A CHRISTMAS CAROL
I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently?

LEWIS CARROLL, 1871

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An actor friend of mine said once that all directors are either mechanics or gardeners. A mechanic solves problems so that the machine works; a gardener creates the conditions in which something can grow. Some of the most vital jobs at The Shaw require mechanics; but to direct our plays, I want gardeners.

What does this mean for the process or result of our work? It means a process in which rehearsals are playful and exploratory. It means that we don’t try to nail down the ‘right’ version of a scene; we play inside it and allow it to reveal itself – over the course of a whole season. And the result? Well, the thing about gardening is that there is no result. A beautiful tree may appear, but it will not be finished. It will keep growing and, with love and care, it will simply get more and more beautiful with time.

This is the garden we will be creating, together with you. Your imagination and your passion will be the sun and rain without which there is no life. Thanks to you, our work will grow, and it will change. So you really need to see every show more than once.

Tim Carroll, Artistic Director

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by CHARLES DICKENS

with PATTY JAMIESON, ANDREW LAWRIE, EMILY LUKASIK, MARLA McLEAN, JEFF MEADOWS, SARENA PARMAR, PJ PRUDAT, GRAEME SOMERVILLE and JONATHAN TAN

Directed by TIM CARROLL
Assistant directed by MOLLY ATKINSON
Designed by CHRISTINE LOHRE
Lighting designed by KEVIN LAMOTTE
Music direction by PAUL SPORTELLI
Movement and puppetry by ALEXIS MILLIGAN

We acknowledge and honour the land upon which we gather today as the historic and traditional territory of First Nations peoples. In particular, we recognize and thank the Neutral Nation, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee for their stewardship of these lands over millennia.

THIS PRODUCTION IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF SHARON AND FREDERICK DIXON, FOR THEIR LOVE OF THE SHAW FESTIVAL AND THE ROYAL GEORGE THEATRE.

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FRONT COVER: A GHOST OF AN ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT McKOWEN
A CHRISTMAS CAROL is generously sponsored by the Shaw Guild. Additional Support provided by Michael Therriault as Scrooge.
The Cast
IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Mrs Dilber           PATTY JAMIESON
Bob Cratchit         ANDREW LAWRIE
Belle                EMILY LUKASIK
Mrs Cratchit         MARLA McLEAN
Christmas Present    JEFF MEADOWS
Christmas Past       SARENA PARMAR
Emily                PJ PRUDAT
Mr Hubble            GRAEME SOMERVILLE
Fred                 JONATHAN TAN
Scrooge              MICHAEL THERRIAULT

Other parts played by members of the Ensemble.

CHAPTER 1: Marley's Ghost
CHAPTER 2: The First of the Three Spirits
CHAPTER 3: The Second of the Three Spirits
CHAPTER 4: The Last of the Three Spirits
CHAPTER 5: The End of It

Stage Manager       ALISON PEDDIE
Assistant Stage Manager ANNIE McWHINNIE
Assistant Lighting Designer/Video Co-ordinator NICK ANDISON
Sound Design         TREVOR HUGHES
Recording Engineer   FRED GABRSEK

RUNNING CREW
ROB GRINDLAY, Stage Carpenter; MARTIN WOODYARD, Props Runner; PAUL McMANIS, Electrician; JOHN MARSHALL, Video Technician; TREVOR HUGHES, Audio Supervisor; KATY NAGY, Wardrobe Supervisor; MARGARET MOLOKACH, Wardrobe Attendant; LORENA GHIRARDI, Wigs Supervisor

Special thanks to Agnete Haaland and everyone at the National Theatre of Bergen, Norway, where an earlier version of this show was staged; and to James Oxley for his contribution to that original production.

Cratchit family puppets crafted by Mandarava Butlin.
Additional puppets crafted in the workshops of Den Nationale Scene.

UNDERSTUDIES
PATTY JAMIESON, Christmas Past, Emily, Ensemble; ANDREW LAWRIE, Christmas Present, Ensemble; EMILY LUKASIK, Mrs Dilber, Mrs Cratchit, Ensemble; MARLA McLEAN, Fred, Ensemble; JEFF MEADOWS, Ensemble; PJ PRUDAT, Belle, Ensemble; JONATHAN TAN, Ensemble

Running time is approximately 90 minutes including one intermission
MICHAEL TERRIAULT AS SCROOGE WITH (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) SARENA PARMAR AS CHRISTMAS PAST; JEFF MEADOWS AS CHRISTMAS PRESENT; CHRISTMAS YET TO COME; AND THE ENSEMBLE.
ARTHUR RACKHAM’S ILLUSTRATION OF SCROOGE’S ENCOUNTER WITH JACOB MARLEY IN A 1915 EDITION OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL (BRITISH LIBRARY). OPPOSITE: DICKENS AT AGE 18, OIL PAINTING BY JANET ROSS, 1830 (DICKENS MUSEUM, LONDON/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES).
Charles Dickens, according to many contemporary judges, could just as easily have been a great actor as one of the giants of the English novel. In the last years of his life, before his early death at fifty-eight, he spent more time performing his books than writing them. As the actor Simon Callow, who has performed many of Dickens’ public readings himself, notes in his biography *Charles Dickens and the Great Theatre of the World*, the writer’s obsession with the stage began early. As a young man, Dickens tells us, he was obsessed with the ‘monopolylogues’ of Charles Matthews, a now-forgotten giant of the nineteenth-century theatre. In these one-man performances, Matthews would impersonate multiple characters, sometimes sticking his head out between the stage curtains and dazzling his audience by the facility with which he became each successive character merely by a change in one feature. Dickens used to go home from these and other performances determined to unlock the secret of impersonation. One time, he tells us, he spent many hours practicing the act of getting up from a chair and walking to a door, because he had seen one of his heroes do it on stage and couldn’t get over how natural he had seemed.

Of course, notions of what is ‘natural’ on stage change from one generation to another, and what seemed natural to Dickens might well seem ridiculous to us now. I suspect Dickens would not have cared. Where Hamlet talks of the playwright holding the mirror up to nature, Dickens was always more likely to use the magnifying glass. Perhaps this reflected his immersion in the theatre of the early nineteenth-century, a period which, unlike almost any other since Shakespeare, has bequeathed us nothing we consider worth producing. At its best, the drama of the period is horribly overblown and exaggerated. This is, of course, a criticism that is often levelled at Dickens’ own writing; but Dickens was, himself, a larger than life character (his nickname was The Sparkler of Albion), and he knew that people are always performing themselves — so why not exaggerate? The question with his characters is not, ‘is this person real?’, but ‘do I know the type?’ The fact that we still talk of someone as a Scrooge, or a Micawber, or a Uriah Heep, suggests that Dickens had some gift in this direction.

He also had a knack for dialogue. One of my favourite passages in Dickens is from *The Pickwick Papers*, where a coachman warns his passengers of the danger if they don’t

*take care of your heads!*... Five children – mother – tall lady, eating
sandwiches – forgot the arch – crash – knock – children look round – mother’s head off – sandwich in her hand – no mouth to put it in!

This is the kind of writing that rolls off the tongue, and that actors long to perform. And it is not surprising that Dickens’ characters speak in such immediate and vivid language: every conversation in his books is a record of a real dialogue — with himself. His daughter reported hearing a frightful scene going on in her father’s study. Fearing that the dispute she could hear was becoming so heated that it might erupt into violence, she crept to the door and opened it. Peering in, she saw that her father was on his own: he was playing out both parts in the scene he wanted to write, berating his imaginary adversary in the middle of the room before dashing back to the upright lectern he always used to capture the exact words he had spoken before he forgot them.

While he was still surprisingly young (he did everything surprisingly young), his remarkable gift for impersonation on paper had made him enough money to join the middle class. Not bad for a kid who had been reduced to working in a blacking factory at the age of eleven, because his father had gone bankrupt. As often happens, this early brush with destitution left him with a lifelong anxiety about money; but he was not by nature mean, so when the appeal came to do something to help indigent writers, Dickens was quick to combine charity with pleasure. He and Mark Lemon, the editor of the satirical magazine *Punch*, performed a farce called *Used Up* in a series of benefit performances that quickly became legendary. It is often hard with old comedies to work out exactly how they were made amusing by the actors who performed them, and *Used Up* is no exception; but Dickens and Lemon must have been genius *farceurs*, because many witnesses reported that people were in danger of falling out of the balconies from laughing so hard. Dickens was cock-a-hoop: a great deal of money was raised for a good cause, and he
"I am sorry to have to introduce the subject of Christmas... It is an indecent subject; a cruel, gluttonous subject; a drunken, disorderly subject; a wasteful, disastrous subject; a wicked, cadging, lying, filthy, blasphemous, and demoralizing subject. Christmas is forced on a reluctant and disgusted nation by the shopkeepers and the press: on its own merits it would wither and shrivel in the fiery breath of universal hatred; and anyone who looked back to it would be turned into a pillar of greasy sausages."

BERNARD SHAW
A SCENE FROM THE FROZEN DEEP STAGED AT DICKENS’ RESIDENCE AT TAVISTOCK HOUSE IN JANUARY, 1857 (THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS); CHARLES DICKENS WITH HIS WIFE AND HER SISTER, 1842 (BOTH MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY).
had finally realized his dream of treading the boards. All he needed now was to try his hand at tragedy.

Never one to do things by halves, for his next appearance, Dickens was not only author, but director, designer, stage manager and indeed theatre owner. Theatre-builder, more like: he had the bay windows of his house in Tavistock Square taken out to accommodate a purpose-built stage and the installation of state-of-the-art lighting and scenic effects. These were necessary for the ambitious play he was presenting, which came to its climax in the Arctic wastes. *The Frozen Deep* was, in fact, co-written with Wilkie Collins (so he did do *something* by halves), who is now remembered for his novels, including *The Woman in White*. Sharing Dickens’ taste for melodrama, Collins gave Dickens a plum role as the tragic hero who is redeemed from sin by sacrificing his life for the woman he loves. As Dickens, who was apparently never happier than when putting on a play, died with great tragic intensity, his daughter, playing the woman he loved, wept over his body, carried away by the emotion of the moment. So successful was this public charity performance (it was reviewed glowingly in *The Times*) that Dickens was invited to perform it for Queen Victoria at the charmingly-named Royal Gallery of Illustration. In a sign of the way that the status of actors has changed since those times, Dickens refused to allow himself and his family to be introduced to the Queen after the performance ‘in the character of actors’, insisting that he would rather they meet her another time, when they could appear as the respectable citizens they really were.

Perhaps in reaction to this experience, when Dickens was invited to play *The Frozen Deep* at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, he decided it would be inappropriate to parade his own family, and so he hired another: Frances Ternan and her daughters Maria and Ellen took the roles, with long-lasting consequences: now it was the younger daughter, Ellen, who was weeping over Charles’ heroic death. Stage intimacy, not for the first or last time in history, soon led to real intimacy, and Dickens’ marriage was over.

Perhaps because his affair with an actress was such a deep secret (so well hidden that it was not made public until the twentieth century), Dickens never appeared on stage in a play again; but he was not done with performing. When he realized that he could hold an audience spellbound simply by reading from his novels (he admitted to revelling in the almost mystical power he had over his listeners), he gave a series of readings, first for charity, and then, in spite of his friends’ snobbish misgivings, for his own profit. (The
old anxiety over his financial security had still not left him, for all his success.) Although the simple lectern at which he stood suggested no attempt at theatrical presentation (except for the gaslight that drew all eyes to the glowing figure of the reader), Dickens could not resist taking on his characters’ voices and even physicality. His brilliant mimicry, inspired so many years earlier by Charles Matthews’ monopolylogues, made his readings a money-spinning sensation, both in Britain and North America. One of his most-requested pieces was, of course, *A Christmas Carol*. When he reached the line about ‘…Tiny Tim, who did not die…!’ (his performing script, complete with underlining, still survives), he could be sure of raising a huge cheer.

Dickens loved doing these readings, and his readers flocked to hear him; but it is almost certain that they robbed us of many of the books he might have written. He wrote a great deal less once he became a public reader, and the energy he put into his readings cost him dearly. But he was a trouper, and hated to let down his public, often limping onto the platform against his doctor’s advice. One night he pushed it too far. A particular audience favourite was Sikes and Nancy from *Oliver Twist*, in which Dickens would work himself up into a homicidal rage as Bill Sikes. On this occasion, when he came to the gruesome murder of Nancy, he not only read it but acted it out so full-bloodedly that, as he left the stage, he collapsed. He seemed to have had a stroke, a harbinger of the one that would kill him barely a year later.

When John Forster, his oldest friend, learnt of Dickens’ death, he said ‘the wine of life is drunk, and only the lees is left’. He was not the only one to feel that a great light had been snuffed out too early; but Dickens had always said that it was ‘better to die doing’, and he was as good as his word: only a week before his death he was as busy as ever. What was he doing? Putting on a play, of course.
An Octoroon, 2017

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ANDRÉ SILLS AS M’CLOSKY WITH DIANA DONNELLY AS DORA; LISA BERRY AS DIDO, KIERA SANGSTER AS MINNIE, DIANA DONNELLY AS DORA, ANDRÉ SILLS AS GEORGE AND RYAN CUNNINGHAM AS PETE; STARR DOMINGUE AS GRACE; VANESSA SEARS AS ZOE; PATRICK MC MANUS AS THE PLAYWRIGHT.
I didn’t get into Dickens until I was in my twenties, but since then I have been making up for lost time. The first of his books that I read as a grown-up (I may have read something at school, but that’s under duress, isn’t it, so of course you try very hard not to let it impress you) was *Great Expectations*. I was knocked out by how funny it was. Why had no one told me what a comic genius this writer was? As soon as I finished it (learning, along the way, that he could also make me cry), I got hold of another novel, and then another, and another, and before long I had finished them all. But my appetite was not sated. So I began on his non-fiction, such as *The Uncommercial Traveller*, a wonderful collection of his journalism. In tandem with this reading, I began devouring any biography I could get my hands on. I think I have read six now, plus books about single aspects or episodes of his life. Finally, I took the plunge and began reading the Pilgrim Edition of Dickens’ letters. Only a fraction of the letters he wrote survive (he himself had a bonfire of the ones in his possession not long before he died, in the hope of leaving nothing for the vultures to feed on), but there are enough of them to fill twelve volumes, each more than six-hundred pages. It was a two-year journey to read them from start to finish, and it was an incredible feeling to go with him every step of his journey from a callow young man making his way in London to the world-famous novelist answering enquiries from admirers. As I neared the end of the last volume, I was overwhelmed with sadness at the thought of saying goodbye to such an inspiring companion.

He wasn’t always a good person, Dickens, but he did a lot of good: he raised prodigious sums for charity, and often got involved at first hand in their running. He started charities for fallen women and struggling writers, and he used the pulpit that his fame had won him to crusade for a better society. Sometimes
he did it by explicitly political campaigns; but at other times, most famously in *A Christmas Carol*, he set out simply to light a fire inside the hearts of men and women. As George Orwell said in his famous essay on Dickens, this was his really valuable contribution: as a political thinker he was pretty limited, if not downright naive; but that straightforward quality served him wonderfully well when it came to asking simple questions, like: if we are in a position to help people who are worse off than we are, why are we not doing it?

For all my passionate devotion to Dickens over the last twenty and more years, I never really expected to put him on stage. It was a private passion, no more to be brought into my work than my love for Manchester United. But then I was asked to stage *A Christmas Carol* by the actor Dominic Gerrard, who wanted to do it as a one-man show. We had a great time making the piece, which he now performs each Christmas at Dickens’ House in London. In that show, Scrooge was a puppet; the idea worked so well that, when I was asked to do the piece again, this time with a full cast, at the National Theatre in Bergen, Norway, I decided that some of the ghosts could be solved in the same way. Thanks to Alexis Milligan, I soon had a human Scrooge surrounded by some very ghostly puppets, and the Norwegian audience succumbed, as even the most hardened heart eventually must, to the exuberance and optimism of Charles Dickens. It is a version of that show that I am staging for you today.

Having experienced so many times the joy of surrendering to the great wave of love and hope that is *A Christmas Carol*, I am proud to welcome you to this, our version of Charles Dickens’ best-loved tale. Whether you are coming to see a show here for the first time or the hundredth, welcome. I feel blessed to be sharing this with you. It’s my Christmas gift to myself.
TIM CARROLL  Director
SHAW 2017: Director for *A Christmas Carol*, *Saint Joan* and *Androcles and the Lion*. My earliest theatre experience? A Christmas show in Manchester, England. I must have been very young, because all I remember is that they threw orange parcels into the audience, and I was cross that I was too far back to get one. I never even found out what was in them. The best thing about being a director is that I don’t get to act. And that is good news for the audience, because I am a terrible actor. I tried at university and my friends told me I had to stop, because I was ruining every play I was in. Christmas to me means a chance to eat all the mince pies in the world. It also means seeing faces light up when I give the perfect gift, but if I had to choose, I would go for the mince pies.

MOLLY ATKINSON  Assistant Director
SHAW 2017: Assistant director for *A Christmas Carol*, *Saint Joan* and *Middletown*; director for *The Tortoise and the Hare* (Secret Theatre). Christmas was always a busy time for my family. We sang and performed together as The Atkinson Family Singers, for local churches, parties, fairs and Christmas bazaars. Mostly my sisters and I would fight over the microphone or the instruments — I played the tambourine and the triangle. This led me to my career as a performer, actor and now also a director. Christmas has always been about family, music, stories, warmth and love. The best part about being a director is that I get to create and be a part of delivering stories, music, warmth and love to audiences and their families.

CHRISTINE LOHRE  Designer
SHAW 2017: Designer for *A Christmas Carol*. My grandmother took all the family to the National Theatre in Oslo before Christmas to see *Searching for the Christmas Star*. I remember the warm light from the lanterns outside the old theatre falling on the snow. Inside, the theatre was decorated in gold and the stage was like looking into another world. To build an atmosphere is what inspires me. I have a way of building my memories and imagination in shapes and colours; and, as a designer, I can also help tell a story with those tools. I like the design not to be too defined, to leave it open for the actors to play with and for the audience to fill in their own imaginations. My Christmas is celebrated with family and traditional food. We still make a circle around the tree and sing carols — it’s a mid-winter ritual that I cannot be without.

KEVIN LAMOTTE  Lighting Designer
SHAW 2017: Lighting designer for *A Christmas Carol*, *Me and My Girl*, *Saint Joan* and *Middletown*. My earliest theatre memories are of being in school plays. In grade one I played Joseph in the Nativity scene of my public school’s Christmas pageant. The best thing about being a lighting designer is collaborating with other artists from many disciplines to create something new. Christmas to me means family and the joy of being with all who are present, as well as remembering family and friends who have passed.
PAUL SPORTELLI  Music Director

SHAW 2017: Music director for *A Christmas Carol* and *Me and My Girl*; music director/composer for *Androcles and the Lion*. I was very young when I had my first experience of theatre. My mom did community theatre and she took me to rehearsals, I think mainly to avoid having to hire a babysitter for me. So did other parents, but while the other kids were in the parking lot playing, I was inside watching rehearsal, mesmerized. So it’s no surprise that I now find myself working in theatre. The best thing about being a music director is bringing music to life — making what’s on a page of music jump off that page and become sound — and awakening music as fully and vibrantly as possible in actors and musicians with whom I collaborate. Working on this production of *A Christmas Carol* makes me realize that, for me, the meaning of Christmas changes as I change.

ALEXIS MILLIGAN  Movement / Puppetry

SHAW 2017: Movement/puppetry for *A Christmas Carol*; movement director for *The Madness of George III* and *Saint Joan*; dance sequences/puppetry for *Androcles and the Lion*. Christmas in my family, for many years, has been all about the theatre and puppets. In Halifax there is a production of *The Nutcracker* (now in its 27th season) produced by Symphony Nova Scotia. When I was fourteen, I was cast in the show as a young dancer and puppeteer, and that is where my love for puppetry began. A few years ago, I was asked to join the cast again, only this time as one of the grown-up parts and “Mother Ginger,” which thrills my children to no end. Going to the theatre, dancing and carol singing is a staple of our holiday season, although my favourite Christmas memory has to be my mother and I sneakily playing Christmas carols on cold days in October, when my father was out of the house.

PATTY JAMIESON  Mrs Dilber

SHAW 2017: *A Christmas Carol*, *Me and My Girl* and *Androcles and the Lion*; 20th season. When I was young, my family lived in Germany. I attended a French school there in grade four, and a puppet troupe came from France to present a show with paper puppets. They asked for a volunteer, and I was chosen to help assemble a big, red, dog puppet. I hadn’t mastered the language yet and didn’t understand what they were saying, but I felt the magic of being “in the show”. There are many good things about being an actor — one of them is travelling and performing in different cities and countries. It’s like being paid to explore people and places you might never get to see otherwise. Travelling can be a little difficult at Christmas when it’s important to be home with family; but my family, with their military background, have generously spent Christmas with me in several hotel rooms over the years.
ANDREW LAWRIE  Bob Cratchit
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, The Madness of George III and Saint Joan; 1st season. My earliest theatre memory was going to see The Phantom of the Opera with my uncle, at the Princess of Wales Theatre. I was seven years old and was mesmerized and invigorated by the performance. I suppose that’s one of the best things about being an actor — to be able to invigorate, uplift and delight those who come to see my work. And funnily enough, I also think that’s what Christmas is about for me — people coming together to share in something that brings hope and joy.

EMILY LUKASIK  Belle
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Saint Joan and Wilde Tales; 2nd season. Some of my earliest theatre memories as a child are of going to a holiday show with a big group of family and friends; a tradition that has continued to this day. I couldn’t be happier to be spending this “most wonderful time of the year” in Shaw’s first-ever Christmas production. Christmas to me is making hundreds of perogies with my family, going on a carolling “tour” and best of all, spending time with loved ones reflecting on the gifts and growth of the year that’s passed. What I love about Christmas is in many ways what I love about the theatre: people coming together to make music, tell stories and — as Dickens says so beautifully — “open their shut-up hearts freely.”

MARLA McLEAN  Mrs Cratchit
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, 1837: The Farmers’ Revolt and Dracula; 11th season. All of my earliest theatre memories take place in my home province of Nova Scotia at Neptune Theatre. My school was sponsored to see a number of different shows there. Each time I sat in the audience I felt sure that both the actors and the audience were sharing something singular. When my time came to step onto that stage, years later, I realized that what I loved most about being an actor was the opportunity to step into another’s shoes and to allow the audience an opportunity for empathy toward another or for themselves. The Shaw Festival has been my home for several years. To spend Christmas with my little one and my husband in this gorgeous town, while doing this beautiful play, is the perfect Christmas gift.

JEFF MEADOWS  Christmas Present
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Saint Joan and Middletown; 16th season. Christmas for me is thirty people making a lot of noise, kids running about screaming and laughing — full of sugar and ripping presents open, everyone belting out carols. The Meadows mob does a mean
Twelve Days of Christmas. And, of course, there’s always a dance party. I remember one Christmas Eve, when the Christmas cheer was flowing, I ended up dipping — and releasing — my mom into the Christmas tree while Prince’s “Kiss” blared out of the speakers. My mom loves that story. Christmas with the Meadows always includes a bit of unintended theatricality — and now here I am in this play, making theatre on purpose. Cue Prince. Loud.

SARENA PARMAR  Christmas Past
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Dancing at Lughnasa and Androcles and the Lion; 1st season. Every year my elementary school put on a Christmas show. My fifth-grade teacher was a Star Trek fan, so naturally we presented Christmas on the Enterprise. I was too shy and nervous to audition for any of the parts, so I was given the role of the computer. I sat behind a box and spoke in a monotone computer voice, which suited me just fine. The best thing about being an actor is always getting to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills. Nothing ever stays the same for very long. Soon enough you’re on to another adventure. Acting has taught me to try new things or learn new skills.

PJ PRUDAT  Emily
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Saint Joan and Wilde Tales; 1st season. I am a proud Métis/Michif, Cree, Saulteaux, French and Scandinavian “Canadian” theatre artist. I was born in a wild snowstorm in northern Saskatchewan on twelfth night; stories and connections to this land are what guide me as an artist. My first theatre memory is one of a compelling, funny, fearless solo actor named Tom, who toured the prairies teaching sex education through performance, capturing the attention of an entire school of farm kids for an eternity (or an hour). He told my 11-year-old self that he’d never forget my name and I sometimes still wonder if that’s true. I have come to believe that the best thing about being an actor is that the older I get the younger I become. This special show, the players within and the entire artistic team remind me that Christmas is about ‘enjoying every sandwich’, mutual kindnesses and giant, heart-sized hope. Kitatamihinawâw.

GRAEME SOMERVILLE  Mr Hubble
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Saint Joan and Dracula; 15th season. I have a photo which was taken in the lobby of the Shaw Festival theatre thirty-five years ago. In it, I stand beside my father, who has just purchased a book from the gift shop for me, entitled Model Theatres and How to Make Them. In a romantic gesture he has inscribed within: “To Graeme, who at the age of eight has a love for the theatre. May it last a lifetime.” This Christmas will be the third with our son and the fifth without my father. I hope that, in time, Griffin may come to love this raucous and joyful revel of an art form as much as his grandfather did, and as his wonderful mother, Marla, and I do.
JONATHAN TAN  Fred  
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Saint Joan and Wilde Tales; 7th season. My first experience with theatre was seeing Les Misérables at age seven (!), and I was smitten from the start: words and music and ideas so intoxicating that it may as well have been real magic come to life. A few weeks later, a group of puppeteers came to my school to do a hysterically funny show — a different kind of magic — and I realized that theatre could be anything. The best thing about being an actor is saying “listen, I have this thing I want to tell you,” and, incredibly, people come to listen. You make believe you’re another person in another time and place, and people listen and believe. Add family, food and tradition, and you’ve got the recipe for Christmas: believing in magic with the ones you love. We’re all “fellow passengers to the grave”. Christmas reminds me to travel merrily, laughing all the way.

MICHAEL THERRIAULT  Scrooge  
SHAW 2017: A Christmas Carol, Me and My Girl and Androcles and the Lion; 1st season. My earliest theatre memory is playing a tap-dancing dog in a recital when I was five. I didn’t do much tapping as I recall. I located a coloured mark on the stage, panted a bit and walked in a circle; a performance you are likely to see echoes of tonight! I have always said that the best thing about being an actor is the people I get to spend my life around. Kind, easy-going, supportive, playful; they are some of the most inspiring people I know. As for my feelings on Christmas, although my family doesn’t exchange gifts anymore, we do love spending time together and for me Christmas is a yearly reminder to do that as often as I can.

ALISON PEDDIE  Stage Manager  
SHAW 2017: Stage manager for A Christmas Carol and Saint Joan; 12th season. My favourite memory of Christmas with my family was the big Christmas Eve party my grandparents threw every year. There were cousins in every corner of the house and loud laughter from every room. As adults, my cousins and I still talk about those parties with child-like happiness. For me, my grandparents, great-aunts and -uncles, and parents live again, larger than life, in Christmas Eve memory. As an adult, and now with a child of my own, I still enjoy the anticipation that is such a part of Christmas Eve. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!

ANNIE McWHINNIE  Assistant Stage Manager  
SHAW 2017: Assistant stage manager for A Christmas Carol, Me and My Girl and An Octoroon; 9th season. My earliest theatre memory is seeing musicals as a child and then going home to play the cassette recordings on repeat until I had learned every word. One of my favourite things about working in stage management is collaborating with all the different departments, creative and technical, from the rehearsal process all the way through to the closing of the show. For me, growing up in an interfaith household, the holiday season has always been about celebration and spending time with those I love.
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