

The Chatham Players presents

A Christmas Carol

Adapted from the writings & letters of Charles Dickens by Philip Wm. McKinley

MUSIC AND LYRICS
Philip Wm. McKinley
Suzanne Buhrer

BOOK BY
Philip Wm. McKinley

SPECIAL MUSIC AND
ARRANGEMENTS
Ken Watkins
Helen Gregory

DIRECTED BY
Susan Speidel

MUSICAL DIRECTOR/
ADDITIONAL
ORCHESTRATIONS
Jack Bender

PRODUCTION
ASSISTANT
Joëlle Bochner

COSTUME DESIGN
Ann Lowe

LIGHTING DESIGN
Nicholas Marmo

PRODUCER
Joe DeVico

PROPS
Carol Saso
Tish Lum

SCENIC ARTISTS
Andrea Sickler
Dean Sickler

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Ed Whitman

WIGS
Mary MacDonald

THE CAST

(in alphabetical order)

SCOTT BAIRD *Bob Cratchit*
JOËLLE BOCHNER *Mrs. Dickens, Beatrice, Laundress*
FINNIAN BURNS *Young Man Scrooge, Topper*
ALEXIA DAVIES *Harriet Cratchit, Fan*
PARKER EBERT *Peter, Young Scrooge, Boy in Street*
ALAN ELLIS *Jacob Marley, 2nd Gentleman*
GWENDOLYN FINNERTY.... *Belinda Cratchit, Fezziwig Child*
MICHELLE FINNERTY *Mrs. Cratchit, Fezziwig Guest*
OWEN FINNERTY..... *Fredrick Cratchit, Fezziwig Child*
SEAN FINNERTY *Christmas Present, Undertaker*
HOWARD FISCHER *Mr. Fezziwig, 1st Gentleman*
CHRIS FURLONG *Ghost of Christmas Future*
CHARLES GRAYSON *Ebenezer Scrooge*
TRACEY LYNNE HASKELL *Mrs. Fezziwig*
SUSIE PAPLOW *Ghost of Christmas Past, Scrooge's Niece*
ADELAIDE PREKOPA *Belle, Martha Cratchit*
CHIP PRESTERA *Charles Dickens*
DAVID ROMANKOW *Fred, Pawnbroker*
ASHLEE DONNA VISSERS *Tiny Tim, Child Scrooge*
LESLIE GAYLE WILLIAMS *Charwoman, Emily,*
Fezziwig Guest

A Christmas Carol was first produced at the Meadows Playhouse, Las Vegas, Nevada,
and was developed on the Equity Library Series, Lincoln Center, New York

December 15 through 31, 2020
THE CHATHAM PLAYHOUSE
23 North Passaic Avenue, Chatham, New Jersey

ACT ONE

- 1. **London, 1843**
Prologue..... Dickens and Townspeople
- 2. **Scrooge’s Office**
Jingle of Money Scrooge and Carolers
Not TomorrowBob Cratchit and Family
- 3. **The street and Scrooge’s bedroom**
Remember Christmas Past
- 4. **A schoolhouse in the 1780’s**
Without You Fan and Scrooge as a Young Boy
- 5. **Fezziwig’s warehouse in the 1790’s**
Dance With Your Dumpling Fezziwigs and Guests
- 6. **A street in London years later**
Only a Fool Belle, Dickens, and Scrooge
- 7. **Scrooge’s bedroom**
Remember (reprise)Christmas Past, Scrooge, Dickens

ACT TWO

- 1. **Scrooge’s bedroom**
Have a Banquet, Mr. Scrooge Christmas Present, Dickens, Scrooge
- 2. **Bob Cratchit’s home**
Tiny Tim’s DreamTiny Tim and Family
- 3. **Drawing room of Scrooge’s nephew Fred**
- 4. **A Street in London**
- 5. **The street, several years later**
Pawnbroker’s Song.....Charwoman, Laundress, Pawnbroker, Undertaker
- 6. **Bob Cratchit’s home**
If I Could Hold You In My Arms Mrs. Cratchit, Bob, and Family
- 7. **A graveyard in London**
- 8. **Scrooge’s bedroom and the street, 1843**
Once MoreScrooge and Dickens
Once More (reprise)Scrooge and Dickens
- 9. **The street on Christmas Morning, 1843**
Finale Dickens and Company

WHO’S WHO IN THE CAST

SCOTT BAIRD (*Bob Cratchit*) is excited to be back performing in Chatham. CCP credits include *Falsettos* (Mendel, NJ Perry Nom.), *A Christmas Carol* (Bob Cratchit, 2014 & 2018) and *Jersey Voices: 2015* (Director). Select NJ Credits are *Parade* (Leo Frank), *Shrek* (Lord Farquaad), *Mothers and Sons* (Will Ogden), *It Shoulda Been You* (Marty), *Legally Blonde* (Emmett), *Mary Poppins* (Mr. Banks), *Company* (Bobby), *Les Miserables* (Thenardier, NJ Perry Award Winner) and *The Producers* (Leo Bloom). Scott currently serves on the Board of Directors at The Barn Theatre as the Special Event Director and also oversees the theatre program at Montville Township High School. Big thanks to Susie, Jack, the entire production staff and CCP for making this special production possible.

JOËLLE BOCHNER (*Mrs. Dickens/Beatrice/Laundress/Assistant Production Coordinator*) is delighted to be joining the cast of *A Christmas Carol* for the ninth time since 2001. She has been involved in CCP since 1998 and, in those years, has acted, stage managed, produced, production coordinated, propped, and worked set construction as well as having served several terms on the Board of Trustees, where she is now Past President. Favorite roles performed onstage have included *A Christmas Carol* (Laundress, Mrs. Dickens), *Christmas Cards* (Pearl), *Pride and Prejudice* (Charlotte), *Christmas Cards: Letters to Santa* (storyteller of “Eight Little Angels”), *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Blanche), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Miss Maudie) and most recently *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Mrs. Frank).

FINNIAN BURNS (*Young Man Scrooge/Topper*) is very excited to return to the CCP family for this year’s version of *A Christmas Carol*. Finn appeared as Peter Cratchit in the 2008 production, as well as in *Oliver Twist* (Orphan/Fagan Child). He has performed in shows at the County College of Morris, such as *It’s a Wonderful Life* (George Bailey), *Bright Star* (Daddy Murphy), *Miracle On 34th Street* (Bloomington/Jim Duncan), and many more. Finnian dedicates this production to his family and friends.

ALEXIA DAVIES (*Harriet Cratchit/Fan*) is thrilled to return to CCP for her second appearance in *A Christmas Carol*. Alexia is a dancer, pianist, singer, and competitive swimmer with Lakeland Hills YMCA. Theater credits include *21st Century Christmas Carol* (Dakota), *The Who's Tommy* (Young Tommy), *A Christmas Carol* (Belinda Cratchit), *Peter Pan* (Twin Two) and *After School Special* (Stacey). Film credits include *The Prize* (Emily). Alexia thanks her family, director Susan Speidel, music director Jack Bender, and this talented cast for their support!

PARKER EBERT (*Peter Cratchit/Boy in the Street/Young Scrooge*) is very excited to return to ...*Carol* for his fourth time! He has played Peter Cratchit and Boy in the Street in the past and is thrilled to add Young Scrooge. At Clear Space Theater Camp, he appeared in *West Side Story* (Action), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey II), *The Lion King* (Young Simba), and *Winnie The Pooh* (Owl). At Edison Intermediate School, he has done *Aladdin* (Aladdin's friend), *Beauty and The Beast* (Shepherd Boy), *Seussical* (Who Family), and is currently in *The History of Theater (abridged)* as The Phantom and a Rhino. Parker thanks his mother for being so caring, his stepmother for teaching him so many lessons, his father for being the source of humor in his life, and his brother for being his best friend. Merry Christmas!

ALLEN ELLIS (*2nd Gentleman/Jacob Marley*) is happy to return to *A Christmas Carol* after taking part in the 2018 production. He appeared in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Into the Woods* at the Bickford Theater, as well as in *Later Life* (Austin) for Alliance Repertory. For the last four years he has designed and built the sets for the fall and spring productions at Hanover Park High School.

GWENDOLYN FINNERTY (*Belinda Cratchit/Fezziwig Child*) is in her first production at CCP. This show is also her stage debut, aside from performing at recitals for her mother's voice studio for the past two years. Gwen is in second grade in Bernardsville and enjoys hiking, ice cream, piano lessons, playing lacrosse, and taking her new puppy, Daisy, out for walks.

MICHELLE FINNERTY (*Fezziwig Guest/Mrs. Cratchit*) is in her fifth production at CCP and her third production of *A Christmas Carol* (previously as Mrs. Cratchit and Belle). Some of her performance credits include *Master Class* (Sharon,) *Little Women* (Meg), *Seussical* (Music Director), *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Janet,) *Beauty and the Beast* (Belle), and *Urinetown* (Hope). Michelle currently teaches voice lessons and musical theater classes with Elefante Music and Performing Arts School, and also works as a Cantor for Mass celebrations at a number of local churches. Many thanks as always to her husband Sean, and their kids Owen and Gwen.

OWEN FINNERTY (*Fredrick Cratchit/Fezziwig Child*) is thrilled to return to CCP after playing Tiny Tim for his stage debut two years ago. In addition, Owen has performed at recitals for his mother's voice studio the past two years and is taking piano lessons. He is a third grader in Bernardsville and he also enjoys exploring in nature, playing lacrosse, and taking his new puppy, Daisy, out for walks.

SEAN FINNERTY (*Christmas Present/Undertaker*) is in his second production at CCP and his first time performing in *A Christmas Carol*. Previous credits include *Little Women* (John), *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Rocky), *Rent* (Roger), *Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston), *Urinetown* (Bobby Strong), *Children of Eden* (Father), and the NJ Premiere of *The Bridges of Madison County* (Robert). Sean currently works as the VP of Sales for ControlRad. Sean is also a Veteran of the Navy, having served in Africa as a Counter Terrorism Officer in Operation Iraqi Freedom after attending the United States Naval Academy. Thanks to Michelle, Owen and Gwen for sharing this experience.

HOWARD FISCHER (*1st Gentleman/Mr. Fezziwig/Nutley*) is appearing in his 20th CCP production and his third production of *A Christmas Carol*, having previously played the Gentleman, Nutley, Topper, and Fezziwig. Other Chatham shows include *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Spamalot*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Inherit the Wind*, *The Fantasticks*, *City of Angels*, and multiple *Jersey Voices* and *Fantasy Theater* productions. Recent local appearances are *The Runner Stumbles* and *Black Coffee* at Westfield Community Players. Thanks to wife Jill for her support, advice, encouragement, and patience. (See what you started, Jen?)

CHRIS FURLONG (*Ghost of Christmas Future*) is thrilled to be back on stage in *A Christmas Carol*, having been an actor in the original cast in 1988. He continued as a cast member in various roles for several years thereafter, and also worked on every subsequent production in some capacity. Happily, *A Christmas Carol* has held a special place in his heart for more than half his life. Chris has produced 19 CCP productions over two decades and also served as CCP's President. With 35-plus years as a volunteer at CCP, he thanks everyone who has shared this time with him. Special thanks to Patty, who continues to fill his heart with "Love & Joy."

CHARLES GRAYSON (*Ebenezer Scrooge*) is a teacher, songwriter and playwright who makes his home with his lovely wife Amy in Morristown. He was previously seen at CCP in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Jersey Voices*, and he is just plain "giddly" to join their long-standing holiday tradition. Other recent roles include *Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike* (Vanya), *The Foreigner* (Charlie Baker), and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Albert Dussel). We could use a little reminder of the importance of charity, kindness, goodwill, and community just now. Thanks to Susie and CCP for keeping that "Hope and Chance" alive.

TRACEY LYNNE HASKELL (*Mrs. Fezziwig*) is full of gratitude for the opportunity to perform in her very first CCP *A Christmas Carol!* Previous CCP appearances were in *Falsettos* (Dr. Charlotte), *August: Osage County* (Johnna), *Jersey Voices* and *Blood Brothers*. Across NJ she has performed in *Songs for a New World*, *Starting Here, Starting Now*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *And the World Goes Round*, *Motown for Our Town*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Other favorite roles include *Into the Woods* (The Witch), *West Side Story* (Anita), *SideShow* (Daisy), *The Robber Bridegroom* (Rosamund), *The Life* (Sonya), *Starmites* (Diva), *Ragtime* (Sarah's Friend), *A New Brain* (Lisa), and many more. This year has been weird, but creative humans will rise to the occasion. Tracey has seen so many beautiful things come out of this challenging time... let's keep going!

SUSIE PAPLOW (*Ghost of Christmas Past/Scrooge's Niece*) is thrilled to be back in CCP's gorgeous theater. It has been far too long.

Susie was seen previously here in *Dames at Sea* (Ruby), *Pure as the Driven Snow* (Imogene Pickens), and numerous Les Lehman & LaVerne Thomas Coffee Houses and Benefits. She was also recently seen virtually in the B Sides Night of One Acts in *The Night Before Krampus* directed by Susie Speidel. Susie P. sends special thanks to Susie S. and all at CCP for inviting her to be a part of the magic of *A Christmas Carol*. She has loved the show since she saw the premiere production and it is a dream come true for her to be involved.

ADELAIDE PREKOPA (*Belle/Martha Cratchit*) returns to *A Christmas Carol* for the second year in a row, having played Belle in 2018. Other favorite credits include *1776* (Martha Jefferson), *The Seagull* (Nina Zarechnaya), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Chava), *Annie* (Star-to-Be), and the Light Opera of New Jersey's *Sweeney Todd* and *A Little Night Music* (Fredrika Armfeldt). She has also performed at various venues with the New Jersey Choral Society, of which she has been a member since 2016. She studies voice with Linda Benanti at Linda Benanti Voice Studio and is currently studying for her BA/MA in Psychology at Pace University's Pforzheimer Honors College, while working in film and TV background.

CHIP PRESTERA (*Charles Dickens*) is honored to be back for his 27th production on the CCP stage, and his fourth time telling the tale of the Carol. His journey with CCP began in the 2012 production of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and was quickly followed by *Cabaret*, *The 39 Steps*, *A Christmas Carol* (Fred), *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Fantasticks*, *Angels in America*, *Christmas Cards*, *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*, *The Normal Heart*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Spamalot*, *Talk Radio*, *Play On!*, and others including six *Jersey Voices*. Since 2010, Chip has performed in 12 productions at other local theaters, including favorites *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Bob Ewell), *Harvey* (Elwood P. Dowd), and *The Wizard of Oz* (Scarecrow). Chip has received six NJAct Perry Award nominations, and he thanks his lovely wife for her non-stop, never-ending support.

DAVID ROMANKOW (*Fred/Pawnbroker*) is a CCP veteran, having appeared in *Moon Over Buffalo* (George Hay, Perry Award nominee), *Other Desert Cities* (Lyman Wyeth), and *The Importance of Being*

Earnest (Dr. Chasuble). Other favorite roles include *Opus* (Alan, Circle Players); *Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Vice-Principal Panch, Chester Theater Group); and *Noises Off* (Lloyd Dallas, Barn Theater). By day, David is a technical writer, guitarist, backgammon aficionado, father, and husband. Cheerio!

ASHLEE DONNA VISSERS (*Child Scrooge/Tiny Tim*) is honored to make her CCP debut in this production of *A Christmas Carol*. No stranger to the stage, Ash has been performing live since she was four and favorite roles include *Frozen Jr.* (Young Elsa), *Matilda* (Amanda Thripp), *The Little Mermaid Jr.* (Ariel), and *The Who's Tommy* (Young Tommy). She loves pursuing her theater training with extensive voice and dance classes and she is an accomplished songwriter working on her first album! Ashlee would like to thank Susie, Jack and the entire cast for this wonderful opportunity, and sends SO much love to her parents, brother Gabriel, and Mom-Mom and Papa, for their love and support! Merry Christmas!

LESLIE GAYLE WILLIAMS (*Fezziwig Guest/Emily/Charwoman*) played Belle and Emily in CCP's first and second production of *A Christmas Carol* 32 years ago. She gladly returned in 2018 for the 30th Anniversary production, this time playing the Charwoman and Emily, and is excited to reprise those roles for this year's incredibly special version. Other CCP credits include *The Curse of an Aching Heart* (Muriel), *Harvey* (Betty Chumly), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Gymnasia), *Christmas Cards* (Sheila/Mom), and *The Normal Heart* (Dr. Emma Brookner), as well as several roles in Chatham's "Sundays at 7" reading series. She currently serves as CCP's Vice President. She thanks Susie and the extraordinary cast for such a unique and wonderful experience and sends much love and gratitude to all the people behind the camera who worked tirelessly to make this event possible.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CREW

SUSAN SPEIDEL (*Director*) thanks this wonderfully intrepid cast for their talent and good will. She also thanks Joe DeVico, Ed Whitman, Jack Bender, Nik Marmo, Carol Saso, Anne Lowe, Joëlle Bochner and Mary MacDonald, along with everyone at CCP, for taking this crazy journey with her. She also thanks Philip McKinley for "greenlighting" the project and for introducing her to CCP – oh, so many years ago! She dedicates this production to the hundreds of actors, directors, designers, musicians, and crew, who have given their time and talents to *A Christmas Carol* throughout the years, sharing joy and holiday cheer with thousands of audience members. May we all remember to honor Christmas in our hearts and keep it all the year.

JACK BENDER (Musical Director) is happy to join the creative team of *A Christmas Carol* once more! This is his fourth time providing music direction for this production. Recent credits include *She Loves Me* at The Barn Theatre in Montville, and *Chess* at the Cranford Dramatic Club, a production for which he received an NJACT/Perry Award for Music Direction. He is a teacher of music at Newark Academy in Livingston, organist of Sacred Heart Church in South Plainfield NJ, and a freelance composer and arranger of instrumental and choral music.

CHATHAM COMMUNITY PLAYERS OFFICERS 2019-2021

President: Joe DeVico

Vice President: Leslie Gayle Williams

Secretary: Kate Pierce

Treasurer: Chip Pretera

Business Manager: Ed Whitman

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PRODUCTION STAFF & CCP COUNCIL 2019-2021

CASTING: Gus Ibranyi; COSTUMES: Fran Harrison; EDUCATION: Joe DeVico; FANTASY THEATER: Julie Anne Nolan; FINANCE COMMITTEE: Chip Pretera; FRONT OF HOUSE: Bob Denmark,

House Manager; Maybelle Cowan-Lincoln, Scheduling; Mara Lundstrom, Concessions; FUNDRAISING: Maybelle Cowan-Lincoln; GRAPHIC DESIGN: Eleanor Anderson; HISTORIAN: Howard Fischer; HOSPITALITY: Genevieve Anderson; HOUSE/GROUNDS: Chris Furlong, Joëlle Bochner; JERSEY VOICES: Aaron Kellner, Jessica Phelan; LIGHTS: Ed Whitman; MAILING: Kathy Rex; NJACT: George Seylaz, Chris Furlong; OUTREACH: Sarah Pharaon; PAINTING: Carol Saso; PHOTOGRAPHY: Howard & Jill Fischer; PLAY SELECTION: Steffi Denmark; PROGRAMS; Kathy Rex; PROPS/SET DECORATION: Carol Saso, Tish Lum; PUBLICITY: Chris Furlong; SET CONSTRUCTION: Roy Pancirov, Tom MacDonald; SET DESIGN: Roy Pancirov; SCENIC ARTIST: Open; SOUND: Joe DeVico; SUBSCRIPTIONS: Kathy Rex; SUNDAYS@7: Steffi Denmark; TICKETS/BOX OFFICE: Eileen Johnston; VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: Debby Hennessy; WEBMASTER: Chip Prester.