A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Written by
CHARLES DICKENS

Adapted & Directed by
MARK CUDDY

Music & Lyrics by
GREGG COFFIN

KeyBank PRESENTS

19/20 SEASON

Geva Theatre Center

Student Matinee Series

Tess DeFlyer and Alessandro Bucci. Photo by Goat Factory Media Entertainment.
In an effort to help your students enter into the world of A Christmas Carol, we have divided this Discovery Guide into three separate sections – one targeted for elementary students, one for middle school, and one for high school. We encourage you to take the following pages and use them in whichever ways best suit your lesson plans or connect with the culture of your classroom. There is, of course, no need to adhere to only the sections designated for your grade level(s) – this guide is full of thoughts and questions about Charles Dickens and his motivations for writing A Christmas Carol, about the magic of the holidays (and its observations the world over), and the limitless ways to tell...

**About Scrooge’s Journey, from Director Mark Cuddy:**

“I’m a proponent of saying that the more you know, the more you realize you don’t know. It was important for me that, during Scrooge’s journey, he started to place himself in context, and that it was part of the lesson for him. He needed to know that the world was much bigger than him. Scrooge looks at the world in a very two-dimensional way, black and white, or like he’s watching a movie. He’s watching the world go by - not participating. He’s saying ‘leave me alone, just leave me alone.’ But if part of the journey is about becoming more engaged, certainly - at the end of the story - he realizes that he’s just a tiny speck in this tiny universe. He’s really seeing everything for the first time. In other adaptations and older versions of the show, with the Ghost of Christmas Present, Scrooge says I’ve never seen,’ and Present says, ‘Well, you never looked.”

**DEAR EDUCATORS,**

Most people would hardly consider Charles Dickens to be a radical, but following the publication of *A Christmas Carol* in December 1843, the label quickly became attached to the author’s name. Upon learning of the depths of poverty experienced by many of his fellow Londoners – particularly children – Dickens embarked on a mission to deliver, as he wrote in a letter to a friend, a “sledgehammer blow” that would have “twenty thousand times the force” of the government report that first inspired his reaction. Dickens was especially incensed by wealthy industrialists, whom he described as “sleek, slobbering, bow-paunched, overfed, apoplectic, snorting cattle,” whose massive fortunes, he believed, were made at the expense of those suffering the most.

While Dicken’s initial impulse was to write a pamphlet titled “An Appeal to the People of England, on Behalf of the Poor Man’s Child,” he soon realized that the scope of his project was much larger then that of a slim publication and decided to write a novel detailing the crushing poverty occurring around him. When his long-time publishers refused to offer their full support for what they considered to be a book that would be off-putting to readers, Dickens’ belief in his undertaking was so great that he assumed the monetary risk and self-published *A Christmas Carol*.

Much of the reluctance of his publishers stemmed from Dickens’ insistence on giving detailed descriptions of poverty, drawn primarily from his research into the subject as well as his own experiences of financial insecurity as a youth. *A Christmas Carol’s* mention of Martha Cratchit working long days as a factory seamstress, or Tiny Tim’s deteriorating medical condition – and his family’s inability to afford the proper care – were common concerns for many readers who saw versions of their own lives portrayed in Dickens’ tale.

Dickens also used *A Christmas Carol* as a means by which to comment on the uncharitable view of the poor held by many of England’s well-off residents. Ebenezer Scrooge’s inquiries into the efficiency of the country’s prisons and poorhouses, for example, reflected the thoughts of whose who considered the impoverished to be lazy and unwilling to work. They believed that the indignities of scarcity would be sufficient motivation for the poor to improve their situation on their own.

And while the play is important from a historical standpoint, as it offers us a glimpse of life for Londoners from various classes, once we look past the antiquated styles of dress and unfamiliar references, *A Christmas Carol* is remarkably contemporary. The struggles of the Cratchit family, and others like them, are not too far removed from those experienced by families throughout the world today – they could be our relatives and neighbors. It is this sense of constant relevance that has kept Dickens’ story permanently in-print since its original run.

Whether your students are encountering *A Christmas Carol for the first time, or are returning to it, we’re confident that will find themselves reflected in the story – just like Dickens’ early audiences – and will be touched by his call to treat all of our “fellow passengers to the grave” with kindness, grace, and dignity.

Sincerely,

The Geva Education Department

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**College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for elementary school and up are available at:**


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“It is required of every man that the spirit *within* him should walk in fellowship among mankind.” – Jacob Marley
**DEAR EDUCATOR**

This section is comprised of ideas for activities that your elementary-aged students can complete in preparation for *A Christmas Carol*. Included is a synopsis, visual activities, discussion questions, and writing prompts.

**SYNOPSIS**

Bah, humbug! *A Christmas Carol* is the story of a grouchy old man who only cares about money. He doesn’t like Christmas because he doesn’t believe that he can profit from it. He is visited by four ghosts – his old business partner Jacob Marley, The Ghost of Christmas Past, The Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. They show him his life from the past, present, and future. They help him realize how unhappy he is, and help him see the unhappiness that he causes in the people around him. He learns that love is more important than money, and he changes his life to live with love in his heart and to share that love with everyone around him. In the end, he has a happy Christmas, and gives others the gift of a Merry Christmas as well.

**VISUAL ACTIVITIES**

What does Scrooge do with his money? Draw a picture of things you think he might buy or do.

What do you think Scrooge could do to be nicer to the people around him? Draw how you would help him become a good person.

Draw yourself standing next to Tiny Tim. Don’t forget how tiny he is!

**Be the Costume Designer!**

*Christmas Past* is described as an angelic child in the script. Draw what you imagine Christmas Past would look like.

*Christmas Present* is first seen sitting on a throne. What do you think that means for the rest of his appearance? Use your imagination to draw him.

*Christmas Yet to Come* is described as a shadowy figure. Use your imagination to draw what it would look like.

*Jacob Marley* is the very first ghost to visit Scrooge. He is Scrooge’s former business partner. The script describes him as scary. Draw what you imagine he looks like.

These pictures of Scrooge were created by Costume Designer Devon Painter. Which picture do you think shows Scrooge at the beginning of the play? Which one is of Scrooge at the end of the play?

**CHARLES DICKENS’ CHILDHOOD**

When Charles Dickens was a boy, his family was very poor. His father’s debt was more than the family could afford, and they were sent to jail. Charles had to drop out of school in order to work at a factory, so that he could earn money to pay off his family’s debt. He spent his days pasting labels onto jars in a shoe factory and earned very little money. His family eventually came home and Charles was able to go back to school, but he never forgot how awful it was to work in a factory. Ever since Charles worked hard to help the poor. One of the ways he did that was to write stories that made people really think about how the poor were treated. An example of one of these stories is *A Christmas Carol*.

Pretend that Charles Dickens is your friend. Write a letter to him to tell him how you feel about his life.

“Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?” – Scrooge
HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Did you know that A Christmas Carol was important in popularizing many of the holiday traditions celebrated today? It was written at a time when people thought the day should just be about religious observations and not include any kinds of celebrations. Charles Dickens, though, believed that the holiday season was a good time of year to think about the ways that we can all be nicer and kinder to one another, and show our appreciation for our families and friends. He thought that by writing about his ideas in A Christmas Carol it might change how people celebrated the holiday. His story led to the creation of many Christmas traditions in England and America, including singing Christmas carols and sending cards. Holiday songs actually existed long before A Christmas Carol was written. They started in ancient Rome when people grew tired of dark winter nights and began to look for ways to have fun with their friends and neighbors. They would often hold parties with lots of food, and plenty of singing and dancing – and many people have been celebrating winter holidays in the same way ever since. The sending of cards at the holidays also goes back to a time when people would often send a long letter to loved ones to let them know about all the things they had done during the previous year. In 1843 – the same year that Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol – a government worker named Henry Cole found himself so busy that he didn’t have time to write his yearly letter. Instead, he decided to have 1,000 cards printed up to send out to those he cared about as a way to let them know that he was thinking of them. He sold the cards that he didn’t use, and the idea eventually became very popular across the world.

Think about how you celebrate winter holidays and then act out, write about, or draw some of your holiday traditions. Do any of these traditions include helping other people? If so, how does it make you feel to help others? If you exchange gifts during the holidays, what do you like most about giving someone a present? What are other ways that you can show people that you are thinking of them during the holidays?

Circle the pictures that best represent your holiday traditions!

Draw a picture of your own that represents your most favorite holiday tradition!

ADAPTATIONS

Have you ever seen or read A Christmas Carol before? There are many different versions of this classic story. Some examples of these movies are: Mickey’s Christmas Carol (1983); The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992); and A Sesame Street Christmas Carol (2006). If you have watched any of these, you have seen an adaptation of the original A Christmas Carol. The play you are going to see is a recent adaptation, made especially for Geva!

“Merry Christmas, Bob, to you and your family.” – Fred
“Voices lift in unison with songs to say, ‘Welcome now the blessings of this Christmas Day.’” – Carolers
DEAR EDUCATOR

This section of our Discovery Guide explores relevant content, research ideas, writing prompts, discussion questions, and individual and group activities to help connect your middle school students with key themes in Geva’s production of *A Christmas Carol*. Individual selections or the unit as a whole may be distributed to your students for investigation and discovery, according to your classroom schedule and curriculum needs. Please consider that we also eagerly welcome letters and projects from students sent to the theatre for the cast, crew, and artistic team, and we are happy to share them as they arrive.

SYNOPSIS

Set in England in the 1800s, *A Christmas Carol* tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a selfish and bitter businessman who hates Christmas and cares more about money than anything or anyone else. On Christmas Eve, as he tries to fall asleep, he is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley, who died seven years ago to the day. Marley warns Scrooge that if he doesn’t change his unkind and miserly ways, he will end up like himself – a tormented soul bound by chains and agony. To assist Scrooge in becoming a better man, Marley sends three more spirits to visit Scrooge during the night. The Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge both joyful and heartbreaking memories from his past. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge both joyful and heartbreaking memories from his past. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge moments of happiness with his family that he is missing out on and visions of the home life of his clerk, Bob Cratchit, and his family. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come haunts Scrooge with the miserable life and death that await him – and others – if he does not change. Scrooge awakes from his journey in the morning as a changed man who vows to keep these lessons in his heart forevermore.

DESIGNING A GHOST

It is the decision of a play’s director and costume designer to choose what the characters in the play look like onstage. While they may choose to present the ghosts in a way that is similar to what Charles Dickens envisioned in his novel, they may also choose to portray them completely differently.

To access the worksheet for this activity, visit [http://www.GevaTheatre.org/programs-for-students/](http://www.GevaTheatre.org/programs-for-students/) and look for *A Christmas Carol* under the “Student Matinee” heading.

DEVELOPING A CHARACTER

As actors prepare to play characters, they analyze what their character’s goals and tactics are. They do this to tell the story as truthfully as possible, so that the play feels very real both to the actors and to the audience. Choose three characters from the box below. For each character, write their name, their objective, a tactic they use to try to achieve their objective, and if they succeed or fail in reaching their objective by the end of the play.

Example:

**Character:** Jacob Marley  
**Objective:** To warn Scrooge about his future and prevent him from sharing his fate.  
**Tactic:** Scare Scrooge with his own haunting image, and send three spirits to show him his own past and present, and what his future will be like if he does not change.  
**Outcome:** Succeed. Scrooge changes his ways and becomes a better man.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Cratchit / Mrs. Cratchit / Ghost of Christmas Past / Fan / Mr. Fezziwig / Ghost of Christmas Present / Tiny Tim / Martha Cratchit / Belle / Fred / Young Ebenezer / Scrooge / Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come</td>
<td></td>
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“I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate.” – Jacob Marley
“Tim and I almost joined a group of buskers outside of St. Paul’s and danced for coins all night!” – Bob Cratchit

WRITE A MONOLOGUE!

Writing a monologue in the voice of a particular character can be a fun opportunity to discover more about the character’s life and imagine details about them that the playwright may not have included in the play.

To access the worksheet for this activity, visit http://www.GevaTheatre.org/programs-for-students/ and look for A Christmas Carol under the “Student Matinee” heading.

LIFE IN LONDON FOR THE LOWER CLASS

While Dickens was alive, it is believed that over 100,000 children in London never attended a school of any kind. Children who were lucky enough to go to school may have attended “ragged schools” – or schools for poor children. In many instances, the ragged schools not only provided basic education, but also minimal food, clothing, and shelter for their students. The buildings were often rundown, over-crowded, full of disease, and covered in soot from the growing industrialization of the country.

Most children also worked in factories, iron and coal mines, shipyards, construction businesses, and as matchbox makers, stitchers, chimney sweeps, and scrap metal scavengers. Lower or working-class families could not survive without the wages earned by each family member, including children, who sometimes worked 16 hours per day and were paid much less than adults were paid.

Families who could not afford housing or find jobs usually ended up living in workhouses – huge buildings that served as a temporary home to the destitute of London. Families in workhouses were usually separated by gender and age, and they didn’t get to see each other very often. The workhouse was a humiliating and degrading place to live, and people only stayed there as a very last resort. Not unlike the ragged schools, workhouses were often dilapidated and unsanitary. Many Victorians died from illness and disease, which were very common because of unclean drinking water, improper waste disposal, and a lack of good nutrition.

Questions: Charles Dickens thought it was important to help the poor of London. Is there a group of people in Rochester that might need someone to help stand up for them, their rights, or their needs? What can be done to help them? Is there anything you can do to help them?

Activity: Comparing life in Victorian London to life in Rochester in 2019 can help us explore how life for the lower and working classes have changed over time.

To access the worksheet for this activity, visit http://www.GevaTheatre.org/programs-for-students/ and look for A Christmas Carol under the “Student Matinee” heading.

LIFE INSPIRES ART

Charles Dickens was born in England and shared a home with his father (a Navy pay-office clerk), mother, and seven siblings. Living with his large family as a young boy, Dickens happily referred to this time in his life as “a happy dream.” Charles spent his childhood reading and acting since he suffered from seizures and had to spend much of his time indoors. But these joyful years ended when Charles’ father, unable to repay money he owed, was sent to debtor’s prison. At the age of 12, Charles was sent to live alone and work in a factory to make money to support his family. His sister Fanny was sent away to school, and his mother and the rest of his brothers and sisters were sent to live in the prison with his father. Charles experienced the pains of child labor and the terrible way the poor people of London lived. When the family was released from debtor’s prison Charles attended school and became a clerk at a legal firm and, later, a reporter for the courts, where he learned about the British legal system. Dickens became somewhat of a celebrity in England, famous for his novels and goodwill, and advocating for proper care and compassion for London’s most impoverished and unrepresented citizens – especially children, the sick, and the poor.

Activities: For many artists (composers, playwrights, songwriters, painters, authors, choreographers, etc.), the art they create is inspired by their own life story.

* In the paragraph above, use a highlighter to mark any similarities you notice between Dickens’ own life and the story or characters in A Christmas Carol.

* Research an artist you like. Were any of their artistic creations inspired by their own life story?

* If you were to create a piece of art (visual, performance, written, etc.), would you use your own past as a springboard? Is there a specific event in your life you would use for inspiration?
A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

What individuals who celebrate the holiday may think of as a “traditional Christmas” did not really exist before Dickens’ time. Many ideas of what Christmas commonly encompasses – Santa Claus, Christmas trees, Christmas cards, Christmas carols, presents, wreaths, a Christmas dinner, and time with family for singing and playing games - were not established or popularized until the 1800s. Christmas’ emphasis on doing good and helping people in need came, in large part, directly from Charles Dickens. The centerpiece of the Victorian Christmas celebration was the Christmas dinner feast. Because so many people had so little money and no gifts to give, a grand dinner of delicious food was the gift everyone looked forward to enjoying and sharing the most. Of course, the contents of a family’s Christmas dinner all depended on what they could afford, but the traditional Victorian Christmas dinner usually consisted of a Christmas bird or some other meat (goose, chicken, turkey, roast beef, a boar’s head, ham, or wild game), dressing (stuffing), potatoes, sweet or savory pies (such as cranberry or mince meat), oranges, pears, apples or other fruit, a hot punch, and a traditional plum pudding.

Plum Pudding: A traditional English plum pudding was similar to a cake, and tasted sweet (and a little savory too). It was often made of some combination of porridge, suet (beef or mutton fat), breadcrumbs, raisins, prunes, currents, citron (lemon or orange peel), nuts, rum or brandy, sugar, butter, eggs, flour, milk, and spices such as nutmeg or ginger, and was cooked in a copper kettle over the fire. The making of a plum pudding was a very exciting family event. On a day called Stir-Up Sunday, several weeks before Christmas, each family member would take a turn at stirring the pudding clockwise with a wooden spoon for good luck. A ring (symbolizing marriage), a coin (symbolizing wealth), and a thimble (symbolizing a happy single life) were sometimes added to the pudding’s batter as well. Between Stir-Up Sunday and Christmas Day, the pudding was stored in a hanging bag. On Christmas it would be taken down, boiled in beef broth for a few hours, decorated with a spring of holly, doused in brandy, lit on fire for presentation, and then served by the head of the household with a blessing for all who would eat it.

Discussion Questions: Is plum pudding what you expected it would be like? Would you try a traditional Victorian plum pudding if it were offered to you? Why or why not? Why do you think plum pudding was such an important Christmas ritual for Victorian families? Can you think of another dish that families in another culture might make together (like cookies in America, tamales in Guatemala, hallacas in Venezuela, stollen in Germany, or bigos in Poland)?

* Is there a meal or special dish that you and your family enjoy during a particular holiday? What foods or drinks are included in that meal?
* Why do you eat the dish you described above? Does it have a special meaning or significance? Is it a tradition?
* Do you eat any of the same foods during your holiday meal that the Cratchits or other Victorian Londoners might have eaten during their Christmas dinner? If so, which foods do you and your family still eat today?
* Are there any dishes included in the Victorian Christmas feast that you would like to try if you had the opportunity? Are there any you would not try?
* Does your family celebrate any winter holidays? If so, which holiday? What are your family traditions during this holiday?

WINTER HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

A Christmas Carol is set in the context of the Christian tradition of Christmas, but there are many more winter holidays that are celebrated by other faiths and cultures in America and around the world.

To access the worksheet for this activity, visit http://www.GevaTheatre.org/programs-forstudents/ and look for A Christmas Carol under the “Student Matinee” heading.

WRITING PROMPTS

* What does it mean to have the “holiday spirit”? How is it similar among different cultures and faiths? How are the various winter holidays unique from one another?
* What are the most important things in your life? What brings true happiness?
* What makes someone a good person?
* If you could change one thing from your past, what would it be, and why?
* Why did Charles Dickens write A Christmas Carol?
* What do you think Dickens wanted you to take away from the story?

“Every idiot who goes about with ‘Merry Christmas’ on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!” – Scrooge
DEAR EDUCATOR

The following pages were designed with your high school students in mind. The focus for the first two pages of this section is on the “why” behind what is, arguably, Dickens’ most famous work. We hope that you will see these pages as launching points not just for your students’ explorations of *A Christmas Carol* as a work of fiction but, also, as a path to consider the ways that Dickens’ deeply-held concerns are still with us – be they child labor, extreme poverty, or poor working conditions (and the ways in which those topics intersect). The final page of this section invites your students to consider the myriad of design choices that are presented in our production of *A Christmas Carol*. The way that a story is told, of course, is just as important as the “why.” And when the “how” is combined with the “why,” that’s when the magic happens.

SYNOPSIS

*A Christmas Carol* begins on Christmas Eve in 1843, exactly seven years after the death of Ebenezer Scrooge’s business partner, Jacob Marley. Scrooge hates Christmas and has no place in his life for kindness, compassion, or charity. He refuses his nephew Fred’s dinner invitation, and rudely turns away two gentlemen who seek a donation to provide a Christmas dinner for the poor. His only “Christmas gift” is allowing his overworked and underpaid clerk, Bob Cratchit, Christmas Day off with pay – which he only does in order to keep up with social convention.

Returning home that evening, Scrooge is visited by Marley’s ghost. Marley warns him to change his ways, lest Scrooge suffer the same miserable afterlife as Marley. He alerts Scrooge that he will be visited by three ghosts who will accompany him to various locations with the hope of helping him to experience a transformation.

The first of the spirits, the Ghost of Christmas Past, takes Scrooge to Christmas scenes of his youth, hoping to remind him of a time when he was more innocent. The second spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Present, takes Scrooge to several current Christmas settings – most notably the home of his impoverished clerk Bob Cratchit, introducing his youngest son, Tiny Tim, who is seriously ill but cannot receive treatment due to Scrooge’s unwillingness to pay Cratchit a decent wage. The third spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, shows Scrooge dire visions of the future, including Tiny Tim’s death, if he does not learn and act upon what he has witnessed.

Scrooge awakens on Christmas morning with joy and love in his heart and decides to spend the day with his nephew’s family after anonymously sending a prize turkey to the Cratchit home for Christmas dinner. Scrooge has become a different man overnight and now treats his fellow men with kindness, generosity, and compassion, gaining a reputation as a man who knows “how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.”

ABOUT CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812, the second of eight children. Dickens was an eager student with a deep love of reading and writing. Unfortunately, Dickens’ father incurred debts that he was unable to repay, and when Charles was twelve years old, his father was sent to debtor’s prison while Dickens was sent to a factory to help support his family. After his father received an inheritance left by a deceased relative and repaid the debt, Dickens was able to leave the factory and return to school and his family. Charles left school at age 15 to become a law clerk and then a reporter. He began writing stories in 1836 under a pseudonym. The stories, called *The Pickwick Papers*, were published in monthly installments. He became the editor of the magazine that published his next novel, *Oliver Twist* - also in monthly installments. Dickens went on to write 13 more novels before his death in 1870. Many of his works deal with social issues and reforms of the day, especially poverty and education, which was certainly the influence of his time as a child laborer.

“*I am not the man I was! This is not the man I will be!*” – Scrooge

LONDON IN THE 1800S

During the 1800s, London was one of the most advanced cities in the world. Britain was in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, and its capital was reaping the financial benefits of such growth. The city, however, was also suffering the consequences of these rapid advances. The price of this explosive growth was untold squalor throughout the city.

Imagine nineteenth-century London: The homes of the burgeoning upper and middle classes in extremely close proximity to areas of unbelievable poverty and filth. Street sweepers fought a losing battle in an attempt to keep the streets clean of manure, the result of thousands of horse-drawn carriages. The city’s many chimney pots belched coal smoke, resulting in soot settling everywhere. In many parts of the city, raw sewage and human waste flowed into gutters that eventually emptied into the Thames River, a water source used by the entire population.

Why Dickens Wrote A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens was particularly concerned with the health, treatment, and well-being of children, especially those affected by the results of England’s rapid industrialization. By the mid-nineteenth century, for example, it is believed that well over a hundred-thousand children in London had never attended a school of any kind. Those children who did not attend school worked. Many worked in factories and mines. Some children began work at the age of three, and in some of the more dangerous workplaces — such as iron or coal mines — the life expectancy generally didn’t exceed the mid-twenties. Children were often the preferred workforce in these industries because they could be paid less than adults, often no strength was required to operate a machine and, as these machines were completely new, there was no need for experienced adult laborers. It was not uncommon in the earlier part of nineteenth-century England for children to work 16 hour days (the same as adults).

One of the ways that Dickens sought to draw attention to the plight of the poor was through the use of his own celebrity. Dickens’ works — novels, serials, and essays alike — were extremely popular. They were accessible, easily affordable, and often spoke directly to the experiences of his readers. As a result, Dickens attracted crowds wherever he went and often gave well-attended readings of his writings. It was Dickens’ belief that he should use this fame to highlight the needs of those less fortunate Londoners, be it more sanitary living and working conditions, clean water, or better equipped schools.

Discussion Question: Consider the use of a celebrity’s fame as a way to draw attention to a particular social issue. Has a celebrity’s involvement introduced you to an issue or social cause? Was it effective? Did this introduction cause you to explore the issue in greater detail? What actions did you take as a result of this exploration?

“It is more than desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and Destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time.” — Subscription Gentleman
Think about the evolution of a story as it becomes a play. There is a script: words on a page put there by a playwright. There are actors who have memorized those words in order to share that story with us. But once that story finds its way to the stage, it takes a group of designers to bring it to life, and to help us experience the sensation of living in the world of the play. We asked several of the designers of *A Christmas Carol* to consider their hopes for your experience with the story.

**Lindsay Jones, Sound Designer**
“*This production has so much music that is beautiful and lush, full of spirit. With sound, I can bring the darkness; the moments of tension and danger that contrast with that.*”

**Gregg Coffin, Composer and Lyricist**
“I hope my music adds to the peaks and the valleys of Scrooge’s journey. The ‘songs’ in this production are specifically written to be songs for a play with music. That means none of them develop character or move plot along. All the sung moments elaborate on textual ideas that have already been presented.”

**Adam Koch, Scenic Designer**
“For this production, we wanted to strip away the heavy adornment and the usual formal decorative baggage that can come with a telling of this traditional Dickensian story. One of the thrills and challenges of designing for this production is the opportunity to make a seemingly simple space magically transform into all the haunting, joyous, scary, splendid, freezing, cozy, and infinite worlds within *A Christmas Carol.*”

**Dan Scully, Video Designer**
“*While looking at collections of Victorian engravings of London, I discovered each technique of engraving imparts its own emotional charge. I’m trying to illuminate the different kinds of experiences each ghost brings.*”

**Devon Painter, Costume Designer**
“*Scrooge probably thinks he and his life are basically alright, and Marley is the first warning saying: No, you’re not at all alright. Marley needs to be truly scary, gruesome enough to be truly gross and uncomfortable.*”

**Activities**
In small groups, create your own design team with one person handling each of the specific design elements. Don’t forget to include a Lighting Designer. Paul Hackenmueller, the Lighting Designer for *A Christmas Carol* wasn’t included on this page, but his work is extremely important to your understanding and enjoyment of the show. Consider all of the ways in which the different design elements will collaborate with one another, and how they can enhance the telling of the story.

Select one design element and track how many different approaches that designer uses over the course of the play. Why do you think they made those specific design choices? What different choices would you have made if you were the designer?

*“Do you believe in me or not?” – Jacob Marley*
UPCOMING STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES

Looks Like Pretty 4/16 and 4/21 at 10:30am - For middle school audiences and up
Where Did We Sit on the Bus? 4/28, 4/30, and 5/5 at 10:30am - For middle school audiences and up

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Geva Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following individuals, businesses and foundations for their support of the theatre’s education programs: (Donors listed are for the time period 8/1/18 to 7/31/19)

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