

SHOWBILL

LYELL B. CLAY CONCERT THEATRE



A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens,
adapted by Jerry Patch



THE NEW
West Virginia Public Theatre
WINTER SEASON 2016

Welcome to West Virginia Public Theatre's production of Charles Dickens' famous tale, *A Christmas Carol!*

We are pleased you are here for this unique version of this wonderful holiday story. We chose the Lyell B. Clay Concert Theatre for this production to better serve the thousands of school children who have been and will continue to see this show over the next few days. It is certainly a joy to see the faces of children as they witness live theatre for the first time, like many of them do. As you know, this an integral part of the WVPT mission.

We appreciate your attendance for our production this evening and hope you will return to us in the future. The survival of WVPT as a major part of the cultural fabric of Morgantown hinges on the support of its patrons. We encourage you to support not only with your ticket purchase, but also with your tax-deductible gift to sustain our operations and production programs. Please know we are grateful to our donors and sponsors and thank each of them for their invaluable vision and investment in WVPT. With recent state budget cuts to the arts and to WVPT, your support means more than ever before.

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- Entertain and Inspire Audiences with Quality Professional Theatre
- Employ Honorable and Responsible Business Practices with our Community Partners
- Educate the Youth of the State and Region to the Wonders of the Theatre
- Enhance the Economic and Cultural Environment of our Region

Thank you again for your support. Enjoy the Show!



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THE NEW WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC THEATRE

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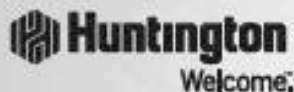
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West Virginia Public Theatre
in cooperation with
WVU College of Creative Arts
Presents

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Charles Dickens, adapted by Jerry Patch



Lee Blair* as Ebenezer Scrooge

Director – Irene Alby

Carols and Original Music Arranged, Directed and Performed –
James Kenon Mitchell

Musical Setting of Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Ring Out, Wild Bells* –
James Kenon Mitchell

Scenic Design – Robert Klingelhoef

Lighting Design – Joshua Williamson

Sound Design – Alan McEwen

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL is produced
by special arrangement with Broadway Play Publishing Inc, NYC
www.broadwayplaypub.com

CAST

Ebenezer Scrooge.....Lee Blair*
 Bob Cratchit.....Joe Bussey
 Mrs. Cratchit/Mrs. Fezziweg.....Jessica Morgan Bishop
 Fred/Mr. Shelley.....Rick Mugrage
 Marley's Ghost/Ghost of Christmas Future.....John O'Connor
 Ghost of Christmas Past/Sally.....Emily Asbury
 Ghost of Christmas Present.....Andra Ward
 Joe/Young Marley.....Bryan Staggers
 Lena.....Ashley Shade
 Mr. Fezziweg/Undertaker.....Troy Snyder
 First Solicitor/Man.....James Butcher
 Second Solicitor/Charwoman.....Charlotte Haas
 Belle/Mrs. Shelley.....Lindsay Bayer
 Young Ebenezer/Topper.....Woody Pond
 Toy Lady/Mrs. Dllber.....Lindsey Wayne
 Boy Scrooge/Chimney Sweep.....Wesley Cotter
 Martha Cratchit/Fan.....Anna Leshko
 Peter Cratchit.....Dominic Secreto
 Belinda Cratchit.....Emmy Leshko
 Tiny Tim.....Eben Mugrage
 Boy/Fiddler.....Angelica Alby-Gabara

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OUR DIRECTOR



IRENE ALBY

Director

A director/actor, Irene Alby was a company member of The Other Theatre from 1997 to 1999 and performed in *Kaspar*, *Year Zero* and *Human Collision/Atomic Reaction* which was presented at the 1999 *Festival de Théâtre des Amériques* and won the *Montreal English Critics Circle Award (M.E.C.C.A.)* for “Best Direction” and “Best Production”. Her New York credits include *Aase* in *Peer Gynt* directed by Andrei Serban, *The Dancing Fox* with the Mettawee River Theatre and Serban’s *Benvenuto Cellini* at the NY Metropolitan Opera as well as performances at the Ohio Theatre Ice Factory Theatre Festival, the Producer’s Club, St. Veronica’s Church and the Theatre of the Riverside Church. She also interned as an Assistant to Legit Agent, Meg Pantera.

Currently, she is a Teaching Assistant Professor at WVU Department of Theatre and Dance. She formerly taught for twelve years at the University of Toledo Department of Theatre and Film, where she was a Senior Lecturer. Her production of *The Adding Machine* was invited to tour to the 2015 KCACTF REGION II Festival, and she recently co-directed *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Kookmin University in Seoul, Korea. She is a founding artist of the Glacity Theatre Collective (GTC), a professional theatre company in Toledo, Ohio, where she also served as the Managing Director throughout the company’s first three years. GTC credits include directing Jenny Schwartz’s *God’s Ear*, and performing in Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Laura Wade’s *Breathing Corpses* and George F. Walker’s *Problem Child*. Most recently, she performed Titania/Hyppolyta in *A Midsummer Night’s Mysteries*, a collaboration with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra.

She received her MFA in Acting at Columbia University’s School of the Arts, studying under Andrei Serban, Kristin Linklater, Anne Bogart and Nikolaus Wolcz, and her BFA in Theatre at Concordia University in Montreal. During that time, she also studied three years at the Ecole de Mime Omnibus and participated in Pol Pelletier’s Dojo workshop.

From the Director...

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* first came out in 1843 as a social commentary against the exploitation of children and the poor, as well as the importance of education. These themes remained central to Dickens' work throughout his life. As a 12-year-old child, he had been forced to work in a shoe polish factory for a year while his father was in prison for being unable to pay off a debt. The experience marked him for life, and though he rarely spoke about it, it is prevalent in all of his works. While there is debate as to how influential his work was on child labor laws, we do know for a fact that many new rules and regulations went into effect during those same years.

The novel was an instant success and eight stage adaptations were already in production within only two months of publication. Throughout the remainder of his life, Dickens himself performed the story every Christmas to audiences across Europe and America. Like all great works, the message of the story rings out with as much relevance today as it did when it was written, and many of us (myself included) make the pilgrimage each year to hear those words performed in theatres across the country. Interestingly, we owe our own sense of nostalgia and tradition to Dickens' oeuvre. Christmas was waning in significance in the 1800's, but the publication revitalized the holiday and brought it back to its central place in Victorian England.

Finally, we sometimes forget that *A Christmas Carol* is also a great ghost story! Dickens introduced his book in this way:

"I have endeavored in this ghostly little book, to raise the ghost of an idea..."

As a director, I have tried to be true to the spirit of Dickens' work and to maintain the three essential qualities that make this one of the great classics of the Western canon. Thus I hope what you will see tonight will be equal parts ghost story, Christmas tradition, and social commentary.

-Irene Alby

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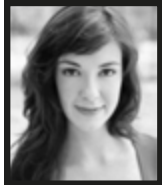
OUR CAST



ANGELICA ALBY-GABARA

Boy, Fiddler

Angelica Alby-Gabara is in grade seven at Suncrest Middle School. She has been performing since age six. Past credits include the role of Lanie in *God's Ear* (Glacity Theatre Collective), Antigone in *Oedipus Rex* (University of Toledo), an orphan in *Cabaret, The Musical* (University of Toledo), as well as performances in school productions of *As You Like It* and *The King and I*.



EMILY ASBURY

Christmas Past, Sally

A native of Barboursville, WV, Emily has spent the last two summers at the nation's longest-running outdoor drama, "The Lost Colony", as Queen Elizabeth I. Other favorite credits include "The Golden Horseshoe Musical" (WV tour), and three national tours with Chamber Theatre Company of Boston. In the spring, Emily will be performing with Lexington Children's Theatre in "Diary of a Worm, Spider, and Fly." Proud graduate of Otterbein University. Thanks, Mom and Dad! www.emilyasbury.com



LINDSAY BAYER

Belle, Mrs. Shelley

WVPT debut! New York: *Next to Normal* (Natalie), NYMF 2015's *What Do Critics Know?* (Betsy), *Dear Albert Einstein* (Judy). Regional/favorites: *Floyd Collins* (Nellie), *The Spitfire Grill* (Percy), *The Light in the Piazza* (Clara), *Sweeney Todd* (Johanna), *Titanic* (Caroline Neville), *Miss Elizabeth Bennet* (Jane). Baldwin Wallace alum. Thanks to Irene, Lee, and the entire team! Love always to Liv, Kev, and her parents. @Lindsay_Bayer

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JESSICA MORGAN BISHOP

Mrs. Cratchit, Mrs. Fezziweg

Jessica is an Associate Professor of Stage Movement in the School of Theatre and Dance at West Virginia University, teaching in the BFA and MFA Acting Studios. Jessica has performed professionally in Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and with the ETA Hoffmann Theatre in Bamberg, Germany. At Greenbrier Valley Theatre in Lewisburg, WV she played Claire in *Proof*, Ariel in *The Tempest* and Becky Lou in *Free Mel Greenburg*. She has been seen locally at Fairmont State's Town and Gown Players as Louise in *Always...Patsy Cline*, as Mrs. Mullin in WVPT's *Carousel*, and as the Mom/Queen in *The Unlucky Princess Battles the Ghouls* and Amy in *Putting it Together* for WVU's Mountain State Repertory. Other favorite roles include Kent in *King Lear*, Roberta in *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, Yitzhak in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, the Angel in *Angels in America, Part Two: Perestroika*, and Jess in *Complete Works of Wm Shkspre (abridged)*. Most recently, she was seen in the staged readings of *Not Someone Like Me*, directed by Chris Sarandon, and a one-woman version of *Miss Zelda: Reflections of a Southern Belle*.



LEE BLAIR

Ebenezer Scrooge

Lee Blair is delighted to be involved in his fourth production of this classic Dickensian tale but his first as the story's protagonist, Ebenezer Scrooge. Lee's credits as an actor and director have included works with Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, New York International Fringe Festival, Emelin Theatre, Alhambra Theatre, Hippodrome State Theatre (Young Scrooge in their 1994 production, Marley and Ghost of Christmas Future in 1995), Greenbrier Valley Theatre (director of *A Christmas Carol* in 2004) and West Virginia Public Theatre. With WVPT, Lee was director of last summer's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, appeared as Hucklebee in 2013's *The Fantasticks* and currently serves as an artistic consultant with the company. Lee is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association (since 1997), an associate member with the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and is Associate Professor of Acting and Area Coordinator for Performance with the School of Theatre & Dance at West Virginia University. At West Virginia University, Lee has directed productions such as *Noises Off*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Seminar*, *Cabaret*, *Lend Me a Tenor* and *Guys and Dolls*. Lee dedicates his performance to the late Rusty Salling (1948-2016) who for more than 25 years appeared as Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* at the Hippodrome State Theatre in Gainesville, FL. "Oh, Spirit!"



JOE BUSSEY

Bob Cratchit

Joseph Bussey is excited to be working with WVPT on *A Christmas Carol*. Joseph has been seen most recently with WVPT this past summer in their productions of *Romeo and Juliet* as Mercutio, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* as Hysterium. He would like to thank everyone involved for helping make this production happen.



JAMES BUTCHER

First Solicitor, Man #1

James Butcher has appeared in WVPT productions of *Footloose*, *Mary Poppins*, *South Pacific*, *Aladdin*, *Anything Goes*, *Oliver!*, *Annie*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *West Side Story*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Aida*. Jim has professional credits in outdoor drama, educational touring and environmental theatre. Film: *Moving Mountains*.



WESLEY COTTER

Boy Scrooge, Chimney Sweep

In second grade, Wesley was cast as Sir Michael in Younglove Production's *Cinderella*. Other Younglove credits include *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Aladdin*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Wesley has had roles in Fairmont State University's *Tom Sawyer* and WVPT's *Tommy* and *Mary Poppins*. He has also appeared in *Honk*, *Peter Pan* and *The Addams Family* at Bridgeport High School. Wesley was a six year member of the Chanticleer Children's Chorus that toured



CHARLOTTE HAAS

Second Solicitor, Charwoman

Charlotte Haas is a local actress and 25 year resident of Morgantown. Previous roles include Grandma in *The Grapes of Wrath*, Mrs. Holly in *Suddenly Last Summer*, Sister Mary in *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All*, Meg in *A Lie of the Mind*, Anfisa in *Three Sisters*, Mrs. Webb in *Our Town*, and Thelma in *'night, Mother*. She thanks Irene Alby for making her part of the inaugural season of West Virginia Public Theater's reboot and hopes this is the start of an exciting new arts scene for the region!



ANNA LESHKO

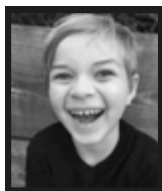
Martha Cratchit, Fan

Anna Leshko is 10 years old and is in 5th grade at North Elementary. She plays the violin and saxophone, and enjoys music, crafting and baking. She has took part in WVU Children's Theater's productions of *Dorothy in Wonderland* (Cheshire Cat, Knave of Hearts) last year, and *Seussical, Jr.* (Vlad Vladikoff) this year.

**EMMY LESHKO**

Belinda Cratchit

Emelia Leshko is 9 years old and is in 3rd grade at North Elementary. She plays ice hockey for the Morgantown Blades and enjoys drawing, constructing, and anything using her boundless creativity. This is Emmy's first theatrical production.

**EBEN MUGRAGE**

Tiny Tim

Eben Mugrage is excited to be in *A Christmas Carol*. Eben has most recently been seen in WVU's production of *Trojan Women*. His favorite part of being in shows are the costumes and sets. Eben moved from Oregon almost two years ago with his mom, dad, and siblings. Before leaving Oregon, Eben trained in Aikido. He's a lover of Lego and is beginning to make stop motion short movies. You can see some of his work on his YouTube channel. He goes by "GOOFIE GUY."

**RICK MUGRAGE**

Fred, Mr. Shelley

Rick Mugrage is excited to be a part of *A Christmas Carol*. This is his fifth show with West Virginia Public Theatre. Two summers ago he played the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, and Shaw Moore in *Footloose*. This past summer he played Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* and Miles Gloriosus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Before coming to Morgantown from Oregon almost two years ago, Rick was seen in many different shows, such as Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables*, Jekyll/Hyde in *Jekyll and Hyde the Musical*, Raul, in the nation's first university production of *The Phantom of the Opera*, Basilio in *Life is a Dream* and many more. Rick is also a recording artist. To learn more about him, you can go to www.rickmugrage.com.

**JOHN O'CONNOR**

Marley, Ghost of Christmas Future

John O'Connor is a Professor/Senior Level: Theatre Arts at Fairmont State University. He has acted professionally in Chicago, Seattle and West Virginia, and has appeared in numerous FSU Masquers and Town & Gown productions. Favorite roles include Cervantes in *Man of LaMancha*, Fagin in *Oliver!*, Thurston Wheelis, et al in *Greater Tuna*, Joe Keller in *All My Sons*, Senex in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Father in *Children of Eden*, all for FSU; Nick in *The Guys* for Vintage Theatre Company; and The Bishop in *Les Miserables* for West Virginia Public Theatre. He is looking forward to playing Lear in the Vintage Theatre Company's fall 2017 production of *King Lear*. O'Connor's directing credits include plays by Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Moliere, Ibsen, Chekhov, Miller, Sondheim, Ionesco, Pinter, Handke, Orton, Elizabeth Robins, Caryl Churchill, Wendy Weiner, Brooke Berman, and Lynn Nottage.



DOMINIC SECRETO

Peter Cratchit

Dominic is excited to be returning to his second production with WVPT. His previous credits include Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (Chip), *Winnie the Pooh Kids* (Owl), *Children of Eden*, and *The Music Man*. He studies vocal technique at Fairmont State Academy for the Arts and is a 5th grader at Cheat Lake Elementary. Dominic also enjoys Tae Kwon Do and learning to play the trombone. Dominic gives thanks to his family for their love and support.



ASHLEY SHADE

Lena

Ashley Shade graduated from West Virginia University in 2011 where she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. Her favorite roles include Abigail in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* at Greenbrier Valley Theatre, and Sondheim's *Putting It Together* at Mountain State Rep. She is a native of Berkeley Springs, WV, and is currently in preproduction for her first play/film *Catch* (a modern bullying-prevention one-act), which made its West Coast Premiere in San Diego, CA in 2014.



TROY SNYDER

Mr. Fezziweg, Undertaker, Man #2

Troy Snyder is a Professor of Theatre and the Technical Director in Fairmont State University. At FSU, Troy has directed several plays including *The Music Man*, *Always...Patsy Cline*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Fiddler on the Roof* at Prickett's Fort. Mainstage directing credits at FSU include *Cabaret*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Rocket Boys the Musical*, *Children of Eden*, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Acting credits include: *1776* (John Adams), *Oklahoma* (Andres Carnes), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Charlie Davenport), *South Pacific* (Luther Billis) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Ageus/ Robin Starveling). Troy has a long association with West Virginia Public Theatre as a designer, technical director, scenic artist and prop master. This is his first time appearing on the WVPT stage.

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BRYAN STAGGERS

Joe, Young Marley

Bryan is a proud alumnus of WVU, graduating with his BFA in Acting in 2015. Favorite collegiate credits include Cliff in *Cabaret*, Douglas in *Seminar*, and Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Regionally, Bryan has worked at the Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, WV, The Lost Colony in Manteo, NC, and B Street Theatre in Sacramento, CA. Love and thanks to his family and friends for their unwavering support. Please continue to support the arts and enjoy the show! www.bryanstaggers.com



ANDRA WARD

Ghost of Christmas Present, Jr.

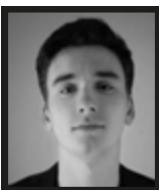
Andra Ward Jr. is thrilled to be a part of WVPT's production of A Christmas Carol. Some of his favorite roles include, Thomas Donahue (*These Shining Lives*), William King (*Brokology*) and Trekkie Monster (*Avenue Q*) as well as roles in *Traveling Thomas*, *The Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, and *Pericles*. He would like to thank Rae Charles and family for all of their continued support through the years.



LINDSEY WAYNE

Toy Lady, Mrs. Dilber

Lindsey Wayne is a junior BFA Musical Theatre major attending West Virginia University. She was last seen as Logainne Schwartz and Grubenierre in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, the first installment of the CCA's Falbo Series. Lindsey would like to thank her family and friends for their love and support and the cast and crew for their commitment to the show. Lindsey is delighted to be a part of *A Christmas Carol!* Enjoy the show!



WOODY POND

Young Ebenezer, Topper

Woody is excited to be performing in this legendary holiday show in his third production with WVPT. His most recent regional role was Lucentio from *Taming of the Shrew* in Marietta, Ohio's Shakespeare in the Park. He is also very passionate about playwriting and lyricism. This performance is dedicated to his big, eccentric family who has made every Christmas a beautiful memory.



JAMES MITCHELL

Vocal Director

James Kenon Mitchell, born in Rochester, NY, is currently in his second year as Visiting Assistant Professor and Interim Head of Opera Theatre at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. In the 2015/16 year he led performances of Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*, Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Hindemith's *Hinn und Zurück*, and Menotti's *The Medium*. He also served as music director for WVU Opera on Wheel's touring outreach production of Edward Barnes' *Mystery on the Docks*, taking live opera to students in elementary schools throughout the state of West Virginia and culminating in a series of performances at the Charleston Cultural Center.

Passionate about cultivating future artists and audiences, Mr. Mitchell is a regular guest at *Theatre Arts for Kids*, a musical theater training program in Lincoln, NE where he has given recitals and masterclasses and directed productions of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *The Addams Family*.

Mr. Mitchell has worked as a pianist for the Bayerische Theater Akademie August Everding and Tulsa Opera and as Assisant to the Music Staff at Sarasota Opera. He has accompanied masterclasses for Susan Ashbaker, Deborah Birnbaum, Dalton Baldwin, Joan Dornemann, William Hobbs, Chuck Hudson, Martin Katz, Kathleen Kelly, Kathryn LaBouff, Ken Noda, Matthew Polenzani, Pierre Vallet, Roger Vignoles and Darren K. Woods.

Before pursuing his Masters in Music, Mr. Mitchell was an Adjunct Professor of Musical Theater at the University of West Florida where he led performances of *Brigadoon* and *A Christmas Carol*. He spent three summers at the CoOPERative Program at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ first as a Pianist Fellow and then as Pianist Intern and the program's first Young Artist Dramatic Coach. He served as Assistant Conductor for the CoOPERative Program's 2013 production of *Don Giovanni* and as Assistant Stage Director for the 2014 production of *La Fille du Regiment*.

Mr. Mitchell has directed *Faust* for Opera Modo (2013) *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Forza (2014) and *La Voix Humaine* and *Iolanta* at Tri-Cities Opera in Binghamton, NY in the spring and fall of 2015.

Mr. Mitchell holds a Bachelors Degree in Music Theory from the Eastman School of Music and a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano and Opera Coaching from Westminster Choir College.



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