

AUDIENCE GUIDE

Dickens'

# A Christmas Carol



December 1 – 23, 2017

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# CHARACTER MAP



CHRISTMAS PAST



CHRISTMAS PRESENT



CHRISTMAS YET  
TO COME



## EBENEZER SCROOGE

The protagonist; a bitter old creditor who does not believe in the spirit of Christmas, nor does he possess any sympathy for the poor.



## JACOB MARLEY

"Dead to begin with."

Ebenezer Scrooge's former business partner, who died seven years prior. His ghost appears before Scrooge on Christmas Eve to warn of him of the Three Spirits, and urges him to choose a new path in life.

## GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

A lively spirit who spreads Christmas cheer.

## GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

Scrooge fears this ghost's premonitions.

## GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Invokes images from Scrooge's past to serve as a reminder that Christmas once meant something to him.

## FRED

Scrooge's optimistic, kind-hearted nephew; he overlooks Scrooge's negativity.

## OLD JOE, MRS. DILBER, LAUNDRESS, AND UNDERTAKER'S MAN

In the future, they meet to share in the profits of selling-off Scrooge's belongings.

## MR. & MRS. FEZZIWIG

Mr. Fezziwig was Scrooge and Marley's former boss at the warehouse. A generous man, who held Christmas parties for his staff every year.

## BOB CRATCHIT

Scrooge's overworked and underpaid clerk. Although he and his family struggle for money, they carry on and look towards the future.

## OTHERS:

## NARRATOR

Kindly provides story information to you, our spectators.

## BELLE

Scrooge's former fiancée; he chose greed over love.

## MRS. CRATCHIT

Bob's wife.

## TINY TIM

Bob's youngest son; crippled at birth and equipped with a loving spirit.

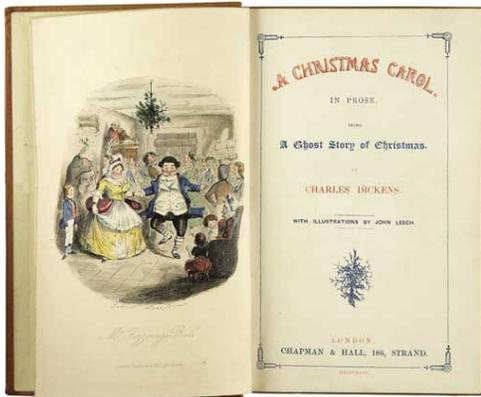
## GENTLEPEOPLE, CAROLERS, PARTY GUESTS, SERVANTS, ETC.

## FAN

Scrooge's older sister and Fred's mother.

## PETER, MARTHA, BELINDA, & THE LITTLE CRATCHITS

Other Cratchit children.



## SYNOPSIS

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens

Adapted for the stage by Geoff Elliott

**ON A FRIGID** Christmas Eve, a miserly old man named **Ebenezer Scrooge** sits in his counting house, keeping an eye on his clerk, **Bob Cratchit**. The stingy Scrooge refuses to spend money on heating coals, so poor Cratchit shivers in the dim room. Scrooge's nephew, **Fred**, drops by and wishes him a Merry Christmas, though Scrooge replies with a bitter "Bah! Humbug!" Later, two gentlemen enter his office and ask him to donate money for a fund that will feed the hungry. Scrooge feels no pity for the plight of those less fortunate and promptly dismisses the gentlemen. At closing time, Scrooge reluctantly gives Cratchit the day off for Christmas.

Scrooge returns home, where he lives in a house that belonged to his deceased business partner, Jacob Marley. Late at night, the sound of dragging, metal chains announces the arrival of **The Ghost of Jacob Marley**. Marley has a grave message for Scrooge. Because Marley lived a greedy and selfish life, his ghost now wanders the Earth in heavy chains as punishment. He hopes he can help Scrooge avoid the same fate. He tells Scrooge that three spirits will visit him, with the first arriving when the bell tolls one.

As promised, the **Ghost of Christmas Past** arrives, leading

Scrooge on a journey to the Christmases of his childhood. He sees himself as a lonely child, an apprentice to **Fezziwig** the merchant, and as a young man who loses his sweetheart **Belle's** love to his greed. Tortured, Scrooge begs the ghost to take him home.

The **Ghost of Christmas Present** takes Scrooge through London to unveil the Christmas holiday as it will unfold that year. Scrooge watches the large and bustling Cratchit family prepare a miniature feast in their meager home. He discovers Bob Cratchit's crippled son, **Tiny Tim**, a courageous boy whose kindness and humility warms Scrooge's heart. The specter then whisks Scrooge to his nephew Fred's house to witness their Christmas party. Scrooge finds the jovial gathering delightful and pleads with the spirit to stay until the very end of the festivities. As the day progresses, the spirit ages, and we see a noticeably older ghost. Prior to his departure, the ghost reveals to Scrooge two starved children, **Ignorance** and **Want**, living under his coat. He vanishes instantly as Scrooge notices a dark and hooded figure approaching.

The **Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come**, the spirit Scrooge fears most of all, leads Scrooge through

a sequence of mysterious scenes relating to an unnamed man's recent death. Scrooge sees businessmen discussing the dead man's riches and some thieves pawing his personal effects for cash. Scrooge, anxious to learn the lesson of his latest visitor, begs to know the name of the dead man. After pleading with the ghost, Scrooge finds himself in a churchyard, the spirit pointing to a grave. Scrooge looks at the headstone and is shocked to read his own name. He desperately implores the spirit to alter his fate, promising to renounce his insensitive, avaricious ways and to honor the Christmas spirit. He suddenly finds himself safely tucked in his bed.

Overwhelmed with joy at the chance to redeem himself, and grateful that he has been returned to Christmas Day, Scrooge rushes out onto the street hoping to share his newfound Christmas spirit. He sends a giant Christmas turkey to the Cratchit house and attends Fred's party, to the stifled surprise of the other guests. As the years go by, he holds true to his promise and honors Christmas with all his heart: he treats Tiny Tim as if he were his own child, provides gifts to the poor, and treats his fellow human beings with kindness, generosity, and warmth. ❖

“Bah! Humbug!”

“I WILL LIVE IN THE PAST,  
THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE!  
THE SPIRITS OF ALL THREE  
SHALL STRIVE WITHIN ME!”

“These  
are but  
shadows of  
the things  
that have  
been...”

“GOD BLESS US,  
EVERYONE!”

“**Scrooge**  
was the Ogre of the  
family. The mention  
of his name cast a  
dark shadow on the  
party, which was not  
dispelled for a full  
five minutes.”

“Are these the  
shadows of the things  
that *will* be, or are  
they shadows of things  
that *may* be, only?”

“Merry  
Christmas!”

“The Cratchit’s *were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being waterproof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker’s. But they were happy, grateful, and pleased with one another, and contented with the time.*”

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **CHARLES DICKENS**



Dickens in New York, 1867, Wikipedia.

**CHARLES DICKENS**, English writer of novels and short stories, was the second of eight children born to John and Elizabeth Dickens in Portsmouth, England on February 7, 1812. He is one of the most famous English novelists of the Victorian Era. As a young child, Dickens spent most of his time reading; he was also quite fond of theatricals, puppet plays, and had a natural singing voice.

Due to Dickens' father's job, the family relocated several times until they settled in Camden Town, a poor neighborhood in London, where Bob Cratchit and his family dwell in *A Christmas Carol*. At the age of 12, Dickens' father was sentenced to debtor's prison, so young Charles left school and went to live with a family friend and work in a shoe-blacking factory. Dickens' family, excluding his sister Fanny, all lived at the prison. Each Sunday, Charles visited the prison and witnessed the disgusting conditions in which London's working poor were forced to live.

After several months, an unexpected inheritance relieved Dickens' father from his debt, and Charles eventually left the factory and returned to school. Still, Charles' job gluing labels on bottles traumatized him, leaving a deep impression that would haunt him for the rest of his life. These difficult times inspired Charles Dickens to include many economic and child labor issues in his fiction.

At age 15, Dickens' father met with new financial difficulties, which caused Charles to leave school and seek permanent employment. Although his formal education was limited, his enthusiasm for reading and his natural writing ability carried him far. He first worked as a clerk in a legal office, and later as a stenographer in the law courts of London.

By 1832 he became a reporter for two London newspapers. In the following year, he began to contribute a series of impressions and sketches to various publications under the pen name "Boz." The same year, Dickens began to write *The Pickwick Papers* in several monthly installments. This form of serial writing became a standard method of writing fiction in the Victorian Era. In fact, many of Dickens' successful novels, such as *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickelby*, *Great Expectations*, and *A Tale of Two Cities* began as magazine installments. In 1836, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of the editor of a London newspaper. Together they had ten children.

In 1842, Dickens went on a five-month long lecture tour of America, speaking out strongly for the abolition of slavery and of other reforms, during which he wrote his travelogue, *American Notes for General Circulation*.

Soon after his return to England, Dickens began to write *A Christmas Carol* (1843), the first of three stories Dickens penned about Christmas (followed by *The Chimes* (1844) and *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845)). *A Christmas Carol* was immediately popular, but Dickens received few of the initial profits due to poor contract agreements. The next year, Dickens performed a live reading of *The Chimes*, which launched Dickens' extensive career in delivering oral interpretations. Dickens continued performing this way for charity and for pleasure for the remainder of his life, and even formed an amateur theatre company in 1848, where he served as manager, producer, and actor.

In the early 1850s, Dickens was confronted with the death of his father and one of his daughters within two weeks. Partly in response to these losses, Dickens began writing what are now known as his "dark" novels which include *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*. In 1857, Dickens fell in love with an actress named Ellen Ternan, and separated from his wife, Catherine, after many years of incompatibility.

From December 1860 to August 1861, Dickens serialized the largely autobiographical *Great Expectations*. The story was published in *All the Year Round*, a periodical owned and created by Dickens.

In the 1860s, Dickens devoted much of his time and energy to public readings from his novels. Traveling grew tiresome, and a train wreck in 1865 left Dickens with

### A Chronology of Dickens' Major Works

1836: <i>Pickwick Papers</i>	1848: <i>The Haunted Man</i>
1837: <i>Oliver Twist</i>	1849: <i>David Copperfield</i>
1838: <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i>	1853: <i>Bleak House</i>
1840: <i>The Old Cottage</i>	1854: <i>Hard Times</i>
1841: <i>Barnaby Rudge</i>	1855: <i>Little Dorrit</i>
1843: <i>A Christmas Carol</i>	1856: <i>Our Mutual Friends</i>
1844: <i>The Chimes</i>	1859: <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>
1845: <i>The Cricket on the Hearth</i>	1860: <i>Great Expectations</i>
1846: <i>The Battle of Life</i>	1870: <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>
1847: <i>Dombey &amp; Son</i>	

dizzy spells, arthritis, gout, and swelling in his left foot. Still, he carried on and performed throughout the United States and Britain.

On June 8, 1870, Dickens spent all day working on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which was rare for the man who normally only wrote for a couple of hours each day. That night, Dickens complained of a toothache, and lost consciousness.

Charles Dickens died from complications of a stroke on June 9, 1870. He is buried in Westminster Abbey. ❖

Other novels by Charles Dickens that were adapted into plays produced at A Noise Within include: *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*.



## TIMELINE OF CHARLES DICKENS' LIFE

**1807:** Abolition of the British slave trade

**1812:** Charles Dickens born on February 7 in Landsport, Portsmouth, England

**1822:** The Dickens family settles in Camden Town, a London suburb

**1824:** Charles Dickens works in Warren's Shoe Blacking Factory as a result of his family's sentence to the Marshalsea Debtor's Prison

**1825:** The world's first public passenger railway opens in northeast England

**1833:** Abolition of slavery in the British Empire. Charles Dickens meets future wife, Catherine Hogarth, and begins working at the *Morning Chronicle*.

**1834:** The Poor Law Amendment Act sets up workhouses, where the poor are sent to work off their debts. They are notorious for their poor conditions

**1836:** Dickens collects his previously published stories into his first book, *Sketches by Boz*. Marries Hogarth on April 2

**1837:** Queen Victoria becomes Queen at the age of 18

**1840:** First postage stamps came into use. Only approximately 20% of children in London receive any schooling at all

**1842:** The Mines Act ends child labor in underground mines. Dickens first visits America and writes *American Notes*, which criticizes slavery and upsets many.

**1843:** Publishes *A Christmas Carol*

**1845-49:** The Great Potato famine of Ireland. 800,000 people die of starvation. Large numbers of immigrants flee to Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States.

**1847:** Parliament passes the Ten Hours Bill — which limits both women and children to work 10 hours per day. This bill is to be enforced in all of England by a total of four inspectors.

**1848:** Cholera breaks out in British towns. Seneca Falls Convention for women's rights organized in New York. *The Communist Manifesto* published in Germany

**1850:** Approximately 120,000 domestic servants in London alone—most work 80-hour weeks for one halfpence per hour. Thousands of prostitutes between the ages of 15-22 at work in London.

**1851:** The Crystal Palace Exhibition—a fair of modern engineering and manufacturing arts

**1853:** Dickens gives his first staged reading of *A Christmas Carol* before 2,000 people at a benefit for Birmingham and Midland Institute, a pioneer of adult scientific and technical education

**1861:** The American Civil War begins. In Russia, following the Crimean War, the Emperor abolishes serfdom, or "enforced labor"

**1865:** Dickens badly injured in a train wreck. The American Civil War ends. The Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery in the United States.

**1869:** Exhaustion and illness force Dickens to return home from an English tour of *A Christmas Carol*

**1870:** Charles Dickens dies from complications of a stroke on June 9.

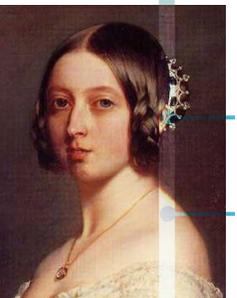


Image credits top to bottom left to right: Dickens: <http://www.wpclipart.com>, Train: <http://workenglish3.blogspot.com>, Queen Victoria: <http://www.gogmsite.net>, Crystal Palace Exhibition: <http://www.johnpaulcatton.com>, Farm: <http://www.irishpotatofamine.net>.

# Dickens' Times: VICTORIAN LONDON

By Jessica Hutchinson



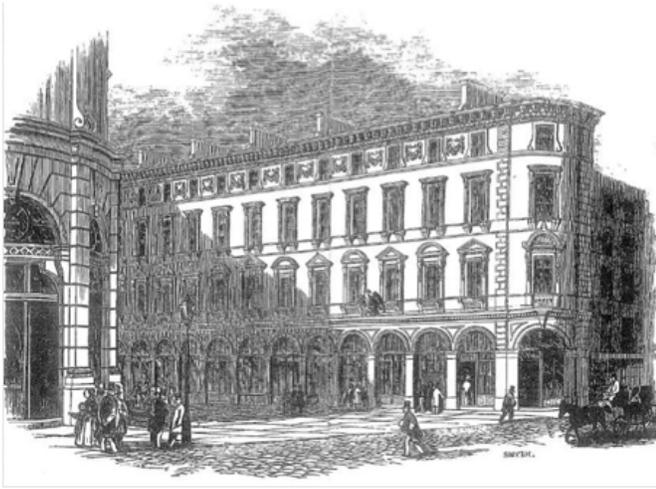
River Thames

**LONDON GEOGRAPHY** was determined by the **Thames**. The great river ran from west to east through the city after a dogleg north past Westminster — so, too, did the city itself, its two great thoroughfares being the Strand — Fleet Street and Oxford Street — Holborn — Cheapside.

At its core was the old **City of London** — known as “the City” as the century wore on — an entity consisting of the roughly square mile making up the area that had once been inside the old walls of the medieval city of London, bounded by the Thames on the south, the Inns of Court and Temple Bar on the west, and the Tower in the east, with its seven gates (Newgate of prison fame being one), which had all been torn down save for “that leaden-headed old

obstruction,” as Dickens calls it at the beginning of *Bleak House*, “appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed corporation, Temple Bar.”

Within the City lay the **Royal Exchange**, (the ‘Change upon which Scrooge’s word in “A Christmas Carol” is said to be so good), which was a gathering place for merchants in different trades, and the **Bank of England**, the financial nucleus of the nation, together with the financial offices and activities that naturally clustered around them. In fact, the term “the City” was also used to denote the financial heart of England in the way that “Wall Street” is used to describe the financial heart of the United States. In Jane Austen’s day, it was still customary for some merchants to live in the City, but as railroads were thrust through it and



Royal Exchange



Bank of England



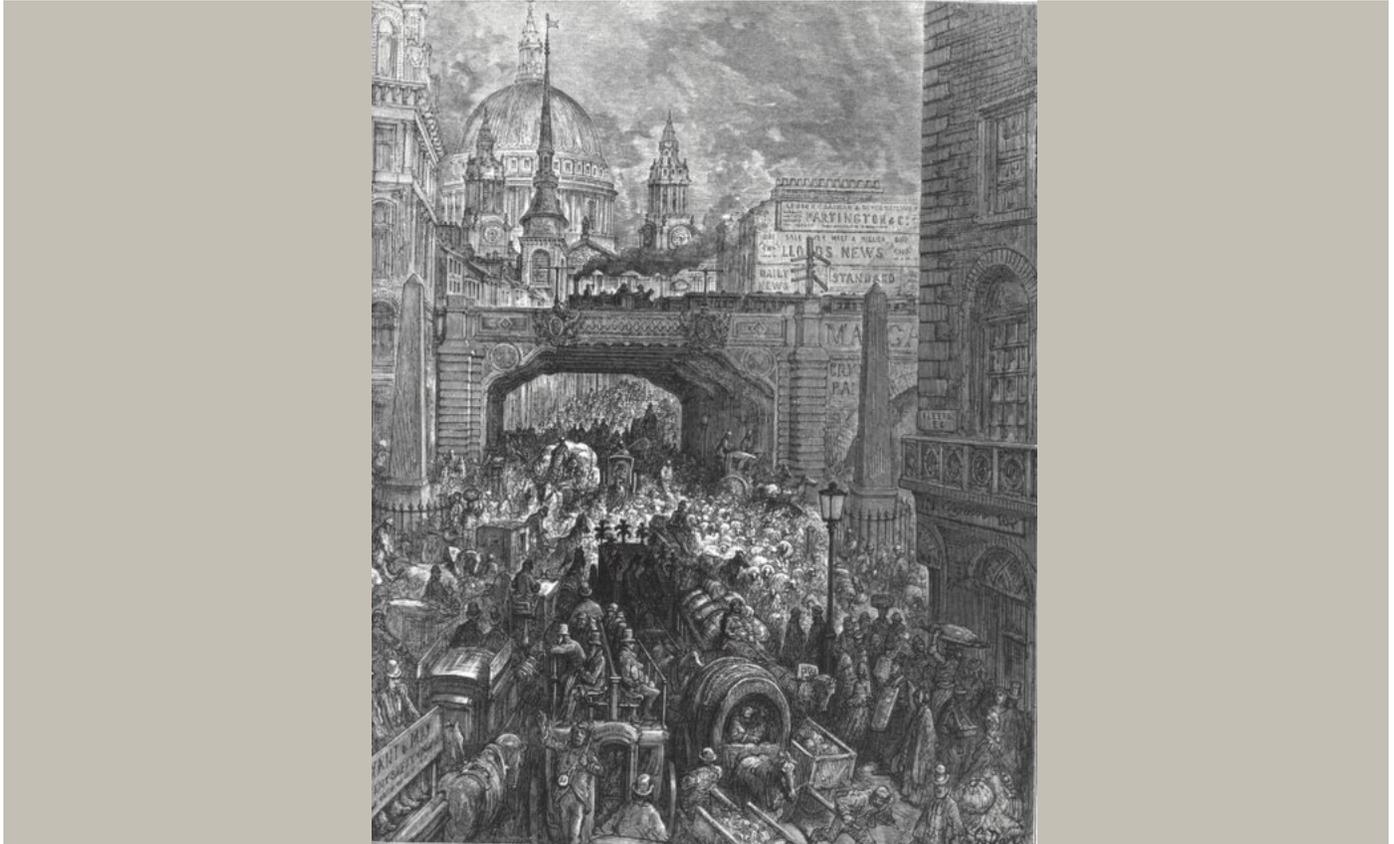
Fog in London

commuting became more feasible, even poor clerks began commuting to work from fringe or suburban areas the way we are told that Bob Cratchit does from **Camdentown**. In the first 80 years of the 19th century, in fact, the resident population in the City dropped from 128,000 to 50,000, while greater London as a whole mushroomed from 1-million to more than 4.5-million people.

The fancy area of London was the **West End**, which lay west of Temple Bar and London's center, Charing Cross. At the historic core of the West End lay what had once been the royal city of Westminster, with its palaces of **St. James** and **Whitehall**, along with **Westminster Abbey** and the **Houses of Parliament**. The Treasury building was here, along with Downing Street, the Foreign Office and the Horse Guards (army headquarters). These had now become part of the larger, expanded London, and adjacent to this nerve center of government and royalty the ultrafashionable West End residential area of Mayfair (and, later, Belgrave Square and the unfashionable Chelsea farther south) grew up. Mayfair was the location of the posh men's clubs on Pall Mall, the exclusive shops on Bond Street and the fancy houses on the ritziest residential street in the city, Park Lane, overlooking the great greensward of Hyde Park on Mayfair's western border. All were within a short distance of the new royal residence, **Buckingham Palace**. Such was London. But what was it like to live in?

The **fog** in London was very real. Just why it was the color it was no one has ever been able to ascertain for sure, but at a certain time of the year—it was worst in November—a great yellowness reigned everywhere, and lamps were lit inside even during the day. In November, December, and January the yellow fog extended out some three or four miles from the heart of the city, causing "pain in the lungs" and "uneasy sensations" in the head. It has been blamed in part on the coal stoves.

At 8:00am on an average day over London, an observer reported the **sky began to turn black** with the **smoke** from thousands of **coal fires**, presumably for morning fires to warm dining rooms and bedrooms and to cook breakfast. Ladies going to the opera at night with white shawls returned with them gray. It has been suggested that the black umbrella put in its appearance because it did not show the effects of these London atmospherics. The fog was so thick, observed a foreigner at mid-century, that you could take a man by the hand and not be able to see his face, and people literally lost their way and drowned in the Thames. In a very bad week in 1873 more than 700 people above the normal average for the period died in the city, and cattle at an exhibition suffocated to death.



Crowded London smoke

There were problems underfoot as well as in the air. **100 tons of horse manure** dropped on the streets of London each day, and a report to Parliament said that “strangers coming from the country frequently describe the streets of London as smelling of dung like a stable-yard.” Originally, many **streets were not paved**; by midcentury, however, the dust from the pulverized stone with which London streets were coated in good weather turned to mud when it rained. An etiquette book advised gentlemen to walk on the outside of the pavement when accompanying a lady to ensure that they walked on the filthiest part of it, and every major street had a crossing sweeper like Jo in *Bleak House*, who for a penny swept the street before you made your way across it on rainy days so your boots did not become impossibly filthy. Nor was the Thames any better. **London sewage**, some 278,000 tons daily at mid-century, as well as pollutants from the factories along the river’s banks, was dumped untreated into the water, presumably helping to fuel the cholera epidemics that swept the city in the early part of the century. The smell was bad enough in the summer of 1858 to cause Parliament to end its session early.

There was what we would surely call **noise pollution**, too—the incessant sound of wheels and horses’ hooves clacking over the pavement, the click of women’s pattens (protective overshoes) on the sidewalks in the rain, the bell of the muffin man, and the cries of the street peddlers selling such items as dolls, matches, books, knives, eels, pens, rat poison, key rings, eggs, and china, to say nothing of the German bands, the itinerant clarinet players, and the hurdy-gurdies. The children who added their din to that of the costermongers remind us that London was an overwhelmingly young city, as we are apt to realize when we read, say, *Oliver Twist*, a city of multitudinous street arabs, young costermongers, crossing sweepers like Jo, or the mud larks who scavenged the bed of the Thames all playing in the streets or crying their wares, holding horses for gentlemen, fetching cabs for theatergoers on rainy nights, carrying packages or opening cab doors or doing cartwheels or handstands in the street in the hope of earning a ha’penny or penny. There was no compulsory school until 1880, and children under 14 made up 30 to 40 percent of the population. ❖

Source: Goodman Theatre — [www.goodmantheatre.org](http://www.goodmantheatre.org)

# Poverty: Life & Death

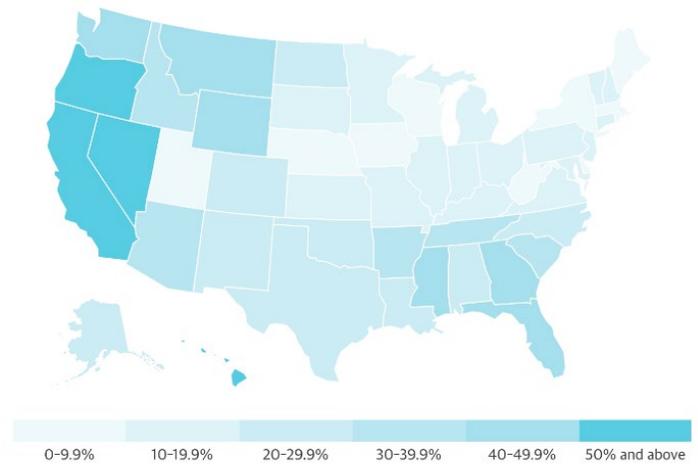
**POVERTY** is one of the themes that strongly resonates with an audience member as they are watching *A Christmas Carol*. As we peer into the Cratchit's household through the eyes of Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present, we see the struggles that are all too familiar to many families living in the US, in California, and in Pasadena. In truth, poverty is a multi-faceted issue comprised of many different hardships, and we are currently seeing these topics come up in conversations in our local and national political arena, our media and, most certainly, our theatre, which compels us to ask: what is poverty, how do we see it operate in society, and what can we do to alleviate it?

In order to understand the depths of poverty, we need to first define poverty as it is currently defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services. There are two ways our federal government defines poverty: thresholds and guidelines. Thresholds are mainly utilized for statistical purposes, and vary depending on certain factors including household size and age. The poverty threshold for a family of four, for instance, is defined as having an income of \$24,563 per year. These changes depending on if you have children under 18, and how many you have. You can find the various thresholds throughout the years on the Census website. Poverty guidelines are utilized for administrative purposes when determining eligibility for different social safety net programs such as SNAP, Head Start, or the National School Lunch Program.

## US STATS

In the US, about 14% of our population (or about 44 million people) falls below the poverty threshold. In California the numbers stay relatively similar to the national average with a reported 14.3% of our population, or 5.5 million people, falling below this poverty threshold. The number of people in poverty in Pasadena, however, is estimated at 15.3%, or about 21,000 people. While we can certainly state what the statistics are, we also need to separate the numbers from what they represent: people in financial distress. Poverty as a system is prevalent throughout the US, and 44 million people fall under that threshold. We can see this in our local conversations about homelessness and food insecurity, which have been pushed to the foreground

## Percentage of homeless people in unsheltered locations, 2016



Source: "The 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress," US Department of Housing and Urban Development | Graphic: Jan Diehm/The Guardian

## QUICK FACTS

Los Angeles is the homeless capital of the nation. And the number one reason for homelessness is loss of a job.

The number of homeless people in Los Angeles has jumped to a new record. Municipal leaders found that in 2017, 557,794 homeless people were living in LA, up more than 23% from last year.

From 1990 to 2015, the poverty rate in Los Angeles County has increased from 15% to nearly 18%

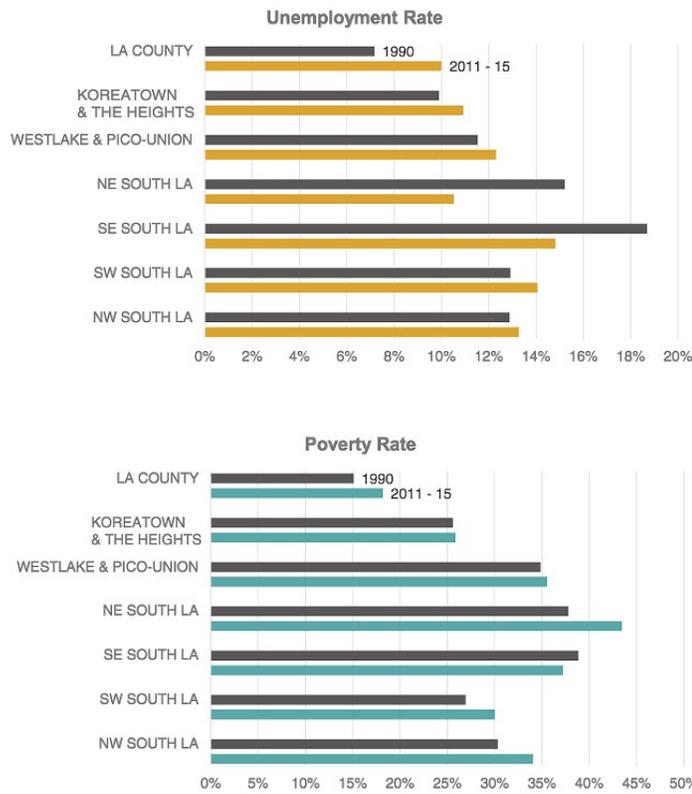
Los Angeles County has the largest food insecure population in the US

A study in 2016 showed that in the US, the richest 1 percent of men lives 14.6 years longer on average than the poorest percent of men, while among women in those wealth percentiles, the difference is 10.1 years on average

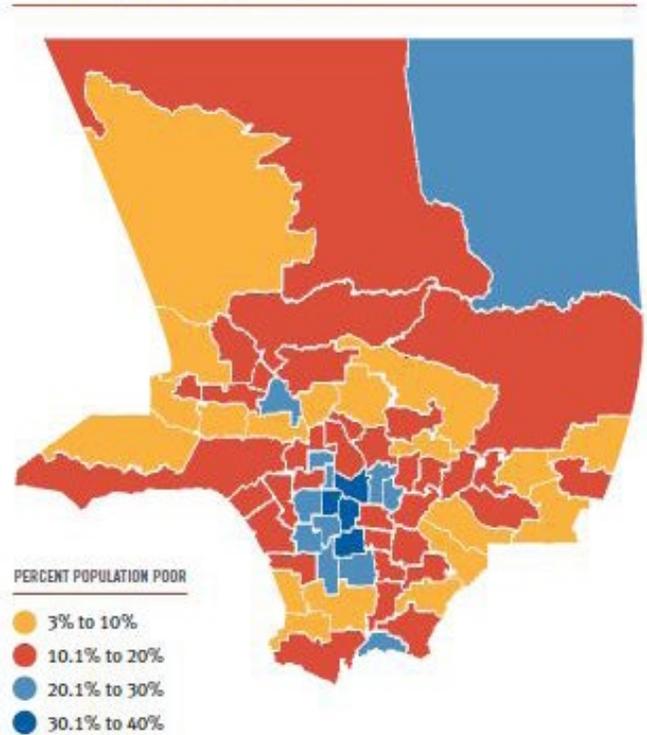
of the ongoing public debate. When the percentage of people falling below the poverty threshold rises, other factors come into play. For example, homelessness, food insecurity and shorter life expectancy.

## THE ANAHEIM STORY

Anaheim declared a state of emergency in September 2017 in response to homelessness in their city, specifically the encampments that line the Santa Ana River. Orange County had a total homeless count of 4,792 in 2017, which was a 5% increase from 2016. Compare this to LA County, whose homeless population skyrocketed from 46,874 in 2016 to 57,794 in 2017, a 23% increase (2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count



**POVERTY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY 17**



- Data Summary - Los Angeles County). This count leaves out Pasadena itself, which had a homeless population of 575 in 2017. That is down 53% from 2011, but up 8% from 2016. Though homelessness is proliferating through our surrounding communities, city initiatives have in part alleviated some of the problem. Pasadena has a “housing first” model; homeless individuals are housed as quickly as possible and then provided with support services to help them remain in housing (Jacobsen, Housing First).

“Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die?”

This approach is predicated upon the idea that housing is a basic human right (Vitalicio and Cross), and that once people are housed they can address issues surrounding health and drug abuse. Although this philosophy has dramatically changed the homeless population in Pasadena, Los Angeles city has not produced the same results. Los Angeles city saw their homeless population increase from 28,464 in 2016 to 34,189 in 2017. So, what’s different? In part, lack of adequate shelters, as many have closed in the L.A. area over the years due to the added costs of providing more services (Smith, Q&A: Demystifying L.A.’s system of homeless shelters). We may see LA City and County decrease their homeless population through funds provided by City Measure HHH

and County Measure H, but that remains to be seen as the legislation goes into effect.

**FOOD INSECURITY**

Another consequence of poverty is food insecurity, or, in layman’s terms, people not having enough to eat. LA had 1.5 million people in food insecure houses in 2016, 12% of whom lived above the poverty threshold. Many of these households are not eligible to apply for benefits like SNAP because they don’t fall under the poverty guideline, yet are still suffering with food insecurity. Luckily, we are seeing practical applications to try and solve this. UC Irvine, in response to growing food insecurity among its student population, recently opened up a food pantry for those less advantaged. In a UC wide survey, they found that 4 in 10 students do not have access to a consistent source of high quality food, one third had difficulty studying due to hunger, and one fourth had to choose between paying for food and educational expense and housing (Watanabe). To help solve this problem, students are allowed to take two bags of groceries home per week after determining they understand what food insecurity is and that it is meant for students who cannot afford meals. Though this is a recently opened project, we will see how it helps alleviate food insecurity and how we can apply it to our various communities.

**LIFE EXPECTANCY**

Finally, short life-expectancy can be attributed to poverty. An effect that still prevails today as it did in Dickensian times. In a study done by Michael Stephner

and Sarah Abraham at MIT's Department of Economics, it was determined that poverty can be directly associated with people living shorter lives than those who might be defined as "middle class" or "upper class." "Over the last 15 years, life expectancy increased by 2.34 years for men and 2.91 years for women who are among the top 5 percent of income earners... but by just 0.32 and 0.04 years for men and women in the bottom 5 percent of income tables" (Dizikes). Moreover, the richest 1 percent of men live 14.6 years longer on average than the poorest 1 percent of men, and the difference for women on the same metric was 10.1 years.

### MOVING FORWARD

We are seeing progress in how we combat poverty, whether it be Los Angeles converting an armory in Sylmar into a homeless shelter for women (Agrawal), or something as simple as opening a pantry for food insecure students, or adopting a philosophy based upon the need for housing as a basic human right. This brings us back to the questions imposed on Scrooge: "Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die?" Through action and through kindness, Dickens argues that someone like Tiny Tim continues to live with the help Scrooge provides in the end. So now it's time to ask ourselves, how are we going to decide what men shall live, and what men shall die? ❖

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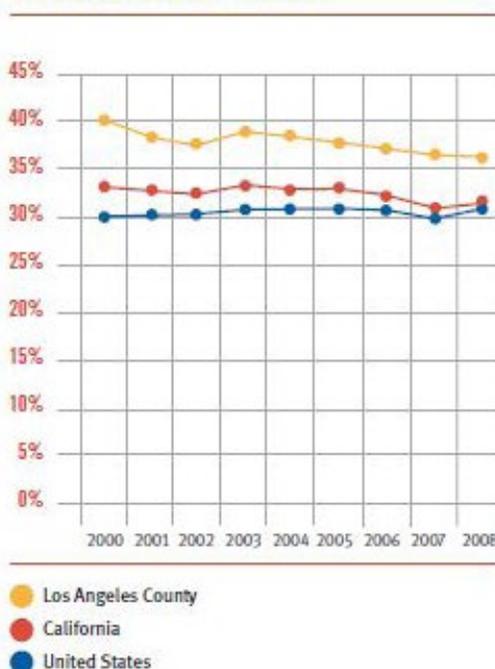


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## AROUND LOS ANGELES

- LA County has a population of over 10 million residents. This would make us the ninth largest state in the US. (LAEDC)
- The median age in L.A. County is 35 years old, which makes us slightly younger than the country as a whole.
- According to the US Census... Latinx are the largest ethnic group with 48.5%. 26% are White (non Hispanic/Latinx, 15% of us are Asian/ Pacific Islanders, and 9% of us are Black.
- In 2015, the county's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$664.2 billion, making it a larger economy than 44 states and all but 20 countries. (County of LA Comprehensive Annual Financial Report)
- Los Angeles is the nation's 4th largest economy
- 17.3% of people in LA County are living in poverty, defined as an income of \$22,000 per year for a family of 4, compared to 14% for the nation.
- Nearly 30% of our full-time workers earn less than \$25,000 a year.
- We have 268,000 millionaires and 1.8 million low income people.
- Nearly 4 in 10 poor people in L.A. County suffer extreme poverty. Over 570,000 people in L.A. County live in extreme poverty, defined as living on less than \$5,400 a year for a single person, or about \$11,000 for a family of four.
- We are the homeless capital of the nation. And the number one reason for homelessness is loss of a job.
- The poverty rate for Latino children (31.6%) was more than double that of Asian American (13.5%) and white (11.9%) children in California in 2014. The poverty rate among African American children was also high (19.0%). Children under 5 had somewhat higher poverty rates than older children (23.6% vs. 22.8%).
- According to Public Policy Institute of California, in 2014, 81.8% of poor children in California lived in families with at least one working adult. Three-fifths of poor children (60.8%) lived in families with at least one full-time worker, and an additional fifth (20.9%) had at least one adult in the family working part-time.

### WORKING POOR POPULATION<sup>30</sup>



#### Our percentage of "working poor" is higher than in the U.S. as a whole.

- From 2000 to 2008, the number of those considered working poor (Household Income under \$44K for a family of four) was nearly 6 percentage points higher than the state as a whole, and 7.5 percentage points higher than the nation.

#### Not all job loss was the result of the recession. Over the course of the decade, slow steady attrition of jobs occurred in several key industries.

- Manufacturing showed the greatest decline (-36%) followed by the Information sector (Publishing, Movies, TV, Radio) with a 16% drop.
- Transportation and Utilities declined by almost 12%.

#### However, certain industries did show growth.

- Educational and Health Services grew by 27% followed by Leisure and Hospitality with a 14% increase.

#### Source

According to the United Way's 2010 study, "L.A. County 10 Years Later: A Tale of Two Cities, One Future"

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# Currency & Wealth

By Jessica Hutchinson

**“GUINEAS, SHILLINGS,** half-pence. You know what they are?” Mr. Dombey asks his little son Paul in Dickens’ novel, *Dombey and Son* (1847). Paul, Dickens tells us, knew, but the average reader of today is not always likely to be so knowledgeable.

In the 1800s, British money was calculated in units of pounds, shillings, and pence. These were the units of value—like the American mill, cent, and dollar—in which all transactions were reckoned, regardless of whether the value was represented by a bookkeeping entry, by coin, by bank notes, or by notations written on a check. The actual physical instruments of currency were paper bank notes and gold, silver, copper, and bronze coins like the sixpence, the crown, the sovereign, the shilling piece, and the penny. Thus, for example, the physical units called pennies were used to measure the value created by an equivalent number of pence. (The guinea, uniquely, was a unit of physical currency that also became an abstract measure of value as well; that is, long after the actual guinea coin itself stopped being minted in the early 1800s, prices for luxury items like good horses and expensive clothes continued to be quoted in guineas as if it were some independent unit of value like the pound.)

Sovereigns and half sovereigns were gold; crowns, half crowns, florins, shillings, sixpences, and threepences were silver; pence, ha’pence, and farthings were

copper until 1860, after which they were bronze. The coins were issued by the Royal Mint, but the bank notes got their names from the fact that they were not issued by a government agency but by a bank, in fact—after the mid-1800s—only by the bank—the Bank of England. Until then banks all over the country issued their own bank notes (or promises to pay), which circulated more or less like money. Private banks in the provinces are by one estimate believed to have cranked out about £20,000,000 worth of notes between 1810 and 1815. With the Bank Charter Act of 1844, however, the government

BASIC UNITS	Value	Coin	Paper	Slang Term
	1,000 pounds		1,000-pound note	
	500 pounds		500-pound note	
	200 pounds		200-pound note	
	100 pounds		100-pound note	
	50 pounds		50-pound note	
	20 pounds		20-pound note	
	10 pounds		10-pound note	tenner
	5 pounds		5-pound note	fiver
One Pound	21 shillings	guinea		
	20 shillings	sovereign	1-pound note	quid
	10 shillings	half sovereign	½-pound note	
	5 shillings	crown		bull
One Shilling	2½ shillings	half crown	half a crown	
	2 shillings	florin		
	12 pence	shilling		bob, hog
	6 pence	sixpence		tanner, bend
	4 pence	groat		
	3 pence	threepence		thruppence
	2 pence	twopence		tuppence
	1 pence	penny		copper
	½ pence	halfpenny		ha’pence
	¼ pence	farthing		
⅛ pence	half farthing			

Rough monetary values and terms in Dickens’ time.

gave the Bank of England a monopoly on the issuance of bank notes. As the currency of other banks subsequently disappeared from circulation, “bank note” or “note” in consequence became synonymous with the paper issued by the Bank of England.

To abbreviate their money, Britons used the symbol £ for pound, s. for shilling, and d. for pence, although five pounds, ten shillings, sixpence could be written £5.10.6. “Five and six” meant five shillings and sixpence, and it would have been written “5/6.”

It is very difficult to know what a pound or shilling from 1800 to 1859 is worth in American currency today, and, as any economist will volubly inform you, the fact that the Victorians had no Hondas and we have no candles, i.e., we don’t buy the same goods and don’t have the same economic needs, makes the purchasing power of the two currencies fundamentally incommensurable. Nonetheless, intrepid estimates have put the pound’s worth in the neighborhood of \$20, \$50 or \$200.

## Being Wealthy

What did it mean to be wealthy in the days before tax shelters, credit cards, junk bonds, and golden parachutes? No stocks and bonds, no money market funds—what did you put your money into? First and foremost, it went into land. Land was socially prestigious and it also produced rent from tenant farmers that was probably the major source of income for most of the landed gentry and nobility during much of the 1800s. Good land, however, was not likely to be easily attainable. Much of it was tied up through entail in family estates, and it was an extremely complicated and expensive procedure to purchase it. A contemporary observer toward the end of the century said the legal fees involved were enormous and also pointed out that by then the 2 percent return on land made it a bad investment unless you didn’t need a big income. In families, land always went to the men, while the women got things like government securities...

It may well be asked—what about taxes? When the young visitors are shown around Sotherton in Jane Austen’s novel, *Mansfield Park*, the author comments at one point that they were not shown the chapel until after “having visited many more rooms than could be supposed to be of any other use than to contribute to the window tax.” It is a passing remark; but one that gives a small glimpse of the remarkably extensive system of taxation that must have made the English one of the most taxed

peoples in the world. During the nineteenth century, for example, there was a tax on land, income, the practice of law, newspaper advertisements, glass, candles, beer, malt, carriages, menservants, coats of arms, newspapers, paper, bricks, stone, coal, windows, corn, soap, horses, dogs, salt, sugar, raisins, tea, coffee, tobacco, playing cards, timber, and silk—but the extent of the taxation begins to become clear. There was even a tax on headgear, which, after Wordsworth was appointed as a collector of stamp duties, moved Byron to write: “I shall think of him often when I buy a new hat. There his works will appear.”

The taxes were important not only because of the bite they put on people but because of their individual social consequences. Until repealed in 1861, for example, the tax on paper helped to keep books scarce and expensive. Soap was taxed until 1853 with the consequence of the poor personal hygiene which may have contributed to some of the epidemics of typhus and other diseases that periodically devastated elements of the population. (In fact, a black market sprang up in soap, and it was smuggled in from Ireland, where there was no tax, to the western shore of England.) The tax on windows mentioned in *Mansfield Park* was perhaps the most pernicious one, since even a hole cut in a wall for ventilation was counted as a window, making, among other things, for dark houses for the poor. The fact that a family was taxed £2 8s. for each male servant in 1812 (bachelors £4 8s.) helped to steer people toward womenservants — both this and the tax on carriages were based on the government’s (correct) assumption that these were two of the leading ways to get revenues from the wealthy.

And these were only the national taxes. At a local parish level from the 1800s on, one could be required to pay a “rate” for the maintenance of the poor (one reason why people were always anxious to have the poor settle somewhere else besides their parish), to which, in due course, were added rates for highways and other local expenses. There was also a local church rate for the physical upkeep of the local Church of England house of worship until 1868. To the national taxes and this local tax must then be added the tithes which farmers and craftsmen had to pay the local clergyman in support of the Church of England. These amounted to one-tenth of the value of the year’s annual produce and, until 1840, also had to be paid in kind, when it was “commuted” to payment in money. ❖

Source: Goodman Theatre — [www.goodmantheatre.org](http://www.goodmantheatre.org)

## ABOUT: **SCENIC DESIGN** | BY JEANINE A. RINGER

**WHEN I FIRST** approach designing a new show, I always try to find initial inspiration in the text. As I read the script for the first time, I jot down any imagery or words that pop out at me. Then, I attempt to find interesting visual research to accompany it.

Next, I typically meet with the director; in this show's case, the directors: Geoff Elliot and Julia Elliot-Rodriguez. Geoff and Julia provided me with some of their visual research, which, coupled with my own research, led to some very interesting choices.

There are three different urban worlds in *A Christmas Carol*: the past, the present, and the future. One of the main challenges was visually defining Scrooge's three worlds. As I moved forward with my designs, I found a link between trees and their cyclical lives. You will see an overriding theme of rebirth in this production, and trees and their branches also play a central visual theme.

We begin in the present, which I view as a very de-saturated, stripped away world. Scrooge himself is in a winter stasis, like a tree without leaves: cold, brittle, scary, and seemingly dead. Take note of the overcast, greyscale color palette in these scenes.

The past is definitely a much brighter and colorful place for Scrooge. His memory is visually depicted in a grander scale—magnified and vivid.

The future I laid out is not a place that many of us would wish to visit. It is a very dark, almost grotesque place. In the end, however, Scrooge's present world blooms once again, much like a tree in the Spring. ❖



**Ms. Ringer** has spent the last decade working in television, film, theater, and other live events. She received her MFA from the University of California, Irvine. There, she took a particular interest in immersive theater, where the scenic environment completely surrounds the audience, and provides the spectator with an opportunity to interact with the production. From there, she went on to work in film and television both as a Production Designer and as a Stylist/Dresser. She has since had opportunities to work on multiple theatrical productions, films, commercials, music videos, and live events. *A Christmas Carol* was Ms. Ringer's first production with A Noise Within, which was shown during the 2010-2011 Season. Since then she has worked as a Scenic Designer on numerous A Noise Within productions including: *Figaro*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Endgame*, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, and *Eurydice*.  
[www.jnicholasdesigns.com](http://www.jnicholasdesigns.com)

## ABOUT: **COSTUME DESIGN** | BY ANGELA BALOGH CALIN

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL** is a favored tale produced by many theatres during the holiday season. Many productions stay true to Charles Dickens' original story and time-period, but our production here at A Noise Within attempts to change things up a bit, particularly in our distinctive choices in defining the past, present, and future worlds.

This might sound strange, but the costume design concept all started with an image of an oversized hat. Then, it snowballed into defining the past through the eyes of a child. When you are a small child, everything seems bigger; it is a time of wonder, and a time of laughter. In *A Christmas Carol*, The Ghost of Christmas Past whisks Scrooge to various scenes from his childhood. I view it as a very romantic, idyllic place, and the Ghost herself appears this way in her white, flowing robe. I also incorporated flowery imagery into the costumes, and you will find an oversized hat, large wigs, and other elements to create a fanciful past.

The present is one world where we opted to stay true to the Victorian time-period. Costumes are realistic in form and in scale. Ebenezer Scrooge himself is drab, but surprisingly, the other characters in the present appear in warm, earthy tones. Fred, Scrooge's nephew, wears rich, jewel tones. The Cratchit Family, who we know is quite poor, is actually the warmest in tone, which reflects their love for each other and belief in the holiday spirit. Even The Ghost of Christmas Present is bright: look for touches from his red costume in the past and future as well.

The future is somber, dark, and nearly apocalyptic. This portion of the show is abstract and very theatrical; color drained from each of the characters. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come wears black from head to toe—aside from that one streak of red, which ties this spirit to Scrooge's past and the present worlds.

After viewing *A Christmas Carol*, you will come to understand how my research affected my designs. Costuming research is an exciting journey into the world

of the play, and world history in general. I enjoy designing costumes because I discover something with each new play. For my research, I plunge into costume books, fashion books, and, of course, the Internet for inspiration.

The Internet is a great tool for easily referencing costume ideas as well as the vast quantity of readily available information. The only problem is combing through it all. It is very time consuming. However, searching the Internet is always worth it because I typically find interesting images that are extremely useful to my research. I never know what will inspire me: street scenes, candid shots, a runway fashion show, or something as basic as patterns and textures. ❖

**Angela Balogh Calin ANW Resident Artist. With ANW:** Set Design: *The Dance of Death, Ghosts, The School For Wives, Julius Caesar, The Seagull, The Winter's Tale, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Cyrano de Bergerac (1995), The Country Wife.* Costume Design: *Julius Caesar, Figaro, The Threepenny Opera, The Dance of Death, The Tempest, Tartuffe, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, The Beaux' Stratagem, A Christmas Carol, Cymbeline, The Bungler, Antony and Cleopatra, Twelfth Night, Or What You Will, The Comedy of Errors, The Chairs, Great Expectations, Waiting for Godot, Loot, As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Hollywood Bowl and at ANW among others **Other Theatres:** South Coast Repertory, Pasadena Playhouse, Denver Center Theatre, The Old Globe, Laguna Playhouse, West Coast Ensemble, Milwaukee Rep., Georgia Shakespeare, Chautauqua Theatre Co., Ensemble Theatre Co., Antaeus Theatre, among others **Film/TV:** 16 productions with I.R.S.Media, PBS, Full Moon Productions, Moviestore Entertainment, Romanian Films **Education/Training:** MFA in Set and Costume Design at The Academy of Fine Arts in Bucharest, Romania. Member of the Costume Designers Guild in the USA and Romania

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL **OVERALL DESIGN CONCEPT**

Images by Spanish photographer, Eugenio Recuenco, caught the eyes of *A Christmas Carol's* Co-Directors, Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott. Recuenco's "cinematic" and "pictorial" photos are featured in many fashion magazine editorials and advertisements. His photos, some of which are pictured here, inspired the overall design concept for Ebenezer Scrooge's uncertain FUTURE...



ABOUT: **PRODUCTION MUSIC** | BY EGO PLUM

**I STARTED OFF** as a drummer, performing in punk rock bands with my friends and older brothers. I also always loved cartoons and was fascinated by the music in them. Particularly, the music Carl Stalling had done on the Warner Bros. Looney Tunes. Growing up watching “PeeWee’s Playhouse” made me want to make music as well. I never had any interest in theater until I was approached to compose music and songs for the *Gogol Project* in 2010 for which I was recognized by the LA Stage Alliance with an Ovation Honor.

For this project, my biggest influence may be John Morris’ score for David Lynch’s film *Elephant Man*. I love that way that music feels. Other composers that inspire me include Raymond Scott, Dee Dee Ramone, Paul McCartney—so many!

Generally, in film and television, we have something that is called a “spotting session.” It’s a meeting where I sit with the director and watch through a film and decide where music is needed. In theater, it’s a bit more difficult and nebulous because no two performances are ever the same. Scenes are not “locked” to precise timing like they are in film, but this is the beautiful thing about theater as well. The fact that it has to be experienced in person, and how once the scene passes before your eyes, it’s gone forever! The things that make it beautiful are also the things that make it very challenging for a composer. Music sometimes needs to be “open ended” and continuous, rather than specific and landing on certain marks. Music helps create general moods and transitions, rather than specific hits, like in cartoons or movies.

The most important thing to me was figuring out what the EMOTIONAL NEEDS of the play are. I need to know what the characters are feeling, what they are trying to convey, and more importantly, what we need our audience to be feeling. These are the important issues that need to be solved in the composer/director relationship. Ultimately, you could use any absurd combination of instruments, but as long as the emotional needs are met, the score has achieved its purpose. Once these questions are answered, we can move further into talking about the actual sound palette and

what instruments we'd like to hear. At this point in a meeting, we will listen to examples to see if they feel right. For example, I brought in the theme to the film *Elephant Man* as well as some wonderfully whimsical cues from *Corpse Bride* that Danny Elfman had written. I also suggested using tuned chromatic bells as a central element to the score.

One of the most exciting and exhilarating parts of the composing process is the "fear of the unknown." The melodies and instruments I'm choosing tend to dictate the direction of the music itself. I can best describe it as trying to climb a ladder AND building it at the same time. You take one step up, but there is not another rung to step on. So you start to carve away at a piece of wood and then you hammer it in and then you take another step. In fact, I don't know what I'm going to see at the top of the ladder until I actually get up there, but I hope to see a musical landscape that is distinct between the past, present, and future.

Ultimately, music is simply particles of sound that are pushing through the air. And their sole purpose is to help tell a story that already exists. It's like a wind that helps push leaves in certain directions...but in this case, the leaves are emotions and story lines. *A Christmas Carol* is the ultimate story of second chances and redemption, so the music needs to help reflect that and reflect the journey Mr. Scrooge goes through to come to his realization about the spirit of Christmas. The music should help propel the story along, providing an emotional undercurrent whenever it's necessary. This is all very poetic and abstract again, but I do really look at it this way... But I cannot deny that sometimes music is simply just there to help kill time while a piece of a set is moved around the stage as well. Music serves many purposes in a show.... So as an audience, you may recognize some musical cues to simply be "transitional", while other musical cues serving to help convey the emotional depth of a certain scene or character. ❖

**Ego Plum** is an American musician, award-winning composer, and producer from Los Angeles. *A Christmas Carol* is the first show he has worked on at A Noise Within. His inventive & eccentric musical style stems from a variety of unconventional influences: The quirky jazz of Raymond Scott, the spastic stop-and-go arrangements of Carl Stalling, the frenetic energy of Oingo Boingo, Devo, The Residents, and the Dead Kennedy's, with the haunting beauty of Franz Waxman and Bernard Herrmann. He has recorded, performed, and collaborated with artists such as David J (Bauhaus/Love & Rockets), Frank Black (Pixies), Steve Bartek & Johnny Vatos (Oingo Boingo), Gidget Gein (Marilyn Manson), and Genesis P. Orridge (Throbbing Gristle/Psychic TV). Ego Plum performs live with his group Ebola Music Orchestra, and had toured the United States playing guitar with the Grammy-nominated, comedy-rock group Green Jëlly. He got the attention of Nickelodeon in 2008 and he was hired to compose music for Amy Winfrey's hit series, *Making Fiends*, which aired around the world. Ego's musical subversions can be heard on everything from KROQ radio bumpers to television commercials to fashion shows. Projects for 2013 include writing original music and songs for Rogue Artists Ensemble's stage production of *Pinocchio* and scoring Richard Elfman's long-awaited sequel to his cult classic, *Forbidden Zone*. *Forbidden Zone 2: The Forbidden Galaxy* will find Ego Plum co-composing the original music and songs alongside the illustrious Danny Elfman.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### BOOKS

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- Tomalin, Claire. *Charles Dickens: A Life*. Penguin, 2011.

### FREE E-BOOKS

- **Dickens' Original A Christmas Carol Manuscript:** <http://www.themorgan.org/collections/works/dickens/ChristmasCarol/1>
- **Dickens' A Christmas Carol (various formats):** <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/46>

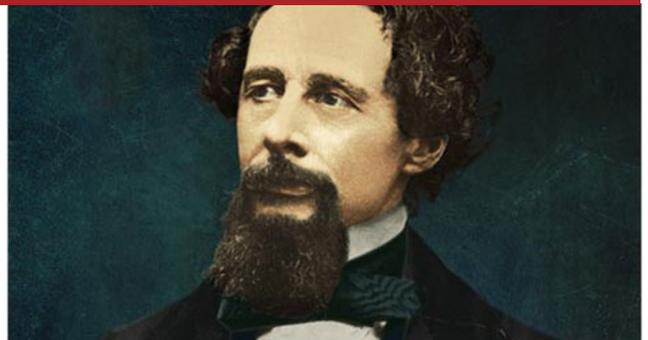
### FILMS

- *A Christmas Carol*. Dir. Hugh Harman. With Reginald Owen and Gene Lockhart. 1938.
- *A Christmas Carol* (also known as *Scrooge*). Dir. Brian Desmond Hurst. With Alastair Sim and Mervyn Johns. 1951.

### WEBSITES

- **The Dickens Project** (UC Santa Cruz): <http://dickens.ucsc.edu/>
- **David Purdue's Charles Dickens Page:** <http://charlesdickenspage.com/index.html>
- **Charles Dickens Museum, London:** <http://www.dickensmuseum.com/>
- **PBS Dickens Page:** <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/dickens/life.html>
- **Victorian Web Dickens Page:** <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/index.html>

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## ABOUT **A NOISE WITHIN**

**A NOISE WITHIN'S MISSION** is to produce great works of world drama and to foster appreciation of history's greatest plays and playwrights through comprehensive educational programs. ANW is the only theatre in Southern California and one of only a handful in North America to exclusively produce year-round classical dramatic literature — from master works by Euripides, Moliere and Shakespeare, to modern classics by Arthur Miller, Henrik Ibsen and Samuel Beckett — in rotating repertory with a company of classically trained resident artists.

The company was formed in 1991. All of A Noise Within's Resident Artists have been classically trained, and many hold Master of Fine Arts degrees from some of the nation's most respected institutions.

In its 24 year history, A Noise Within has garnered over 500 awards and commendations, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle's revered Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the coveted Margaret Hartford Award for Sustained Excellence.

More than 33,000 individuals attend productions at A Noise Within annually. In addition, the theatre draws over 10,000 student participants to its arts education program, *Classics Live!* Students benefit from in-classroom workshops, conservatory training, subsidized tickets to matinee and evening performances, post-performance discussions with artists, and free standards-based Study Guides.

A Noise Within's vision is to become a national leader in the production of classical theatre, creating an environment that continues to attract the finest classical theatre artists, educates, and inspires audiences of all ages, and trains the leading classical theatre artists of tomorrow. ❖

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