

A NOISE WITHIN'S 2023 HOLIDAY THEATRE TRADITION

Charles Dickens'
**A CHRISTMAS
CAROL**

December 1-24, 2023

ADAPTED BY **Geoff Elliott**

DIRECTED BY **Julia Rodriguez-Elliott & Geoff Elliott**



A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens

Directed by Julia Rodriguez-Elliott and Geoff Elliott

Adapted by Geoff Elliott

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Original Music Score: Robert Oriol

Music Director: Rod Bagheri

Lighting Designer: Ken Booth

Wig/Makeup Designer: Tony Valdes

Stage Manager: Angela Sonner*

Dialect Coach: Andrea Odinov

Assistant Stage Manager: Hope Matthews*

Original Scenic Concept: Jeanine A. Ringer

Original Costume Design: Angela Balogh Calin†

Dramaturg: Dr. Miranda Johnson-Haddad

Board Operator: Raven McMillen

Projections: Kristin Campbell

Stage Crew: Iliana Cusack

Stage Crew: Rody Villegas

Setting: London, England, mid-1850s

CAST

Ebenezer Scrooge.....	Geoff Elliott*
Mr. Cratchit	Kasey Mahaffy*
Mrs. Cratchit.....	Emily Kosloski*
Ghost of Christmas Past	Trisha Miller*
Fred	Mitch Connelly*
Fred's Wife/Ensemble	Suzen Baraka
Belle	Nicole Javier*
Narrator	Frederick Stuart*
Marley.....	Jeremy Rabb*
Ghost of Christmas Present/Ensemble.....	Anthony Adu*
Ghost of Christmas Future/Ensemble.....	Jose Donado
Ensemble.....	Clifton Adams
Cratchit Child	Kwayi Grimstad Ndjamen
Cratchit Child	Stella Bullock
Cratchit Child	Analise Morris
Cratchit Child	Molly Morris
Cratchit Child	Brendan Burgos
Cratchit Child	Scarlett Ray
Cratchit Child	Julian Wilkes
Cratchit Child	Estella Stuart
Tiny Tim.....	Annalise Morris
Tiny Tim.....	Aarush Mehta



* Designer is represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CAST

SCAN THIS QR
CODE TO READ
MORE ABOUT
OUR ARTISTS



Clifton J. Adams
(Ensemble)



Anthony Adu
(Ghost of Christmas
Present)



Suzen Baraka
(Scrooge's Niece/
Ensemble)



Stella Bullock
(Cratchit Child/
Ensemble)



Brendan Burgos
(Cratchit Child/
Ensemble)



Mitch Connolly
(Fred/Young Scrooge/
Ensemble)



Jose Donado
(Ghost of Christmas
Future/Ensemble)



Geoff Elliott
(Producing Artistic Director/
Director/Ebenezer Scrooge)



Nicole Javier
(Belle/Ensemble)



Emily Kosloski
(Mrs. Cratchit)



Kasey Mahaffy
(Mr. Cratchit/Ensemble)



Aarush Mehta
(Tiny Tim)



Trisha Miller
(Ghost of Christmas
Past/Ensemble)



Annalise Morris
(Tiny Tim/
Ensemble)



Molly Morris
(Cratchit Child/
Ensemble)



**Kwayi Grimstad
Ndjamen**
(Cratchit Child)



Jeremy Rabb
(Marley)



Scarlett Ray
(Cratchit Child)



Estella Stuart
(Cratchit Child)



Frederick Stuart
(Narrator)



Julian Wilkes
(Cratchit Child)

FROM SCROOGE TO SWEENEY



**A Conversation
with A Noise Within
Co-Artistic Director
Geoff Elliott about
the joys, challenges,
and endless
surprises of making
regional theatre in
Southern California**



A Noise Within theatre company has been producing professional theatre for 31 years in the LA area. What inspired you and your Co-Artistic Director/wife Julia Rodriguez-Elliott to create a theatre company like this?

I graduated from American Conservatory Theatre (ACT) in San Francisco, and Julia was a year behind me. We increasingly were working out of town, in regional theaters, and we decided to give producing a go. We had \$3,000 in our savings account. We took that out and used it to produce *Hamlet*. We were able to put it up in the former Masonic Temple building in Glendale. It was really just an experiment. Was there an appetite for Shakespeare in Southern California? And lo and behold, people came. And we were inundated with resumes from so many talented, trained actors who didn't have opportunities to do this kind of work anywhere. And it was at that point that we decided there is more here than just one play. There was an appetite from artists and audience. We decided we really needed to create

a company committed to doing the great classics of world drama. And that's what we set out to do.

You have cultivated a company of Resident Artists who often come back again and again for productions. What do you think is unique about the audience experience inside theatres with this model?

Julia and I wanted a community. And the first step in creating that community was getting a group of actors and designers together, who were of like mind. Not only were they exceedingly talented, but they were also generous of spirit. These were people who wanted to be a part of something bigger than themselves—and that kind of energy is gold. Incredible things can get done when you have a group of people who have a shared mission. And it's like the pebble in the pond—it ripples out and the audience begins to feel that. They begin to see that they're watching a family creating art together, and they begin to feel as though they're a part of the family. Our audience has become invested in these people and

Photo left by Craig Schwartz, Geoff Elliott in *A Christmas Carol*.

Photo right by Daniel Reichert, Geoff Elliott for *Sweeney Todd*.

the kind of work that they do—see their entire range as performers. They get to see them in a new play, with a new director, in completely different periods, often centuries apart. Like how our Puck from *Midsummer* will be playing Bob Cratchit in *A Christmas Carol*. Audiences find these transformations utterly enthralling.

At what point did *A Christmas Carol* become this annual Pasadena tradition?

We finally moved into our home in Pasadena in 2011, and we mounted *A Christmas Carol* in 2012. We were hoping to create a family tradition for people every year, because it's one of the greatest stories ever told, concerning transformation and forgiveness, and what the possibilities are for us as human beings. It's a very important story, because we all have the potential to go from old Scrooge to new Scrooge, on a daily basis, on an hourly basis. Really important stuff. From my point of view, *A Christmas Carol* is easily as Shakespearean as Shakespeare. It has some darkness to it—it's a ghost story—but it's a very bright and beautiful story, ultimately. And it helps us to embrace our common humanity.

Right after this deeply redemptive character in this holiday classic, you go on to play a more sinister figure of “the demon barber of Fleet Street,” in the darkly humorous musical *Sweeney Todd*. What might audiences look forward to experiencing onstage?

This production couldn't be timelier. The play is essentially about the haves and the have-nots. This play is about a power structure, a systemic power structure that destroys people's lives—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Everybody is destroyed by this particular corrupt power structure. The great plays are about human beings being passionately pitted either

against their environment, or against each other, or against some other power. And an audience member gets to see what happens to a person when they need to survive. All human beings go through experiences in which we feel like, “I'm not going to get through this.” So audiences get to come and watch these great larger-than-life characters, and see how they either get through it, or they don't get through it. This particular production will be so different from other versions of *Sweeney Todd*. It is going to be more intimate and close-up. And I believe that our stripped-down version of the play is going to help you see that humanity more.

You will be playing the iconic roles of Scrooge and Sweeney back-to-back. Is there any common thread between these characters?

Well, they're great roles! But when you have a brilliant play or musical, whether it's Shakespeare or Sondheim, it's not really about the leads. Every role in that kind of a play is extraordinary in its own way. You can understand everybody's point of view, whether you consider them a villain or whether you consider them a hero. The great plays allow us to see their humanity. Every actor has to make choices in terms of the context, in terms of the givens of a situation, and what they want. The deeper you go with that, the more watchable and more empathetic these performances are going to be. And there is something that *Sweeney* has in common with *Scrooge* actually. They both have epiphanies! It's just that one heads for the light, and one heads for the darkness. But both of them are easily relatable, because we all have epiphanies. These plays are about human beings. I think the people who are on that stage are going to be completely relatable in one way or another. ❖

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(ANW) knows Melody Moore, the House Manager & Volunteer Coordinator. She is often the first person the audience members meet at the door, exuding her welcoming energy. On any given show night, the ANW lobby is filled to the brim with the lively chatter of patrons—some enjoying prosecco and chocolate truffles at the Lobby Bar, some sitting at tables catching up with friends and family, still others connecting with members of the theatre staff like Melody and her longtime volunteer “Ambassadors.” Everyone who gathers there seems to be equally animated by the unique magic of live theatre. Melody credits part of this indelible energy to the enduring vision established by Artistic Directors Julia Rodriguez-Elliott and Geoff Elliot 31 years ago, and to ANW’s new Managing Director, Douglas Love-Ramos, who came

on board this summer. However, perhaps the people Melody thinks about the most at the theatre are its volunteers. To Melody, these Ambassadors make all the difference in the world—setting a tone of excitement that shapes the entire theatrical experience.

There are many incentives to join the Volunteer Ambassador Program but one of the most attractive is that volunteers receive vouchers to see shows free of charge. And Melody sees how meaningful this experience can be. She describes ANW Ambassadors as “patrons of the arts,” and says that even “if they don’t have big checkbooks, they’re giving of themselves” which is rewarding for everyone.

Melody can become deeply reflective when trying to pinpoint the feeling that happens when people come together with a mutual sense of purpose. “The thing

I love about the Ambassadors, is that they come to the theatre for the same reason we all do—to experience magic together. For those two hours we are all engaged in loving theater.” Katie Mandel, an ANW Ambassador, raves about her experience, saying, “Being a part of A Noise Within by ushering at performances has been one of the best and most valuable decisions I have ever made for myself and my family.” She adds, “We wholeheartedly cherish this theatre company and look forward to each new season!”

For those who have never volunteered before, Melody makes it easy for them. She emphasizes accessibility and community with everyone she works with. Regardless of any physical limitations, she welcomes everyone at the theatre, and works within their abilities. She cultivates a sense of belonging, and the Volunteer Ambassador Program includes special behind the scenes events, ambassador appreciation

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awards, and other unique opportunities to socialize as well.

It is easy to see that ANW Ambassadors genuinely enjoy what they are doing. “My volunteers tell me that this is their favorite place to work because they have fun here,” Melody says. “We have fun!” ❖

To learn more, visit:
anoisewithin.org/volunteer



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Julanne Chidi Hill and Erika Soto from *Alice in Wonderland*
Photo by Craig Schwartz.

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