by an audience and which ones recur throughout the story, such as Scrooge's bed chamber.

Once you have made your list, choose one location that you think is particularly important to create in detail for your audience. However, rather than creating a naturalistic set, you must only use the following items:

- Different sized boxes, hampers or trunks
- 2 chairs, of different heights (this might include a stool)
- Hand held luggage, such as suitcases
- Paper
- Small items of costume such as a variety of hats
- 1 table – preferably large enough to seat 6 people

After staging your first choice of location, choose a second, contrasting one and do the same exercise, only using the same items. You do not have to use all of them in either scene.

Finally, create an interesting transition between those two scenes. For example, how might you create an interesting transition between a London street filled with carol singers to the small and cramped living conditions experienced by the Cratchit family?

4: Using descriptions from the novel for characterisation

A Christmas Carol provides detailed descriptions of characters to allow the reader to imagine them vividly. Dickens often made his characters very theatrical and larger than life, and gave them names that also hinted at the character. For example, 'Scrooge' is a combination of 'screech' or 'scrape' and 'gouge', suggesting his cruel and harsh nature.

The novel does not, however, give an actor much of a sense of how to create physicality in order to communicate the character to a theatre audience, rather than a reader.

Look at the descriptions below and, working with a partner, create a tableau (freeze frame) of each character. Once you are happy with the tableau, experiment with gait (how the character moves), and how they might sit when they think they are alone. How might they look when they think of the person or thing they love most in the world? Now consider how they might respond to seeing their past or future selves. What might that change about the way in which they move and speak? Devise a short (silent) scene in which this happens.

Scrooge: 'He was a tight fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self contained, and solitary as an oyster'

Bob Cratchit: 'The clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of it being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's bluff'

Belle: 'A fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears which sparkled in the light'

Little Fan: 'A little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her 'dear, dear brother'...Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered, but she had a large heart!'

Mr Fezziwig: 'An old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling...He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice'

4b: Staging the ghosts

In The Old Vic's production of *A Christmas Carol*, the three ghosts are presented as women of different ages, rather than remaining faithful to the detailed descriptions given by Dickens in the novella. They use a pram, which increases in size, to represent the idea of the journey from the cradle to the grave. The depiction of Jacob Marley remains faithful to the novella.

However you choose to create the ghosts, it is important not to fall into the trap of cliché or stereotype to communicate the sense of the ghosts being other-worldly. If they are too comic, the impact of the visions they show to Scrooge is lost and we need to encourage our audience to willingly suspend their disbelief during the exchanges between them and Scrooge.

Look at the dialogue below between Scrooge and Marley. Consider how the status between the two characters shifts, and the physical reaction Scrooge has to seeing the ghost of someone who has been dead for seven years. Experiment with the use of space (moving closer or further away) to suggest fear or intimidation, and the fact that Scrooge now sleeps in Marley's former chambers.

Marley Ebenezer.

Marley Approaches **Scrooge**. Dragging chains behind him.

Marley (Cont'd) Ebenezer.

Scrooge turns around and sees **Marley**. He decides to make no bones about it.

Scrooge Hush now. What do you want with me?

Marley Much.

Scrooge Who are you?

Marley Ask me who I was.

Scrooge Who were you then? You're particular, for a shade.

Marley In life, I was your partner. Jacob Marley.

Scrooge nods and thinks.

Marley (Cont'd) You don't believe in me.

Scrooge I don't.

Marley Why do you doubt your senses?

Scrooge Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are.

Marley I am here Mr Scrooge and I have waited seven long years to talk to you.

Walking the world, on the wings of the wind, no rest, no peace, the incessant torture of remorse.

Scrooge laughs.

Scrooge You are not Jacob Marley, he'd have no need of remorse. Go now. I have work to do.

Marley I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

Scrooge You were a good friend to me in life Jacob, I don't doubt you'd repeat it in death, but this...

Marley You will be haunted, by three spirits.

Scrooge I would rather not be.

Marley Expect the first when the bell tolls one.

5: Sound tracking

Choose a key moment from the story which you think could be enhanced by the use of live and/or recorded sound. Create a soundtrack for that scene or section which might:

- Create a specific mood or atmosphere
- Encourage the audience to have a specific emotional reaction, including sympathy towards particular characters
- Suggests period and setting
- Create or contrast with a sense of festive Christmas cheer

To achieve these intentions, you might like to consider:

- Live or recorded carols, sung by soloists and/or choirs
- Instrumental versions of popular Christmas carols
- Sound effects such as dragging chains, ticking clocks and doors being slammed

6: Creating Comedy

Throughout Scrooge's journey, it would be very easy to play the story as a sad and depressing one, with very little comic relief. However, that relief is required by the audience in order to sustain their engagement with the story and make them more receptive to the moral messages it contains.

Look at the following extract from Jack Thorne's adaptation. How can you perform this in a way that ensures you:

- Retain the appropriate characterisation of the three ghosts?
- Create humour and comic relief for the audience?
- Ensure that you don't lose the moral strand of the story in exchange for laugh?

After you have rehearsed for 20 minutes, perform for another group and evaluate whether or not you have achieved the playwright's aim for this moment, which occurs towards the end of the play.

Marley *Appears back amongst them, walking heavily towards them.*

Scrooge Jacob.

Marley Ebenezer.

Scrooge I will - I will change it.

Marley Then get started.

*He looks at the **Ghosts**.*

Scrooge Little Fan. I cannot thank you.

Little Fan You don't need to.

Scrooge And you - *He looks at the **Ghosts of Christmas Past and Present**.*

Scrooge (Cont'd) I don't even have a name for you.

Ghost of Christmas Past You don't need one.

Ghost of Christmas Present I always wanted to be called Brenda.

(beat)

It seems a kind name.

Scrooge Thank you. Thank you.

He hugs the three ghosts in turn.

Scrooge (Cont'd) Thank you. Thank you. Brenda.

And then he turns to **Marley**. And he doesn't hug him.

Scrooge Is it so bad? So lonely?

Marley It is.

Scrooge If I could ease your path...

Marley You can't. You can only ease your own.

The two look at each other.

Scrooge Thank you.

Marley Earn this.

Scrooge I will.

Scrooge thinks and then smiles, he looks around.

I will.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Katie Dawson, Assistant Theatre Administrator

What does your job involve?

I am the Assistant Theatre Administrator here at The Old Vic and I started here as an Operations Intern in February 2016. I look after the building and the things that happen inside it, such as room bookings, meetings and setting these up, rehearsal bookings, events coordination and front of house staffing. I arrange and swap the rota for the ushers and bar staff. I also manage the theatre's enquiries and feedback and sometimes I look after stage door, which I find very interesting because you meet so many different people coming in and out of the theatre.

What do you do on an average day?

My job is incredibly responsive so each day is totally different. I must be ready for action if anything happens for example: last minute meetings, ushers calling in sick, the printer breaks etc. Normally, I start my day by reading through all my emails and looking at what needs attention most that day. I do all the rota swaps (e.g. if someone has an acting audition and has swapped with another member of staff for that evening's show, I will swap this and let them know this is all fine) and check that we have enough staff for the shows that week. I look after the post and then respond to feedback and enquiries.

Have you always worked in a theatre/how did you get involved?

This is my first full time job within theatre but I have previously always been involved. I studied drama at school and then Theatre and Performance at university. I have always performed on stage and been very active volunteering through local theatres and dance schools. I did work experience at the National Theatre and then the West End musical *Wicked* in their costume department.

Which part of your job do you most enjoy?

My favourite part of my job is when I am able to be involved in the action. I love helping out at press nights and being on the scene to talk to front of house staff members. I also enjoy being able to help and make patrons happy who visit the theatre when they write in with feedback.

Which part of your work is the most difficult?

My job requires me to keep lots of imaginary plates spinning. I need to make sure the show is fully staffed, that meetings are set up on time, attend important meetings and respond to enquiries as well as well as fitting in some lunch. It can be very challenging but rewarding.

What is your best memory of working at The Old Vic so far?

My best memory of being at The Old Vic so far is when I worked in the office on the first matinee day of *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead* and I heard the show open on stage whilst I was at my desk. It was totally surreal and cool.

If you were to offer a young person wanting to get into the industry some advice, what would you tell them?

There is never any harm in asking. Theatre is wonderful but very challenging to find that first opportunity sometimes. It takes determination to research the available internships, apprenticeships and work experience, so do spend the time on google having a look! Be brave and email theatres about opportunities and especially local theatres. People are always looking for volunteers to help on local community theatre shows, whether that's as a runner backstage or someone to help actors with scripts.

What is the biggest misconception about working in a theatre?

That it is glamorous all the time. I have spent many press nights collecting dirty glasses or getting rid of leaves on the red carpet...

Did you have any theatre heroes when you were growing up?

My idol growing up was Victoria Wood. I never saw her live but every Christmas I still watch her taped performances on TV. She was a writer, director, performer and altogether hilarious woman and she managed to be all of those things at once.

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