



CHARLES DICKENS'  
**A CHRISTMAS  
CAROL**

**STUDY GUIDE**

GEFFEN  
**PLAYHOUSE**

**CHARLES DICKENS'**  
**A CHRISTMAS**  
**CAROL**

WORLD PREMIERE ADAPTATION IN THE  
GIL CATES THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE  
**NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 9, 2018**

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Amy Levinson, Rachel Weigardt-Egel, Brian Dunning, Wendell Pascual,  
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STUDY GUIDE WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY

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This publication is to be used for educational purposes only.

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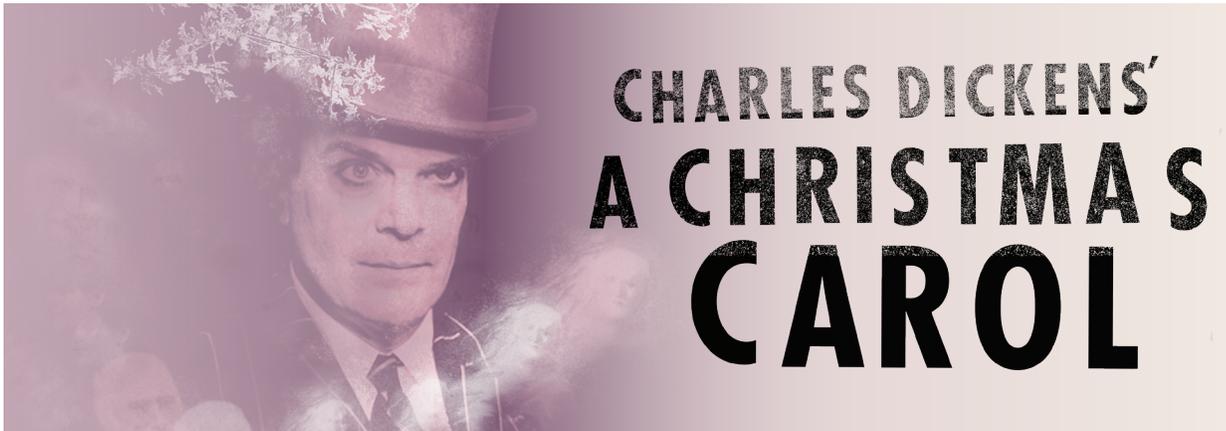
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## SECTION 1

# ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION



## CHARLES DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL



ADAPTED BY

**Jefferson Mays,  
Susan Lyons  
& Michael Arden**

DIRECTED BY

**Michael Arden**

SCENIC & COSTUME DESIGNER

**Dane Laffrey**

LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Ben Stanton**

SOUND DESIGNER

**Joshua D. Reid**

PROJECTION DESIGNER

**Lucy Mackinnon**

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

**Ross Jackson**

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

**Sue Karutz**

SPECTRAL VISUALIZATION

**Matt Wool**

## SYNOPSIS

Jefferson Mays' one-person performance of *A Christmas Carol* has been adapted from readings given by its renowned British author Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Through Mays' narration and portrayal of characters, we enter the world of Ebenezer Scrooge, a wealthy businessman living in London in the early 1800s. A miserly loner who does not believe in celebrating Christmas, he declines his nephew Fred's invitation to join his family for the holiday. That night, the ghost of Scrooge's business partner Jacob Marley appears and warns him that the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future will soon visit him. Marley urges him to learn from these encounters and not end up as he has, forever bound by heavy chains that symbolize his selfishness and greed. Scrooge's journey with all three Ghosts forces him to reckon with past disappointments, his stingy, elitist view of life and a wretched future. These experiences, as well as witnessing the open-heartedness of his employee Bob Cratchit and his family, inspire Scrooge to embrace a more generous and, therefore, joyous way of life.

**SETTING** London, England

**TIME** Christmas Past, Present and Future

**RUNNING TIME** Approximately 90 minutes. *There will be no intermission.*

## ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHIES

**JEFFERSON MAYS** (Performer / Adaptor)

Jefferson Mays has appeared at Geffen Playhouse in *I Am My Own Wife* and *Yes, Prime Minister!* Broadway credits are *Oslo*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *The Best Man*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Pygmalion*, *Journey's End* and *Of Thee I Sing*. Off-Broadway, he has performed in *Measure for Measure*, *Lydie Breeze*, *Quills* and many more. Regional credits include *My Fair Lady*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Tartuffe*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Peter Pan*. Film and television credits include the upcoming *I Am the Night* and the Coen brothers' *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, *Inherent Vice*, *Rebel in the Rye*, *I am Michael*, *The Notorious Bettie Page*, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *The Americans*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Nurse Jackie*, *The Closer* and *Dolley Madison*. Awards include Tony, Lucille Lortel, Drama Desks, Obies, Outer Critic's Circle, Helen Hayes, Elliot Norton, Theatre World, Drama League, Jefferson, Drama-logic and Helpmann. Mays received his B.A. from Yale College and an M.F.A. from University of California, San Diego. He is married to Susan Lyons.

**SUSAN LYONS** (Adaptor)

After graduating from Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art, Susan worked extensively in theater, film, television and radio, playing a wide range of leading roles with all the major companies. She was awarded the Marten Bequest in 1993. Married to Jefferson Mays, she directed him in the national and international tours of *I Am My Own Wife*.

**MICHAEL ARDEN** (Adaptor)

Michael Arden began his theater career at age ten playing Tiny Tim in the Midland Community Theatre's production of *A Christmas Carol* in Midland, Texas. He is humbled to be working with the singular Jefferson Mays and all the incredible artists and technicians—including his longtime friend and collaborator Dane Laffrey—on this reimagining of Charles Dickens' masterpiece. Past directing credits include Deaf West Theatre's *Spring Awakening* (Tony nomination), *Once on This Island* (Tony nomination and the 2018 winner of Best Revival of a Musical), *The Pride*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *My Fair Lady* and *Annie* at the Hollywood Bowl. He hopes Scrooge's visitations might inspire us all to lead more honest, empathetic and benevolent lives. God bless us, every one! @michaelarden

**CHARLES DICKENS** (Playwright)

Charles Dickens, one of the most popular and prolific writers of the nineteenth century, was born in 1812, in Portsea, England. In 1824, his father was arrested for debt and while he was imprisoned, Dickens, then only 12, was forced to work at a blacking factory. After his father was released from prison, Dickens attended school in London. In 1827, he was taken out of school and worked in a law office and later as a freelance reporter. In 1833, he began publishing *The Pickwick Papers* in monthly installments. Over the next six years, Dickens published four novels in serial form including *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839). In 1842, he went on a lecture tour of the United States and Canada, where he urged the abolition of slavery. He wrote *A Christmas Carol*, the first of his popular Christmas books, in 1844. In 1853, Dickens gave the first of many public readings from his work. During this period, Dickens wrote his most successful novels, including *David Copperfield* (1849-1850), *Bleak House* (1852-1853), *Hard Times* (1854), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860-1861). After several tours of the British Isles and America to give public readings, Dickens suffered a mild stroke. He died in London in 1870, leaving his final novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* unfinished.

## SECTION 2

# THEMES & TOPICS

## EMBRACING THE SPIRIT OF HOLIDAY SEASONS

### PAGAN (adj)

Relating to an ancient religion that had many gods and praised nature (macmillandictionary.com)

### PHOTO CREDIT

Pixabay/PD



**The History of Christmas in Europe:** Christmas is a secular and religious holiday, rooted in ancient pagan rituals and Christian beliefs and traditions that were centered in Europe. In northern climates, people feasted to revel in the end of harvests and the beginning of the winter solstice on December 21 which promised the eventual return of light filled days. Putting up a decorated tree was a 17th century German invention based on the pagan ritual of bringing evergreen boughs into the home, during winter celebrations. The Santa Claus of today descended from England's Father Christmas, who evolved from pagan beliefs about "spirits who traveled in the sky during mid-winter (livescience.com)," and did not bestow gifts. While there is no directive in the Bible to acknowledge Jesus Christ's birth, church leaders decided to do so around the 4th century A.D. to emphasize Christ's existence as a human being, and they selected late December as the time to honor when he was born, in church services.

**Christmas in England:** After Puritans assumed power in England, they banned Christmas in 1644 because its pagan-based traditions were considered not strict enough religiously. (Christmas was also banned by Puritans in America's New England from 1659 until 1681.) Up until then whole villages would celebrate for 12 days, by burning a Yule log and engaging in games and feasts. When observing Christmas was allowed again in 1660, it did not resume as meaningful a place in people's lives. During the Industrial Revolution (spanning the late 18th to mid-19th centuries), many rural citizens moved from the countryside to cities, where they had little sense of community and rushed through the holiday in order to get back to work.

**VICTORIAN ERA**

The period in which Queen Victoria reigned in Britain, from 1819 until her death in 1901.

The era was “characterized by rapid change and developments in nearly every sphere - from advances in medical, scientific and technological knowledge to changes in population growth and location. Over time, this rapid transformation deeply affected the country’s mood: an age that began with a confidence and optimism leading to economic boom and prosperity eventually gave way to uncertainty and doubt regarding Britain’s place in the world. Today we associate the nineteenth century with the Protestant work ethic, family values, religious observation and institutional faith.”  
(history.ac.uk)

**SOURCES**

[tinyurl.com/DickensUCSC](http://tinyurl.com/DickensUCSC)

[tinyurl.com/PaganismLive-Science](http://tinyurl.com/PaganismLive-Science)

[tinyurl.com/PuritanBanChristmas](http://tinyurl.com/PuritanBanChristmas)

[tinyurl.com/LasPosadasFranciscan](http://tinyurl.com/LasPosadasFranciscan)

[tinyurl.com/FilipinxProcession](http://tinyurl.com/FilipinxProcession)

[tinyurl.com/ChabadChanukah](http://tinyurl.com/ChabadChanukah)

[tinyurl.com/KwanzaaSymbols](http://tinyurl.com/KwanzaaSymbols)

During the Victorian era, the time in which Charles Dickens wrote, Queen Victoria’s activities with her family inspired a host of traditions, including decorating the home, sending Christmas cards, exchanging gifts, which up until that point had usually occurred on New Year’s Day, and gathering with family members to share a lavish meal. Charles Dickens not only drew on these traditions to create *A Christmas Carol*, he also popularized them and is credited by the Dickens Project, based at the University of California at Santa Cruz, with making the celebration of Christmas accessible to nuclear families, through his winning portrayal of the Cratchits.

**Winter Holidays Across Cultures:** Holiday traditions have also existed within cultures not based in Europe but influenced by Catholicism. *Las Posadas*, a ritual practiced in Mexico and Guatemala, centers on Joseph and Mary seeking a place in which Mary can give birth to Jesus Christ. A procession visits various houses and is turned away until it is welcomed at a residence, where participants feast and children play with a piñata shaped like a star. In the Philippines, folk theater known as *Panunuluyan* offers a similar re-enactment of Joseph and Mary’s search.

During *Chanukah* (the Festival of Lights), which usually takes place in December, those of Jewish heritage light candles each night to honor how after the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was reclaimed from the Greeks in ancient times, a one-day allotment of oil provided illumination for 8 nights. Festivities include prayers, songs, favorite foods and gifts.

The cultural tradition of *Kwanzaa*, which is usually celebrated by African Americans during the month of December, affirms core values through symbols “reflective of African culture and contributive to community building and reinforcement (officialkwanzaawebsite.org),” and provides an opportunity for personal reflection.

**The Spirit of the Season:** Just as these traditions honor the spiritual aspects of their respective holidays, by revering the birth of Christ, reflecting gratitude or strengthening identity and connections among community members, so did Dickens highlight the “spirit of the season” in *A Christmas Carol*. By focusing on Scrooge’s conversion from a negative to life-loving person, which occurs in large part through his observations of the ever-respectful and hopeful Bob Cratchit and his family, Dickens’ tale is about honoring the humanity in all people. His message has particular resonance in current times in the United States, when many are not only concerned about the focus on the consumption of extravagant decorations, gifts and food during Christmas, but also the lack of fellowship that seems so pervasive in our land, at this time.

**DISCUSSION POINT**

What is your favorite winter holiday tradition? How does it provide comfort or inspiration or make you feel connected to others?

## RELEASE FROM SELF-IMPRISONMENT

**MISER** (noun)

Someone who has a great desire to possess money and hates to spend it, sometimes living like a poor person because of this. (dictionary.cambridge.org)

**SOURCES**

[tinyurl.com/WikipediaJElwes](http://tinyurl.com/WikipediaJElwes)

[tinyurl.com/ExtremeFrugality](http://tinyurl.com/ExtremeFrugality)

[tinyurl.com/OCPDFacts](http://tinyurl.com/OCPDFacts)

**PHOTO CREDIT**

Pixabay/PD



In *A Christmas Carol*, we first encounter Scrooge as a penny-pinching, cynical outcast. He is so reluctant to pay for coal, his overworked and underpaid clerk Bob Cratchit tries to warm himself with a candle in the bitter cold of the office they share.

**Extreme Frugality:** John Elwes (1714-1789) a wealthy member of British Parliament (1772-1784), whose mother and uncle were well-known misers and who went to extremes not to spend any of his fortune, is said to have been Dickens' inspiration for the character of Scrooge. He'd go to sleep when it became dark to avoid paying for candles, ate rotting food, wore clothes even as they became rags, allowed his several residences to fall into terrible disrepair, and refused medical help for injuries. Considered "eccentric" in his time, Elwes would likely be diagnosed now as suffering from obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, a symptom of which, according to Barbara Van Noppen of the International OCD Foundation, is "extreme frugality for no reason." No doubt influenced by the miserly habits of his family members, Elwes also likely inherited a predisposition for the anxiety disorder underlying his severe "underspending."

**Scrooge's Journey:** While not as far gone as Elwes, Scrooge is not only extremely stingy, he also withholds feelings for others, as those with this affliction usually do. Just as misers feel deeply insecure about having enough money, so do they fear being manipulated or controlled if they open themselves to others. A major disappointment in love as a young man, resulting from his obsession with money, likely led Scrooge to cutting off emotional attachments to people and, in effect, imprisoning himself. Scrooge is freed when he heeds the warnings of the Ghosts who appear and allows himself to care about the fate of the Cratchits' youngest son Tiny Tim.

Stories of psychological transformation are satisfying because in the hands of a skilled author we first revile a deeply flawed character and then are uplifted as they make life-affirming choices and connect to others. We are happy for them and, if we have known despair or alienation, we often experience hope for ourselves.

**DISCUSSION POINT**

What destructive attitudes might be blocking fulfillment in your life?  
What might inspire you to change?

# THE AUTHOR AS SOCIAL CRITIC

## INDUSTRIAL

### REVOLUTION (noun)

In modern history, the process of change from an agrarian and handicraft economy to one dominated by industry and machine manufacturing. This process began in Britain in the 18th century and from there spread to other parts of the world. (britannica.com)

## SOURCES

[tinyurl.com/DickensUCSC](http://tinyurl.com/DickensUCSC)

[tinyurl.com/IdustRevChildSlaves](http://tinyurl.com/IdustRevChildSlaves)

[tinyurl.com/DickensDiniejko](http://tinyurl.com/DickensDiniejko)

[tinyurl.com/CarolOrigins](http://tinyurl.com/CarolOrigins)

[tinyurl.com/BCCCarol](http://tinyurl.com/BCCCarol)

[tinyurl.com/WEFWealthyResearch](http://tinyurl.com/WEFWealthyResearch)

*A Christmas Carol* has endured as a timeless classic because it evokes the spirit of a beloved holiday and is a tale of transformation. It is also seeks to right social injustices.

As Dr. Andrezej Diniejko states, “*A Christmas Carol* was Dickens’s response to the Children’s Employment Commission Report on the miseries suffered by many poor children...As a social commentator, Dickens saw the need for the reform of English society; he urged that the wealthy and privileged exhibit a greater humanitarianism towards the poor and the vulnerable (The Victorian Web, 2012).”

**Fighting Child Exploitation:** Between the time Dickens was born in 1812 and he wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, London’s population had increased from 1 to 3 million people because of the Industrial Revolution. The resulting mass production of goods for a rising middle class required many more workers, and children provided cheap slave labor. At first Dickens wanted to write a political pamphlet to address the terrible living and working conditions and inadequate schooling to which such children were subjected. He could relate personally because he’d had to leave school to work in a shoe-blackening factory at the age of twelve when his family could not make ends meet. He’d also seen his father and other family members suffer the shame and privations of living in a debtors’ prison.

**Addressing Attitudes of the Wealthy:** Instead of writing a political tract, Dickens decided to create a story that would open people’s hearts and minds. Through his depiction of Scrooge, he shed light on the patronizing and punitive attitudes the wealthy had for the poor. Many believed that charity made the disadvantaged “lazy” and that the conditions of workhouses and prisons should be so dire they would serve as deterrents for falling behind financially. Bob Cratchit, who has so much less, is much more generous than Scrooge. Interestingly, researchers Paul Piff and Angela Robinson have explored how wealth can make people “selfish and stingy,” and how “it is those with fewer resources who attend more to the needs of others (World Economic Forum, 2016).” They found those with less financial security socialize more than those with means, because they are more dependent on relationships not money to help them through hard times. They are also more empathetic and give more to charity. When the gap between rich and poor is pronounced, the researchers noted a tendency for the rich to equate “being better off” with “being better” than others. With more economic equality, “the wealthy are less likely to feel disconnected from and superior to others, and are more likely to behave generously with their resources.”

**Impact:** Through *A Christmas Carol* and his other masterworks, Dickens not only advanced Western literature, he also “contributed significantly to the emergence of public opinion which was gaining an increasing influence on the decisions of the authorities (Diniejko, The Victorian Web, 2012).”

## DISCUSSION POINT

What novel, play, or film has inspired new thinking about a social issue? Why? Were you prompted to speak with others or take action? If so, how?

# GHOSTS: CONNECTING TO THE UNKNOWABLE

## MEDIUM (noun)

an individual held to be a channel of communication between the earthly world and a world of spirits (merriam.webster.com)

## SÉANCE (noun)

a meeting where people try to communicate with the dead, often with the help of someone who claims to have special powers to do this (dictionary.cambridge.org)

## SOURCES

[tinyurl.com/LiveScienceGhosts](http://tinyurl.com/LiveScienceGhosts)

[tinyurl.com/AOGhostsVictorianEra](http://tinyurl.com/AOGhostsVictorianEra)

## PHOTO CREDIT

Pixabay/PD



**Belief in Ghosts:** The belief that the souls of the dead can interact with the living has existed from ancient times to the present. According to educator and psychologist Benjamin Radford, “43 percent of Americans believe in ghosts (*Live Science*, 2017).” In the Victorian era, *A Christmas Carol* likely tapped into what science writer Dan Nosowitz describes as a “deep love of magic and paranormal spectacles... Mediums and séances were fantastically popular, as were hypnotism shows (*Atlas Obscura*, 2015).” He points to the speed with which the Industrial Revolution was changing life as being “terrifying: all of a sudden, magic was made ordinary and tangible.”

**Do Spirits Exist?** Ghosts have mainly been felt as mysterious presences and through unexplained movements of objects and the air, or heard through sounds or spoken words. Some claim to have seen ghosts in embodied, sometimes translucent form, wearing clothes, like the spirits Scrooge encounters. The existence of ghosts has never been proven, because, according to Radford, they are either not real or scientific methods that can record their presence have not yet been developed. He also raises the question of whether they are material or not: if manifested physically they can move objects; if insubstantial, they cannot.

**Comfort & Guidance:** Whether the existence of ghosts can be proven or not, believing in them can help us in different ways. It is deeply comforting to envision a loved one who has died continuing in an afterlife and retaining the capacity to look after us. Acknowledging the presence of ghosts adds intrigue to old residences and keeps a human dimension alive in places where tragic events occurred. Writers and filmmakers have used ghosts to reveal deeper truths about characters as people based in reality grapple with the needs or vengeful impulses of souls that have not moved on.

**The Fear Factor:** In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens has three intimidating Ghosts open up different moments in time to teach Scrooge unnerving lessons that transform his life for the better. Dickens, as well as those who have presented this work in different media since, have benefitted from audiences’ appetites for being frightened by ghost stories while also being entertained and moved by them.

# THE CHALLENGES OF PERFORMING A ONE-PERSON SHOW

According to Simon Callow in his article for the British Library, Charles Dickens was not only an incredibly prolific and skilled writer but also a talented performer. He had aspirations to be a professional actor as a young man, ended up becoming a journalist, continued to involve himself in amateur productions and went on speaking tours that thrilled audiences in Britain and the United States. His performances, in which he stood at a podium, read narration and brought his characters vividly to life, were precursors to a genre of theatre popularized in the United States by Ruth Draper in the 1930s, and advanced since by artists such as Lily Tomlin, John Leguizamo, Anna Devereaux Smith and Daniel Beaty, in which one performer enacts a collection of different characters.

To better understand the demands of performing a one-person show, read the excerpt from *A Christmas Carol* below, thinking about the following:

- Who are the characters, what are their attitudes, and what is happening in this scene?
- What vocal and physical choices will you make to convey who they are and their roles in the scene to an audience – without identifying them?

BOB CRATCHIT

My dears. God bless us!

NARRATOR

Which all the family re-echoed.

TINY TIM

God bless us every one!

NARRATOR

–said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father’s side upon his stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

(SCROOGE steps away from the scene to converse with the SPIRIT.)

SCROOGE

Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live,

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

I see a vacant seat in the chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, The child will die.

SCROOGE

No, no, Oh no, Kind Spirit! Say he will be spared.

Once you have made choices, incorporate them as you read the scene aloud to make each character distinctive. Then find a partner for whom to perform the scene. Ask for feedback on how clear the characters and their attitudes were. Then perform the scene again.

**Reflection:** What did you learn about performing different characters, as if you were in a one-person show?

## SECTION 3

# PERSONNEL PROFILE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSS JACKSON

### **How long have you worked as a Production Stage Manager at the Geffen?**

I've been working as a PSM here at the Geffen for a little over a year.

### **What are your primary responsibilities while a play is in rehearsal, and once a play has opened?**

The most important thing that I do from day one to closing is work with the other artists and professionals around me. In rehearsal, the stage management team is charged with tracking all the movement of the cast and props, scenery and costumes so that we can replicate what is created in the rehearsal room on the stage. When the show opens, it becomes our responsibility to maintain the artistic integrity of the show. The director, cast and designers have taken the playwright's text and meticulously fabricated a full-realized world for the audience to observe and enjoy. It's our job, as stage managers, to make sure that the audience that watches a Tuesday evening performance sees the same show as the audience that will be present later for Sunday's matinee.

### **What educational and professional experiences led to stage management as your line of work?**

I ended up stage managing my first show in the freshman year of my undergraduate Theatre Arts program. I was attending the University of Arkansas at Little Rock at the time. I was in a very unstable point in my life, dealing with personal issues and challenges, and finding stage management uncovered something stable and reliable for me. I found that I loved the responsibility and trust that goes into facilitating the creation of a living, breathing piece of art, and I've stuck with it ever since.

### **How did you come to the Geffen?**

Jill Barnes, the Geffen's Associate Production Manager, was the Company Manager for a show that I did down in Laguna after moving back to LA from NYC. Due to the rapport we had established throughout that production, she was kind enough to offer me opportunities at the Geffen. Since then, I've been lucky enough to work here non-stop.



### **What do you find most challenging about your work?**

Probably the most challenging thing about stage management is resetting your approach show-by-show. I get to work on several shows throughout the year, each with its own company of actors and creators. It's very exciting to collaborate each time with new people from different backgrounds, who have had different professional and life experiences. Since every person has their own unique way of expressing themselves, it can be like learning a new language each time as well. While that can be challenging, I believe very strongly in supporting each company member's humanity by learning how they prefer to communicate.

### **What do you find most satisfying?**

I love facilitating the creation of new worlds. Going from telling the story of four Detroit auto workers facing the closing of their plant and the threat to their livelihood in *Skeleton Crew*, to exploring death and the transfixed nature of communication beyond our lively bounds in *The Untranslatable Secrets of Nikki Corona*, to sharing the wonderful and mysterious story of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in ways the audience has never seen before, has been an extraordinary opportunity. Productions like those tell vividly conceived stories about experience, retribution, heartache, transformation and healing that resonate with a wide spectrum of audience members. Getting to facilitate and support that kind of work is incredibly fulfilling. ■

## SECTION 4

# AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Going to the theater is a unique experience, and we all need to be mindful of “audience etiquette,” or how to behave at the theater.

**The Audience’s Role:** The audience plays an essential role at the performance of a play. Without an audience, the actors are only rehearsing. Audience members’ concentrated silence and responses, such as laughing and applauding, provide energy to the actors as they bring the performance to life.

**Behaviors to Avoid:** Since the actors can hear the audience so clearly, it is important not to engage in behaviors that might disturb or distract them—and fellow audience members.

These actions include:

- Talking
- Texting
- Allowing cell phones to ring
- Taking photographs or video
- Getting up to leave before intermission or the end of the show (unless it is a true emergency)
- Eating or drinking
- Unwrapping candy or cough drops.

**Use of Social Media:** We appreciate you sharing your Geffen Playhouse experience via social media, but ask that you **do not do so inside the theater, where the use of electronic devices is prohibited.**

We recommend that you post your status **in the lobby after the performance**, and invite you to tag @GeffenPlayhouse and use #GeffenPlayhouse to share your experience and continue the conversation with us online.

**Audience Awareness Activity:** Before going to the Geffen Playhouse for the first time, compare and contrast the experience of seeing a live play with:

- going to the movies
- attending a live sporting event
- watching television.

### DISCUSSION POINT

If you were onstage performing a play, how would you want the audience to behave?

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Depending on the time available and your group members' interests, guide them to respond to questions selected from those suggested below. Encourage everyone to participate, while having respect for differing opinions. Individuals can share their thoughts with a partner or in a small group. Ask for several volunteers to share their groups' answers with the larger group.

- Overall, how did you feel while watching *A Christmas Carol*? Engrossed? Distanced? Entertained? Bored? Conflicted? Moved? Inspired? What made you feel this way?
- At which points were you most engaged in the story? Why? At which points were you least engaged? Why? (Provide evidence from the production.)
- Did experiencing this play affirm or make you reconsider the importance of holiday traditions in your life? If so, how?
- After watching this play, are you more or less convinced that stories have the power to open minds? Why?
- How did Ebenezer Scrooge's journey from being miserly to taking joy in life impact you? Did you find it inspiring? If so, why? If not, why not?
- What did you find surprising or mysterious about this production?
- What did you appreciate most about the performance by the actor? How did he bring the whole story to life?
- How did the set, costumes, props, lighting and projections contribute to the impact of the play?
- Have you seen a live performance of *A Christmas Carol* before? If so, compare and contrast the productions? Which did you enjoy more? Why?
- Would you recommend this production of *A Christmas Carol* to other theatergoers? Why, or why not?

## SECTION 5

# RESOURCES

**WATCH** a filmed version of *A Christmas Carol*. DVDs of productions from different eras are available at the Los Angeles Public Library. (Contact [www.lapl.org](http://www.lapl.org).)

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**LEARN** about Charles Dickens, one of the world's most popular authors and a social reformer, at the British Library at [tinyurl.com/DickensBritLib](http://tinyurl.com/DickensBritLib).

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**LEARN** how Christmas evolved during the Victorian era in Britain at [tinyurl.com/BBCVictorianChristmas](http://tinyurl.com/BBCVictorianChristmas).

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**PARTICIPATE** in a yearly, countywide, multi-cultural holiday celebration presented at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the Music Center of Los Angeles. (Information at [www.lacountyarts.org](http://www.lacountyarts.org).)

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**VISIT** the Enchanted Forest of Light at the Descanso Gardens in La Canada Flintridge, during the holidays. (Go to [descansogardens.org](http://descansogardens.org) or call 818-949-4200.)

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**LEARN** more about working conditions in the United States from a 2015 survey conducted by the Rand Corporation at [tinyurl.com/RandStudyWork](http://tinyurl.com/RandStudyWork).

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**VOLUNTEER** to help in-need citizens through programs such as VolunteerLA, supported by the Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles to encourage increased volunteerism in Los Angeles, which offers a wide range of service options. (Contact [volunteer.lamayor.org](http://volunteer.lamayor.org).)

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