30th Anniversary Season

Pennsylvania Youth Theatre
Presents

A Christmas Carol
THE MUSICAL

Originally Presented by Radio City Entertainment at The Theater at Madison Square Garden

December 4-13, 2015

Enjoy the nostalgia of the holidays wrapped up in this lively musical retelling!
This familiar classic and its heartwarming themes are perfect holiday fare for the young and young at heart.

Charles A. Brown Historic Ice House · Bethlehem

123pyt.org
610-332-1400
Dear Teachers,

The following resource guide is designed for you and your students to facilitate the integration of the performing arts into core curriculum areas. The activities in this guide support the PA State Educational Standards in several areas, develop critical and creative thinking and enrich the live theatre experience for your students.

Pennsylvania Youth Theatre is proud to present *A Christmas Carol, The Musical* performed at the Ice House on Bethlehem’s Sand Island. Thank you and enjoy the show!

Melissa Keiser
Education and Outreach Coordinator

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**Pre-Show and Post-Show In-School Workshops**

If you would like to schedule a PRE or POST show workshop for your class for this particular production, please contact

Melissa Keiser, Education & Outreach Coordinator
610-332-1403
education@123pyt.org

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**ABOUT PYT**

Pennsylvania Youth Theatre (PYT) is a professional, non-profit performing arts organization whose mission is to educate, entertain, and enrich the lives of young people through the art of theatre. By bringing literature to life with theatre, PYT enhances the Language Arts curriculum for 12,000 community school students annually. Founded with the belief that all children deserve the very best, PYT’s Mainstage literature-based plays are professionally produced. Professional directors, choreographers, actors, dancers and musicians as well as lighting costume and set designers are hired to achieve the best possible presentation of children's plays. To keep our Mainstage productions available to all, we continue to offer these professionally staged shows to school groups for approximately $3.50 a ticket which is 57% below our break-even cost. PYT is happy to offer plays of this quality to the school children of our community for this reduced cost. We hope you and your class enjoy this performance!

www.123pyt.org
ABOUT CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* during the fall of 1843. He wandered miles and miles in the foggy London streets each night as the story took shape in his head. It was a story born of memories from his own unhappy childhood.

As a boy, Charles knew the indignity of poverty. His family wasn’t poor to begin with, but Charles’ father was completely irresponsible with money. He plunged the family deep into debt and they were forced to sell their possessions to pay creditors. Charles, 12 years old, was sent to work in a rat infested, boot-blacking (shoe polish) factory. After his father was thrown into debtor’s prison, Charles was forced to take cheap lodgings near his job. He lived alone, struggling to feed himself on the pittance that he earned. After a few months, a modest inheritance rescued Charles’ father from prison. Charles was freed from his dreary occupation and allowed to attend school.

He began working as a newspaper reporter and in 1833 Dickens began to contribute short stories and essays to periodicals. His first published story was *A Dinner at Popular Walk*. It was at this time that his primary focus became that of being a novelist although he still continued his journalistic work until the end of his life. His connections to various magazines and newspapers gave him the opportunity to begin publishing his own work. Charles never forgot his harsh upbringing and often wrote about the evil injustice, ignorance and greed in the world.

ABOUT A CHRISTMAS CAROL

When Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, it was the most successful book of the holiday season. By Christmas it had sold 6,000 copies. Britain was a much harsher, crueler place then it is today. Extreme poverty was widespread. In London, there were terrible slums; for the poorer classes, the average age of death was 22. Dickens originally set out to write “An appeal to the People of England, on behalf of the Poor Man’s Child”, then thought of a story that would have a greater impact.

Scrooge, who values only money and has no love for anyone, embodies what Dickens most hated in the spirit of his age. The Ghost’s antidote to Scrooge’s selfishness—the “spirit of Christmas”, of love, joy and care for other’s—is also Dickens's medicine for his country’s division and injustice. As the Ghosts try to convert Scrooge to kindness, Dickens tried to convert his readers, to honor Christmas in our hearts, and “try to keep it all the year.”

The idyllic Christmas scenes that Dickens painted—very different from the reality most people experienced—were so enchanting that they became a universal picture of Christmas as it should be. Dickens set out to help the poor, and created a story so powerful that it defined the modern idea of Christmas.

OTHER NOVELS:

- *Olivier Twist*
- *Great Expectations*
- *David Copperfield*
- *A Tale of Two Cities*
HISTORICAL CONTEXT: 19TH CENTURY LONDON

Constantly in Dickens’ mind, as seen in a number of his books where he writes vividly of life in London. He is credited with bringing an awareness of these issues to the general public, and using his novels to bring about real social and political change. He wrote the novel following the British government’s changes to the welfare system known as the New Poor Laws, passed in 1834, which required welfare applicants to “work” on treadmills and live in workhouses. He asks his readers to recognize the terrible state of the people whom the Industrial Revolution displaced and drove into poverty while the owners and managers of the companies became enormously wealthy.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Focus Questions: What does industrial mean? What is a revolution?

London was known as the Fever Patch. It was the first big industrial city in the world, and it was extremely polluted and unhealthy. Diseases spread very quickly.

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain during the 1700s. It started spreading to other parts of Europe and to North America in the early 1800s. By the mid 1800s, industrialization had become widespread in western Europe and the northeastern United States.

The Industrial Revolution created an enormous increase in the production of many kinds of goods. Some of this increase in production resulted from the introduction of power-driven machinery and the development of factory organization. Before the revolution, manufacturing was done by hand or simple machines. Most people worked at home in rural areas. A few worked in shops in towns as part of associations called guilds. The Industrial Revolution eventually took manufacturing out of the home and workshop. Power-driven machines replaced handwork, and factories developed as the best way of bringing together the machines and the workers to operate them.

As the Industrial Revolution grew, private investors and financial institutions were needed to provide money for the further expansion of industrialization. Financiers and banks thus became as important as industrialists and factories in the growth of the revolution. For the first time in European history, wealthy business leaders called capitalists took over the control and organization of manufacturing.

In the 18th century the population grew at a faster rate than ever before. There are four primary reasons which may be cited for this growth: a decline in the death rate, an increase in the birth rate, the virtual elimination of the dreaded plagues and in an increase in the availability of food. The latter is probably the most significant of these reasons, for English people were consuming a much healthier diet.

Discussion Question:

What themes or characters from A Christmas Carol do you think may be inspired by events or people in Charles Dickens’ own life?
In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens shows us a cross-section of London Society, from the very rich to the very poor, at a time of year when the gulf between rich and poor was most visible and felt most deeply. In the story, Christmas is described as the “time, of all others, when want is keenly felt and Abundance rejoices.” The rich could look forward to resting and feasting, and receiving presents. The working poor would have Christmas Day off, if they were lucky, and might scrape together some sort of meal. For the very poor, Christmas was just another day.

The Scrooges of London had everything their own way. They could pay their worker what they wanted when they wanted (no minimum wage) and fire them when they liked. Even so, any sort of job was better than none. There was no government help for the unemployed. Those who lost their work might even starve. Many rich businessmen such as Scrooge made their money at the royal exchange. Their businesses were supported by ever-growing armies of poorly paid clerical workers. Many people worked 12 hours a day 6 days a week. Their only days off were Sundays, May Day and Christmas Day. Employers did not have to let their employees off even for these. Many poor workers—domestic servants and factory workers, for example—had to work on Christmas Day. Scrooge resents giving Bob Cratchit even Christmas Day off.

In unhealthy London, very many children were sickly, even died young. Few poor children had the chance of an education. Many of London’s youth were poor, even homeless. Most spent their days earning money for their families, instead of going to school. Because of the poor living conditions and lack of proper nourishment, there were thousands of children, like Tiny Tim, who were sickly or had ailments and died young. In 1839, nearly half of the funerals were for children under the age of 10. Many children grew up without education and virtually no chance to escape the cycle of poverty. Dickens felt that this cycle of poverty could be broken through education and became interested in the Ragged Schools in London. Ragged Schools were for poor children in the cities who could not afford the tuition of the more common private schools.

**Discussion Question:**

Dickens wrote about the troubles in Victorian era England. If the author were alive today, what social issues do you think he would write about?
## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### CHRISTMAS PAST

**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 him of the Three Spirits, and urges him to choose a new path in life.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST**  
Invokes images from Scrooge’s past to serve as a reminder that Christmas once meant something to him.

**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.

**BELLE**  
Scrooge’s former fiancée; he chose greed over love.

**FAN**  
Scrooge’s older sister and Fred’s mother.

### CHRISTMAS PRESENT

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT**  
A lively spirit who spreads Christmas cheer.

**FRED**  
Scrooge’s optimistic, kind-hearted nephew; he overlooks Scrooge’s negativity.

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

**MRS. CRATCHIT**  
Bob’s wife.

**TINY TIM**  
Bob’s youngest son; crippled at birth and equipped with a loving spirit.

**PETER, MARTHA, BELINDA, & THE LITTLE CRATCHITS**  
Other Cratchit children.

### CHRISTMAS FUTURE

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME**  
Scrooge fears this ghost’s premonitions.

**OLD JOE, MRS. DILBER, LAUNDRESS, & UNDERTAKERS**  
In the future, they meet to share in the profits of selling-off Scrooge’s belongings.

**NARRATOR**  
Kindly provides story information to you, our spectators.

**GENTLEPEOPLE, CAROLERS, PARTY GUESTS, SERVANTS, ETC.**
AFTER THE SHOW:
IMPROVISATION ACTIVITY

Experiencing a variety of improvisation topics will help students relate to Scrooge’s journey. Act out the following scenarios:

1) A lazy student is awakened in the night by the ghost of a drop-out student (Marley) who tells the student that he/she will be visited by three ghosts. The Ghost of School Days Past will show the student his/her former diligence. The Ghost of School Days Present will show the student the success other students are having by putting forth effort and focus in their school work. The Ghost of School Days Future will show the student what will happen in his/her future if the student’s lazy ways are not changed.

2) The grumpy manager of a fast food restaurant bullies his employees to work harder. One day he is knocked unconscious by a fallen box of frozen meat patties. He dreams of how loved the former manager was and how hard the employees worked for him. Once he awakes, the manager is transformed to a generous, congenial boss.

3) A bossy, mean older sibling dreams of how his younger siblings greedily divide up to sell his possessions on Ebay after he is found mysteriously dead.

YES AND NO GAME

It was popular during Dickens’ time to play party games during holiday gatherings. One popular game was called the “Yes and No Game.” Similar to a game we play today called, “20 Questions.” One player thinks of a person, place or thing. The others try to guess what that person is thinking by asking questions that can only be answered with a yes or a no. When someone guesses correctly it is that person’s turn to think of a person, place or thing. Play as a class, choosing a person, place or thing from A Christmas Carol. Try it out at home when you have family gatherings for the holidays!

DID YOU KNOW?

In Dickens’ time the word “humbug” was a common and witty expression used to proclaim a hoax, trick or deception. The word’s origin are unknown but Dickens’ conjunction of the word acknowledged the word’s popularity and made use of his readers’ associations of humbug with the model businessman of England’s Industrial Age, interested in only hard economic fact and with no time for useless sentiment.

www.artsalive.ca/pdf/eth/activities/achristmascarol.pdf
THEMES TO FOLLOW: TRANSFORMATION

A Christmas Carol is bursting with all kinds of transformations. The biggest of all being Scrooge’s journey from a young boy evolving into a bitter old man and then his efforts to reconnect that old man to the emotional young boy he used to be. The story of Scrooge and A Christmas Carol, leaves you wondering, “What if?” What would have happened to Scrooge and the other characters if the story wouldn’t have ended the way it did. Pick one of the “What If” questions below. Ask your teacher for more paper if necessary!

“What If” Stories

(Suggested for Grade 3 and up)

1) What if Scrooge did not meet Marley’s Ghost? What might have happened to him?
2) What if Scrooge had been very poor?
3) What if Scrooge did not see his grave?

AFTER THE SHOW: A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

After seeing PYT’s production of A Christmas Carol, the Musical and reading through the Historical Context, have your students give our vocabulary crossword puzzle a try!

ANSWERS:

Treadmill
Gruel
Carol
Humbug
Mistletoe
Workhouse
Delicacy
Fate
Miser

www.capa.com/files/about/a-christmas-carol-study-guide.pdf
AFTER THE SHOW: A CHRISTMAS CAROL VOCABULARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE DEFINITIONS

ACROSS
1) A mean person who is extremely stingy with money.
2) A place where poor people or those guilty of a minor crime were sent and forced to work as punishment.
3) Something pleasing to eat that is rare or luxurious.
4) A machine used as punishment in prisons in which a prisoner operates the device for long hours to grind grain or raise water. It is powered by either stepping continuously on a series of treads or steps.

DOWN
1) A type of plant with green leaves and white betties. According to Christmas tradition, if you meet someone under it you are obligated to kiss them.
2) A thin, soupy form of porridge made of boiled ground grain such as millet, oats or barley.
3) The will or determining cause by which things in general are believed to come to be as they are or events to happen as they do.
4) Nonsense; especially something designed to be deceptive or misleading.
5) A song associated with Christmas. Originally from the 14th century French word, corale or the Latin word choraula.
AFTER THE SHOW: CREATIVE WRITING (PICK ONE)

1) You are visited by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, & Future. What do they show you when they take you on the journey of your own life? Would you be happy with what you saw? What would you go back and change if you could?

2) Which Ghost would you like to be and why?
Make a list of character traits about Scrooge from the examples given. List them in either Scrooge Before or Scrooge After.

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<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
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<td>Sympathetic</td>
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<td>Thoughtful</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
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</table>

Examples:

- Arrogant
- Brave
- Cautious
- Civil
- Confident
- Considerate
- Cooperative
- Courteous
- Determined
- Envious
- Exhausted
- Friendly
- Frightened
- Gentle
- Giddy
- Giving
- Greedy
- Happy
- Helpful
- Honest
- Honorable
- Humble
- Jealous
- Lonely
- Respectful
- Selfish
- Spiteful
- Sympathetic
- Thoughtful
- Trustworthy
An acrostic is a type of poem that describes something (in this case, a character from the play *A Christmas Carol*) by using each of the letters in the word as the beginning of a line of poetry.

**T**

**I**

**N**

**Y**

**T**

**I**

**M**

Maybe you could try one for Scrooge, Marley, Bob Cratchit or even yourself! Ask your teacher for more paper!
COMPARE & CONTRAST

Using the Venn diagram below, compare Tiny Tim’s character traits with your own. Write words that describe you in the ME circle. Write words that describe Tiny Tim in his circle. In the space in the middle, where both circles meet, write words that describe both of you.

ME
NAME:

TINY TIM:

BOTH:
Ex: young
Scrooge eventually learns the importance of charity. Think about a cause that is important to you (i.e., homelessness, equality, cancer treatments) and write a short, persuasive letter to Scrooge, urging him to donate some money and/or time. Be sure to include some statistics to help convey your message, and describe how his donation would improve the situation. Share your letter with the class.

Dear Mr. Scrooge,


Sincerely,
PYT QUICKTIVITIES

This activity can be done BOTH before and after the show. If you are able to, find a copy of the book or film to show your students before PYT’s production. Compare and contrast those to each other, then to the play you will see at the Ice House!

The ROLE ON THE WALL outline is drawn on a piece of chart paper around an important character. Information and feelings about the character are written into the shape. It can also be enriched by being written from different perspectives, for example, the space outside the outline can contain comments about the character as they are seen from an observer’s viewpoint and the interior space can contain the character’s own thoughts and point of view. This is useful for building a deeper understanding of a character and the play. Use this outline below to record information about each character. This can be done with both older and younger students. With older students, you can assign a different character to groups and they can collaborate and share their work with the class.

SCROOGE, TINY TIM, BOB CRATCHIT, ETC: *How does he/she see him/herself?* (Record these traits on the inside of the Role on the Wall.) *How do other people view him/her?* (Record these descriptions on the outside of the character.

You may do this activity before the show, based on your students prior knowledge, then compare and add to after the show. Hand out the outline below and have your students begin the process.
I liked A Christmas Carol, The Musical because...

My favorite part was...

The scene I remember the most was...

The character I liked best was______________________ because...

The character I did not like was________________ because....

Overall, I think A Christmas Carol, The Musical was...
AFTER THE SHOW: DRAW A REVIEW!
ATTENTION TEACHERS

When you check in at the Ice House on Sand Island, you will be given a packet with a Performance Evaluation Form. Your feedback is very important to us, and we hope that you will take a few minutes to complete the form and return it to the PYT office.

Thank you for bringing your students to this PYT production!

COMING IN MAY!

The Wizard of Oz

Tuesday, May 17 at 9:45 am
Wednesday, May 18 at 9:45 am & 12:15 pm
Thursday, May 19 at 9:45 am & 12:15 pm
Friday, May 20 at 9:45 am

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES K – 12

APPROXIMATE LENGTH: 90 MINUTES

Diamond Theatre at Zoellner Arts Center

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

The audience is a very important part of any live theatre performance. Without the audience, there would be no one to laugh when the show is funny, to gasp when it is scary or to applaud at the end.

• Enter the theatre quietly. Listen to the directions from the ushers and sit where they direct you.

• There is no intermission, so you may want to use the bathroom before the show begins.

• You will help others enjoy the show when you keep your feet on the floor and your hands to yourself.

• Save your comments or questions for later in class. Do no talk during the show.

• Food and drinks are NOT allowed in the theatre. Enjoy your snacks, gum or candy after the show.

• A live play is different than a movie or a football game. Talking to the actors is not appropriate and can be distracting.

• Please turn off your cell phones, and no texting during the show.

• No photographs or video taping, please. This is for the actor’s safety.

• Show your appreciation by applauding at the end of the show.

• When the show is over, our ushers will give you directions to leave the theatre in an orderly manner.

• Enjoy the show! We’re glad you came to a production by Pennsylvania Youth Theatre!