

'Carol' in P'town

By ROBERT BOLES
Staff Writer

PROVINCETOWN — The Provincetown Theater Company has prepared a Christmas gift for the Lower Cape towns, and at 8 p.m. Dec. 18 the Town Hall will take on the illusions of Charles Dickens' London for a production of "A Christmas Carol."

As rehearsal begins, Tiny Tim (fourth-grader Michael Ahern) waits to be called to the stage; Scrooge (Ron Weissenberger) put on his spectacles; Tita Rutledge makes final adjustments on the costume of the Spirit of Christmas Past (Alexis Hluchyj); and Bob Cratchit (George Libone) gets his top hat.

A unit set is being used and a thrust stage has been built for the street scenes and the caroling and party sequences.

At the helm of the production is its director, Robert Teague. "The play is done in a classic style," he says. "The audience will see a play as it would have appeared at the turn of the century."

This is not the first time Teague is directing this adaptation of "A Christmas Carol." As producer, director and founder of the Performing Arts Repertory/Forum in Marblehead, Teague wrote this adaptation, and it has been performed in Marblehead the past three Christmas seasons.

Teague has worked as associate director in the Phoenix Theater Center, Phoenix Ariz., in lighting design for the National Shakespeare Company, in production and direction of community theater companies in Cheryerazoul and Ankara, Turkey, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, Eastham and Camden, Me.

Along with Teague's professionalism is that of Keith Talbot, the set designer for this production, who majored in architecture and minored in theater arts at Cornell University.

Artists with degrees in painting are painting the sets, and Tita Rutledge, the costume director, has had professional experience in the theater.

Though professionals are involved, many of the cast and crew are amateurs.

John Russell, production manager, is particularly pleased that amateurs in the cast and crew have professionals as teachers in this venture.



In the Provincetown Theater Company's production of "A Christmas Carol" are, from left, Ron Weissenberger as Scrooge, Alexis Hluchyj as the

Spirit of Christmas Past, George Libone as Bob Cratchit and Michael Ahern as Tiny Tim.

(Staff Photo by Robert Boles)

"For many, it's a learning experience," he says. "We have real flats (frames covered with muslin which make up the scenery) that we can paint and reuse for future productions. We have the thrust stage which we'll be able to unbolt and store and use again when we need it."

"The community has responded well in this effort," Teague says. "Extra lumber was thrown in by the people at the lumberyard. The printer gave us color at no extra cost when we had some printing done. The town manager, William A. McNulty, and others in the town hall have been friendly and helpful."

The company, which was founded nearly 20 years ago, has not been at its most active recently. Some see this play and Tom Stoppard's "Enter a Free Man," which will be produced in February, as a rebirth of the company.

"There are a lot of talented people in this town," set designer Talbot says. "Getting them together and getting them involved is difficult at first, but things seem to be coming together well."

The 12-member board of the company is already looking at proposals for plays to produce in the future. The mailing address is P.O. Box 192, Provincetown, Mass. 02675.

Although the company does not have its own theater, it does have storage space and hopes to have a home in the future.

This production will cost approximately \$1,200. The cost of tickets will be \$3 for adults and \$2 for children and senior citizens. Ticket sales will, it is hoped, cover production costs and add to the non-profit company's building fund.

Performances are set for 8 p.m. Dec. 18 through 21.

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Scrooge is Alive and Well in Provincetown

Christmas has a special feeling on Cape Cod. The sea and the wind bring that feeling to us from all directions. To help keep this traditional spirit of Christmas alive on the Cape, the Provincetown Theater Company is presenting its first event of the 1980-81 winter season, an all-community production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens' classic story of the spiritual reawakening of an embittered cynic has been newly adapted for the stage by director Robert Teague, with touches of traditional music and dance to make it festive. This enduring fable has been taking shape on the stage of Provincetown Town Hall auditorium since mid-November. Additional staging has been built to accommodate the elaborate set and the large cast of nearly 40 Theater Company veterans and members of the Lower Cape community. All Cape residents are invited to see the results December 18 - 21 (Thursday - Sunday) at 8 pm.

As well as being the first production this season by the Theater Company, *A Christmas Carol* marks the local directorial debut of Provincetown newcomer Robert Teague. It's an ambitious undertaking, but his ambition doesn't stop with this production. Casting calls have already been held for his proposed production of Tom Stoppard's *Enter a Free Man*, a BBC television play adapted for the stage by the author. It will be welcome news to locals that Bob's production of Stoppard's play will mark the return to the stage of Jim Forsberg, a popular abstract-expressionist painter and a founding member of the

Provincetown Theater Workshop. Eventually, Bob would like to organize a semi-professional touring children's theater originating on the Lower Cape.

Organization is nothing new to director Teague. His experience in theater spans several decades and continents, in places as close as Marblehead and as remote as Turkey and Germany. In the summer of 1971 he was an actor and director of the Children's Series with the Fisherman's Players in Eastham. Prior to his recent move to the Cape he was founding staff member, technical and tour director, actor and designer with the William Shakespeare Company in Camden, Maine.

In the current production of *A Christmas Carol* Bob is being assisted by some able hands. The set is designed by Keith Talbot, a recent graduate of Cornell University, who holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree with a minor in Theater Arts. Lighting design is by Donna Short, who has done the lighting for numerous PTC productions, including the highly successful *The Richest Girl in the World Finds Happiness* in the summer of 1978. Paul Fonseca, who spent last summer on scholarship at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Lee, Mass., has choreographed a dance piece to an old English Christmas carol. The role of Scrooge is being played by longtime Theater Company veteran Ron Weissenberger, an actor who has contributed to many of the Company's greatest successes and who has himself directed the popular productions of *Bus Stop* and *Happy Birthday*, Wanda June.

Christmas Carol, community theater

By Susan Seligson

When Charles Dickens's classic "A Christmas Carol" plays in Town Hall next week ghosts will occasionally visit the stage, but the prospect of thriving community theater in Provincetown will no longer be just a fleeting vision.

With a cast of 47 local people and a production crew of almost 40, this production marks the beginning of The Provincetown Theatre Company's enthusiastic drive to recruit local talent as diverse as the community itself. Under the direction of Robert Teague, a newcomer to Provincetown who adapted the Dickens novel to the stage, the one-hour production is the first event of the company's 1980-1981 winter season.

The familiar tale of the spiritual reawakening of the embittered cynic Scrooge, the play will feature traditional caroling by 12 local children as well as dance and street scenes that will bring the stage to life. Town Hall's large expanse of stage will be doubled in size for the performance. Scrooge is played by Ron Weissenberger. George Libone will play the timid Bob Cratchit.

Teague, who came here from Maine with extensive directing and producing experience, first suggested a production of "A Christmas Carol" because he wanted to involve as many people as possible, the main objective of true community theater.

"About 60 people auditioned and we used almost everyone," Teague said. Teague referred to his original script, performed three times before in Marblehead, as "the most honest adaptation possible" of Dickens novel. Remaining for the most part true to Dickens's own dialogue, Teague has added street scenes, a prologue and a schoolroom scene from Scrooge's childhood.

Teague, formerly a director with the Fishermen's Players in Eastham, the William Shakespeare Company in Camden, Maine and the Performing Arts Repertory Forum in Marblehead, said he is willing to choose actors with little or no experience and work closely with them. The result is a larger "talent pool" to draw from for future company productions. Although many members of "A Christmas Carol's" cast are not new to the stage, some

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'A Christmas Carol'

(Continued from Page 1)

have no experience at all, Teague said.

Next week's production was conceived at a theater company meeting in October, when the board of directors was enlarged from eight to 12 members and the need for more local involvement was stressed. Teague's Christmas Carol was such a beloved seasonal event in Marblehead he suggested it as a perfect way to stir local interest in theater.

"Teague has brought a new breath of life to the company," said Weissenberger, a Provincetown resident and local performer since 1971. "The response was overwhelming. I never saw this many people turn out for a play in my life."

Weissenberger said in the past the theater company has been ridden with frustrations because of its ailing budget and lack of a permanent home. "People get frustrated and they leave Provincetown and go to New York City to act," he said. "But Teague has really done a great job."

"It's community theater at its peak," George Libone said.

Weissenberger, who appeared in local productions of "The Balcony," "A Thousand Clowns," "Hot L. Baltimore," "Endgame," "Bluebeard" and others, said it was refreshing to see so many new faces, especially the kids. One new face is that of Michael Ahearn, the nine-year old who won the role of Tiny Tim.

This is Ahearn's acting debut, but he's hooked already, according to his mother, Lee. She was working on costumes when Michael came to visit and was enthralled with the activity on the set.

"Do you want to be in a play?" Teague asked Ahearn. Ahearn agreed without hesitation. "He's really taken to it," his mother said.

"It's kind of fun," the nine-year old said. "but it's also very hard work. It's very hard to explain what it's like to act."

Ahearn said he isn't nervous because once, in second grade, he had a part in a play. Asked if it took a long time for him to learn his lines, Ahearn replied with a giggle, "Nope. It's just five words.

"I'm going to wear a black coat, a scarf, brown pants, a crutch and a cap," he added.

Alexandra Hluchyj, who visits the disbelieving Scrooge as the ghost of Christmas past, said she is impressed with the way Teague has involved people of all ages and from all walks of life in the festive production.

"He has worked around all of their schedules and pulled the whole thing together," Hluchyj said. "The cast is comprised of many different types of people with different interests."

Hluchyj, who last spring graduated from the State University of New York at Fredonia with a degree in musical theater, is also one of the play's make-up artists. It's fortunate, she said, that the Provincetown Theatre Company is now largely a fall to spring operation lacking the support to make productions possible all year long.

"We want the company to return theater in Provincetown to what it once was," she said.

With all the actors, the behind-the-scenes set, the production people and the involvement of local merchants, "A Christmas Carol" has become a "total" production, Teague said. Rehearsals occupy up to seven hours a day and the set, made of wood and muslin and reusable for future productions, slowly begins to resemble an old London street.

The scenery for the performance was designed by Keith Talbert, a recent graduate of Cornell University with a degree in architecture and theater arts. Donna Short, lighting designer for many previous Provincetown Theater Company productions, will supervise lighting for the performance. Short has also set up a training group for people interested in lighting so the company will have a greater number of qualified local people to choose from in the future.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit, merchants all over town donated their services and residents have donated or lent props and equipment, Teague said. Craig's Lumber donated plywood for the sets, Dodie's pizza gave the company \$50 to pay for makeup and the owner of the Golden Gull record store allowed Teague to choose from among his 4,000 Christmas records to tape the play's soundtrack. Another resident donated a tape recorder to the company and others volunteered their time to help work on the scenery, Teague said.

"We developed a Christmas spirit long before the season," Teague said.



A scene from "A Christmas Carol" produced by The Provincetown Theatre Company December 18-21 at the Provincetown Town Hall at 8:00 p.m. From left to right: Ron Weissenberger as Scrooge; Alexandra Wluckys as Ghost of Christmas Past; George Libone as Bob Cratchit; and Michael Ahern as Tim.

Photo by John Russell

'A Christmas Carol' smooth

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" by Charles Dickens; performed by the Provincetown Theater Company; adaptation and direction by Robert Teague, Provincetown Town Hall; 8 p.m. through Sunday; \$3, \$2 senior citizens and children.

By ROBERT BOLES

In little more than an hour, Ebenezer Scrooge underwent a transformation last night. The ghost of Jacob Marley proved to be more than a "fragment of underdone potato," and Tiny Tim proved to be indeed "a childish essence" from God.

In a production that was handsome in every aspect, the story, that piece of Dickens that comes alive every year about this time, was fully told on stage by about 40 people.

A versatile set easily became Scrooge's business house, Scrooge's chambers, the living room of Scrooge's nephew, Fred, Bob Cratchit's house, Scrooge's home as a youth, hall for the Fezziwig Dancers and London Street.

Burnett becomes boss of Hollywood 'G-men'

Los Angeles Times

The Los Angeles district attorney's Entertainment Industry Task Force, instituted 2 1/2 years ago, has

Review

There was not a curtain for this production because of the thrust stage that was used. Scene changes involving dozens of characters as well as furnishings occurred in well-timed blackouts that did not impede the rhythm of the tale.

In fact, despite all that could conceivably detract from a story so well known, the costuming, for instance, or the set, the blocking or a stage mishap — and there was a minor one — or acting of uneven quality, nothing halted its flow.

Scrooge was Scrooge and Tiny Tim could bring a tear.

Step by step, a heart, bound by greed, was opened. Scrooge's life, his past, the present and possible future were shown to him and he changed.

Robert Teague's adaptation and direction were on the mark in skillfully illustrating Dickens' tale without anywhere straying or over- or understanding any of its parts.

The cast, including Ron Weissenberger as Scrooge, Alexandra Hluchyj as the Spirit of Christmas Past, Paul Asher as the Ghost of Jacob Marley, Keith Talbert as Fred, Michael Ahern as Tiny Tim and all of the others moved and acted easily and brought London at the turn of the century, Dickens at his best and a truly communal feeling alive.

CASTING CALL

"A Christmas Carol"
by Charles Dickens
directed by
Robert Teague

THERE ARE OVER 40 ROLES
AND EVERYONE IS ENCOUR-
AGED TO TRYOUT FROM AGES
5 TO 105. THIS IS AN ALL
COMMUNITY EVENT. EXPER-
IENCE IS NOT NECESSARY.

CAN'T OR DON'T CARE TO
ACT? WE NEED HELP IN ALL
BACKSTAGE CAPACITIES
INCLUDING: COSTUMING,
LIGHTING, SOUND, PROMO,
SET CONSTRUCTION, PAINT-
ING, ETC,ETC,ETC.

MONDAY NOV. 3 at 8:30 PM
THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
PROVINCETOWN

WEDNESDAY NOV. 5 FROM 2-4PM
PROVINCETOWN ART ASSN/MUSEUM
PROVINCETOWN

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
CALL 487-1265 AFTER NOV.1ST

BACKSTAGE

ACTRESSES

ACTORS

" A CHRISTMAS CAROL "

CAST LIST

home
9401-0936
3464

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Prologue | | |
| Scrooge | Ron Weissenberger | 2618 |
| Bob Cratchit | George Libone | 3834 |
| Fred | Keith Talbot | 0159 |
| 1st Gentleman | John Crates | 2542 |
| 2nd Gentleman | Gene Fedorko | 1579/3694 |
| Marley's Ghost | Paul Asher | 0201 |
| Christmas Past | Alexandra Hluchyj | 0386 |
| Christmas Present | Warner Raglund | 9767 |
| Christmas Future | Alexandra Hluchyj | 0386 |
| Topper | Mike Noons | 7546 - out of ct |
| Fred's Wife | Ellen Miller | 9767 |
| Party Guest | Barbara Stoughton | 9432 |
| Party Guest | Paul Schuppert | 2072 |
| Pawnbroker | Jim Rann | 1206 - T-th in |
| Housekeeper | Ardis Manharian | 1122 - wed |
| Laundress | Linda DiBenedetto | 3975/3300 - |
| Fezziwig | Paul Fonseca | 1930 |
| Mrs. Fezziwig | Barbara Warren | 2354 |
| Dick Wilkins | Susan Swain | 1172 |
| Young Scrooge | John Carr | 0706 |
| 1st Gossiper | Paul Asher | |
| 2nd Gossiper | Ron Vallee | 2618 |
| 3rd Gossiper | Christy Randazzo | 3834 |
| Sweetheart | Phoebe Otis | 2139 0065 |
| Voice of Schoolmaster | Noons | 1546 |
| Sweetheart Husband | Mike Belland | 0706 |
| Caroler | Mianne Feeney | 1822 |
| Mrs. Cratchit | Amy O'Brien | 349-6800-457 |
| Martha C. | Lee Galen | 0214 |
| Belinda C. | Galen Mallicoat | 0791 |
| Cratchit Girl | Tara Owen | 0722 |
| Cratchit Boy | Heather von Rohr | 0221 2218 |
| Tiny Tim | Michael Ahearn | |
| Little Fan | Mianne Feeney | 1822 |
| Youngest Scrooge | Mike Feeney | 1822 |
| Peter Cratchit | Brad Moore- | 0490 |
| Turkey Boy | Carolyn Walsh | |
| Fezziwig Dancer 1 | Mike Belland | 3834 |
| Fezziwig Dancer 2 | Bonnie Alexander | no phone |
| Sweetheart Children | | |
| 1 Mianne Feeney | | 1822 |
| 2 Cara Hewitt | | 3215 |
| 3 Mischa Richter | | |
| 4 | | |

John Rush 2618
 Eve Archer 3171
 Cristy Randazzo 3834
 Kris Owen 0722
 Tita Ruthledge 2013
 Mike Crow

2256




P.O. Box 192 ■ Provincetown, MA 02657 ■ A Non-Profit Organization

November 17, 1980

Rachel White
Town Hall
Provincetown, MA 02657

Dear Rachel,

The following are the changes to be made on the Cape Stages lease so it is suitable for the Provincetown Theater Company's Production of "A Christmas Carol." See Selectman's meeting of 11/10/80.

Parties. The names to appear here are John Russell, Chairman, Board of Directors, PTC and Robert Teague, Director.

Term. November 10, 1980 to December 23, 1980.

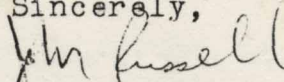
Rent. "20% of gross box office receipts, based on admission charges of not less than \$2.00 for senior citizens and children, and \$3.00 for the general public."

Security Deposit. This paragraph can be eliminated as it is no longer relevant.

Electricity. \$25.00, as approved by the Selectmen for 4 performances. This entire paragraph is dated. Never did Cape Stages or Acting Group Four use it to determine their electrical costs. Please see Bill McNulty about its deletion or change.

Thanks for your help, Rachel.

Sincerely,


John Russell