



Ebenezer Scrooge bestows Christmas joy at KC Rep



Don Ipock/Kansas City Repertory

Theatre

A season-welcoming holiday classic, “A Christmas Carol” renews Kansas City’s love for Charles Dickens’ most riveting curmudgeon, Ebenezer Scrooge, who discovers the joy of the season after four ghostly spirits demonstrate his misguided quest for money.

Kansas City’s biggest local, annual production, “A Christmas Carol” officially opened Saturday night, Nov. 30 and runs through Dec. 29. As evidenced by the rapid standing ovation, the sold out audience thoroughly enjoyed the fourth adaptation in four years of the Dickens novella.

With Thanksgiving and Black Friday in the rear-view-mirror, “A Christmas Carol” at the Rep offers a show to be celebrated annually as a family tradition. “A Christmas Carol” overflows with heart, laughter, and spirit—the holiday spirit.

Appropriate for all ages, the family-friendly play will not be forgotten. Everyone should experience this time-honored, heartfelt favorite.



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With local favorite Gary Neal Johnson reprising the oft funny Mr. Scrooge, the audience laughed out loud at every utterance of “Bah. Humbug.” While Ebenezer voices his dislike of Christmas and the joy it brings, Kansas City audiences do not. Because of KC’s affinity, this opening marks the 39th season for Scrooge and associates to entertain. According to Stuart Carden, KCRep Artistic Director, the Rep plans a 40th celebration next season.

A host of other local actors return annually for this stellar production. Many assume different roles, giving the show a fresh look, and it allows each the opportunity to tailor their new character in a different light. The effect always surprises those who make the play part of their yearly celebration.



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Experiencing Ebenezer's journey through his past, through the present, and the shadows of the future can bring tears when he awakens physically and emotionally to the reason for the season. His dawning to humanity illustrates the hope, joy, heart, tenderness, compassion, and redemption.

The new production stages an adaptation by Geoff Elliott with direction from KCRep Associate Artistic Director Jason Chanos. Different versions of the story varied from a lighter adaptation to a darker version with some popular scenes cut and darker situations emphasized. The current production streamlines the story and restores a more positive approach to the story.



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"As someone who's performed in the show and assistant-directed it in the past, I'm very intimate with the piece and am thrilled to give Kansas City an "A Christmas Carol" that's filled with dazzling sights and heart-touching moments,"

Chanos said. "If you've seen this production in the past, you'll love our classic take on everybody's holiday favorite. If this will be your first time with us, we can't wait to welcome you and your family to take part in this holiday tradition."

"A Christmas Carol" is a novella by Charles Dickens that tells the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge on his redemptive journey with Christmas Past (Vanessa Severo), Present (Matthew Rapport), and Future (Taylor Harlow), to rediscover the true meaning of the holidays. Their arrival follows Scrooge's spiritual visitor, Jacob Marley, (Victor Raidar-Wexler) his deceased business partner who died on Christmas Eve seven years ago. Marley appears to Scrooge to forewarn him of the chain of sorrows awaiting Scrooge if he does not learn to love humanity.



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All four of the spirits engage the audience and contrast so fittingly with the stone-hearted Scrooge. Each spirit magnifies Scrooge's situation while encouraging him to make positive steps toward redemption of his soul. Strong actors presenting strong characters provides a counter-balance to Scrooge's ill-chosen path. Each ghostly apparition leads Scrooge and the audience on Scrooge's journey. All five actors give stand-out performances. Not to be overlooked, the character of Charles Dickens narrates the story and provides insight to changing scenes. The delivery from Walter Coppage

gives an overview of Scrooge, his moods, his temperament, and his softening of his heart. Coppage's brilliant delivery adds so much to the enjoyment of the play.



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KC Rep's production overflows with talent and creativity on all levels. Outstanding costumes showcase the unparalleled acting of the cast. Dramatic lighting and sound pulls the audience into the performance and then engages them with the use of video projections to highlight special effects in several scenes.

The 2019 production of "A Christmas Carol" features the following cast: Gary Neal Johnson as Scrooge, Walter Coppage as Dickens, Victor Raider-Wexler as Marley/Old Joe, Vanessa Severo as Christmas Past, Matthew Rapport as Christmas Present/Solicitor, Taylor Harlow as Christmas Future/Bass, Jake Walker as Bob Cratchit, Yetunda Felix as Mrs. Cratchit, Rusty Sneary as Fred, Brianna Woods as Mrs. Fred, John Rensenhous as Fezziwig/Old Joe, Peggy Friesen as Mrs. Fezziwig/Harp, Kimberly Horner as Belle/Dibler, Joseph Carr as Wilkins, Shanna Jones as Charwoman, T. Eric Morris as Young Ebenezer/Undertaker, Bradley J. Thomas as Solicitor/Topper, Kelly Urshel (Ensemble), Shon Ruffin (Ensemble), Caleigh Michnowicz (Ensemble/Miss 2)



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KC Reps "A Christmas Carol" features two rotating youth ensembles (Holly and Ivy). Members of the Holly ensemble are: Daniel Bryan, Emma Daggett, Alice Feldmiller, Savion Jackson, Eliza King, Leo Lynn, Savaughn McClaine, Ellie Shea McManamy, Laine McManamy, Christopher Rauth, Tess Sollars, Allison Weiner. Members of the Ivy ensemble are: Lucy Alcock, Annika Bryson, Ringlee Bryson, Amelia Coville-Schweigert, Liana Jaramillo, Ike McKee, Lauren Rothaus, Brodi Schlagel, Christon Lee Starks, Tripp Starr, Benjamin Stoker, Moss Terrell.



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Repertory Theatre

The creative team for the production consists of Jason Chanos, Director; Emily Stovall, Costume Design; Kaitlyn Pietras and Jason H. Thompson, Lighting and Projections Design; Joshua Horvath, Sound Design; Anthony Edwards, Music Director/Piano-Conductor; Rachel M. Dyer, Assistant Stage Manager; Jordan New, Assistant Costume Design. Ivan Dario Cano serves as the

Production Stage Manager, Margaret Spare, Assistant Lighting Designer.

Tickets for "A Christmas Carol" start at \$38 and may be purchased by visiting the [KC Rep website](http://kcrep.org/show/ACC) <http://kcrep.org/show/ACC> or by calling the KCRep box office at 816-235-2700. Groups of nine or more receive discounted tickets by calling Andrew at 816-235-6122. . Performances take place at Spencer Theatre on the UMKC campus

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