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Allan Louis in Oh What a Lovely War.
Photo by David Cooper Photography.
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Julia Course and Yanna McIntosh in The Baroness and the Pig (2018). Photo by David Cooper.
MICHAEL THERRIault in

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by CHARLES DICKENS

with KYLA COOK, PATTY JAMIESON, ANDREW LAWRIE, MARLA McLEAN, SARENA PARMAR, PJ PRUDAT, GRAEME SOMERVILLE, SANJAY TALWAR and JONATHAN TAN

Directed by MOLLY ATKINSON
Adapted and originally directed by TIM CARROLL
Designed by CHRISTINE LOHRE
Lighting designed by KEVIN LAMOTTE
Original music and original music direction by PAUL SPORTELLI
Music direction by RYAN deSOUZA
Movement and puppetry by ALEXIS MILLIGAN

THIS PRODUCTION IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF WILLIAM CLARKSON FOR HIS LOVE OF THE SHAW FESTIVAL.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

FRONT COVER: A GHOST OF AN ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT McKOWEN
A CHRISTMAS CAROL is generously sponsored by the SHAW GUILD. Additional Support provided by Hodgson Russ LLP. Official Hotel Partner for A CHRISTMAS CAROL. MICHAEL THERRIault as SCROOGE.
The Cast

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Belle KYLA COOK
Mrs Dilber PATTY JAMIESON
Bob Cratchit ANDREW LAWRIE
Mrs Cratchit MARLA McLEAN
Christmas Past SARENA PARMAR
Emily (Fred’s wife) PJ PRUDAT
Mr Hubble GRAEME SOMERVILLE
Christmas Present SANJAY TALWAR
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

Production Stage Manager ALISON PEDDIE
Assistant Stage Manager ANNIE McWHINNIE
Assistant Director LEIGH McCLYMONT
Assistant Lighting and Projection Designer NICK ANDISON
Sound Designer TREVOR HUGHES
Recording Engineer FRED GABRSEK
Music Captain PATTY JAMIESON
Movement / Puppetry Captain MARLA McLEAN

RUNNING CREW
ROB GRINDLAY, Stage Carpenter; MARTIN WOODYARD, Props Runner; PAUL McMANIS, Electrician;
TREVOR HUGHES, Audio/Video Supervisor; KATY NAGY, Wardrobe Supervisor;
DOT WARD, 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; to James Oxley for his contribution to that original
production; to Tracey Frena for lending the hand bells; and to Jeffrey Simlett for dialect.

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

Running time is approximately 90 minutes including one intermission
MICHAEL THERIAULT AS SCROOGE WITH (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) SARENA PARMAR AS CHRISTMAS PAST; JEFF MEADOWS AS CHRISTMAS PRESENT; CHRISTMAS YET TO COME; AND THE ENSEMBLE. 2017 PHOTOS.
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 reveling 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.
Director’s Notes
BY MOLLY ATKINSON

A Christmas Carol has followed me around it seems, or perhaps I have followed it. Regardless, I am always happy and excited to be a part of the story, like a beautiful old painting that changes just enough to be exciting when you stare at it again, each time coming back to it to find something new. Or perhaps, only coming back to see the familiar scene that you loved when you spotted it the first time.

My journey with A Christmas Carol started when I was ten. I was cast as Tiny Tim and I was so excited to be playing a boy. A boy with an accent and an illness! I couldn't believe my actor's luck! I was in heaven going to rehearsals, and watching how the magic was created. I can still hear the sound of the white plastic chains being spray-painted silver for Marley's ghost, and then watching with absolute amazement as Marley wore those chains as though they were made of the heaviest lead. I remember watching in the wings as Scrooge made his way through the ghosts' visits, in awe of the transformation that the actor went through. As I waited for my next entrance, I would re-enact Scrooge's final speech to, what I believed was, the amusement and entertainment of the crew. Now thinking back as an adult, perhaps it was more amusement at the exuberance and over-eagerness of a child actor.

In the town I grew up in, Christmas was a fantastic winter wonderland. There was always snow, and bells, music and lots of bustling, and of course the much-anticipated reading of A Christmas Carol at the local church. Various local celebrities had the chance to read the story aloud to an excited audience. They would add their certain flare and passion to their respective staves. One could imagine the absolute thrill it would have been to witness Mr. Dickens himself perform it to a live audience year after year. One year, I was asked to read a stave and I was delighted to take a stab at it. The theatricality in the writing made it easy. Dickens gives...
you everything you would ever need to know about how to deliver the words. It almost feels like it is meant to be performed to an audience, and you can’t help but devote yourself entirely to it. The audience can’t help being carried along for the ride.

There are other incarnations of *A Christmas Carol* that have stayed with me throughout the years. I created a children’s version conceived with theatre-school kids, written entirely from the ghosts’ point of view. It was awesome. Also another rendition performed by my son’s school. The joy of watching my son give the full passionate portrayal of the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge in grade two was miraculous. And then, the opportunity to join this production last year as the Assistant Director was, I must say, a pure delight. To witness the story that I had known for so many years coming alive through the imagination of Tim Carroll was such a pleasure. It is a refreshing take on the story, but rooted deep in the original words that Dickens wrote. We were always rewriting the script, and referencing the story to make sure we plucked as much of the original Dickens text as we could fit in. We worked hard to make the story everything you would want from *A Christmas Carol*. I love witnessing the audience reactions to each little bit of the story, as if they had never known the story before, but yet they were somehow familiar all at the same time. It seems that we all just love a good story, and if it’s really good, we love to hear it over and over and over again, and this one is a really good one.

I hope to guide the story with all the passion of that ten-year-old kid in the wings, entertaining whoever was around. Still so fascinated and in awe of the actors and the stage managers and the crew, and everyone who does all the hard work of creating the magic that we get to behold. Welcome to *A Christmas Carol*. 
MOLLY ATKINSON  Director
SHAW 2018: Director for A Christmas Carol. 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.

TIM CARROLL  Adapter / Original Director
SHAW 2018: Adapter/original director for A Christmas Carol; director for The Magician’s Nephew, Mythos; co-director for Henry V. 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.

CHRISTINE LOHRE  Designer
SHAW 2018: 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 2018: Lighting designer for A Christmas Carol, The Magician’s Nephew, Mythos, The Baroness and the Pig and Henry V. 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**
Original Music / Original Music Direction
SHAW 2018: Original music/original music direction for *A Christmas Carol*; music director for *Grand Hotel* and *Oh What a Lovely War*; composer for *Mythos*. My mom starred in community theatre and my parents took me to rehearsals when I was quite young. Other parents brought their kids too, 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. For me, Christmas is a great time to celebrate with family and friends, as well as an opportune time for reflection.

**RYAN deSOUZA**  Music Director
SHAW 2018: Music director for *A Christmas Carol*; associate music director for *Grand Hotel* and *Oh What a Lovely War*. I learned to play the piano in church and grew up playing and singing the carols you will hear today. We toured the country singing them at churches and concert halls across North America, with St Michael’s Choir School; and, to this day, my brothers and I get together and do a midnight mass every year. It’s amazing how that “O Come All Ye Faithful” descant, or the choir suddenly breaking into four parts in “Silent Night”, can bring back all those great memories of Christmases past. That’s one of the reasons I love doing what I do — creating a soundscape that inspires the magic of the mind.

**ALEXIS MILLIGAN**  Movement / Puppetry
SHAW 2018: Movement/puppetry for *A Christmas Carol*; movement/puppetry director for *The Magician’s Nephew*; movement director for *The Baroness and the Pig* and *Oh What a Lovely War*; puppetry director for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Christmas in my family, for many years, has been all about theatre and puppets. In Halifax there is a production of *The Nutcracker* (now in its 28th season) produced by Symphony Nova Scotia. When I was fourteen, I was cast in the show as a young dancer and puppeteer. 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 of my mother and me sneakily playing Christmas carols on cold days in October, when my father was out of the house.
KYLA COOK  Belle
SHAW 2018: A Christmas Carol; 1st season. My earliest theatre memory is performing in A Christmas Carol in my beautiful hometown of Charlottetown, PEI, at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. In this production I played Young Cratchit and will never forget the incredible learning experience I had while working with seasoned professionals. It’s unbelievable how things in life come full circle. I have the same feelings now about the wonderful cast and crew I have the privilege of working with in this production at the Shaw Festival. The best thing about my job is that it never feels like a job. As a performer, I feel alive when I’m on stage and there is nothing I would rather be doing. Christmas to me is a time to reflect on what’s truly important in life. It is a time for rejoicing and a time to be grateful for all the great experiences life has to offer us.

PATTY JAMIESON  Mrs Dilber
SHAW 2018: A Christmas Carol, The Magician’s Nephew and Grand Hotel; 21st 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 that 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, has generously spent Christmas with me in several hotel rooms over the years.

ANDREW LAWRIE  Bob Cratchit
SHAW 2018: A Christmas Carol, Of Marriage and Men and The Orchard (After Chekhov); 2nd 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.

MARLA McLEAN  Mrs Cratchit
SHAW 2018: Appearing in A Christmas Carol and Oh What a Lovely War; appearing in and assistant director for Grand Hotel; 12th 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.
SARENA PARMAR  
Christmas Past
SHAW 2018: *A Christmas Carol* and *Stage Kiss*; appearing in and author for *The Orchard (After Chekhov)*; 2nd 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. Christmas is my favourite holiday! It is a time when magic is possible and people lead with kindness.

PJ PRUDAT  
Emily (Fred’s wife)
SHAW 2018: *A Christmas Carol*; 2nd season. I am a proud Métis theatre artist and writer, born in a wild snowstorm in northern Saskatchewan on twelfth night. Stories and connections to this land are what guide me as an artist. I was five years old when I took my first steps onto a stage to play a dancing lady in *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. The best thing about being an actor is the freedom to play and connect to others in the sharing of a great story. Christmas, to me, has always been about family, kindness and offering generosity to those in need.

GRAEME SOMERVILLE  
Mr Hubble
SHAW 2018: *A Christmas Carol, Henry V* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; 16th 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 fourth with our son and the sixth 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.

SANJAY TALWAR  
Christmas Present
SHAW 2018: *Stage Kiss, The Orchard (After Chekhov)* and *A Christmas Carol*; 4th season. Decorating the tree, carols, presents (and so, shopping), *It’s a Wonderful Life*, the Grinch, Scrooge, counting down to the big day (sometimes in minutes and seconds), playing games with my sister between 5 and 7am so my parents could get some rest… but, mostly Christmas has been about family for me since I was little.

My parents, my sister and at least one guest that my father would have brought to our house — an exchange student, a new Canadian, someone whose home was far away. It made me realize that family could mean more than I ever thought. Merry Christmas to you and your family!
JONATHAN TAN  Fred  
SHAW 2018: A Christmas Carol; 8th season. My first time in the theatre was seeing a huge Mirvish musical and being swept away by the sheer size of it: the roar of the orchestra, the spectacular set, the anthemic numbers that moved me to tears. A few weeks later, some puppeteers came to my school to do a wacky, half-improvised sketch with no set, a gibberish language and some cheeky audience interaction... and I laughed and howled till I couldn’t breathe. No matter the scale, good theatre provokes, and great theatre transforms through empathy and compassion. Now an adult and an actor myself, I’m proud to champion theatre’s role in an increasingly cynical world, inviting strangers to let down their guard, to share in the same story, to listen and believe. We’re all “fellow passengers to the grave”. Our humble Christmas offering is a light-hearted reminder that our journeys are not so different after all.

MICHAEL THERRIEULT  Scrooge  
SHAW 2018: A Christmas Carol, The Magician’s Nephew and Grand Hotel; 2nd 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  
Production Stage Manager  
SHAW 2018: Stage manager for A Christmas Carol and Mythos; 13th 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 2018: Assistant stage manager for A Christmas Carol, Stage Kiss and The Orchard (After Chekhov); 10th 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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