

No Porpoise Productions in association with the Newmarket Old Town Hall present

A Christmas Carol

"Absolutely brilliant
and so, so funny."
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COMEDY

October 14, 2016. NEWMARKET - Part Christmas Carol, part pantomime, a twist of *39 Steps* and a whole lot of fun nonsense; this 2 Man show of **A CHRISTMAS CAROL COMEDY** will be a new telling even if you have seen the movies 50 times... Starring **Jesse Buck** as Scrooge & **Sean Sullivan** as everybody else. Written by **Katie Leamen** and directed by **Lynne Griffin**. Kick-start your Christmas **December 21-23** at the **Newmarket Old Town Hall**. Special thanks to *Newmarket Celebrates the Arts* for supporting this production.

To save his beloved holiday from the Puritans who sought to squash it, Charles Dickens wrote a silly Christmas ghost story to resurrect the Ghost of Christmases Past. Now, in an age when Christmas shopping begins in September and the season is more full of stress and spending than it is of glad tidings, **A CHRISTMAS CAROL COMEDY** is sure to resuscitate your good humour and goodwill to all men – but especially towards the two actors on stage tackling all of Dickens' beloved characters! Mixing shades of Monty Python with the Shades of Past, Present and Future, this comedy is just the ticket for anyone aged 5 to 95 looking for a bit of festive fun.

Directed by renowned actress **Lynne Griffin** (*Santa Baby 1 & 2* as Mrs. Claus; *The Glass Menagerie*, Island Productions BC; as director: *Baby Redboots' Revenge*: North American/Central Europe Tour), performers **Jesse Buck** (*The Servant of Two Masters*, Odyssey Theatre - Capital Critic's Circle Award for Best Actor; *Alegria*, Cirque du Soleil; *Richard III*, A Company of Fools), and **Sean Sullivan** (Best known for his multi-award winning solo play *Baby Redboots' Revenge*, North American/Central Europe Tour; and as Phil in *Wayne's World*) lead the laughs. Written by Newmarket native **Katie Leamen** (*Treasure Island*, Solar Stage – Dora Award nomination for Outstanding Ensemble TYA; *Alice in Wonderland: A Tale with No Porpoise*, No Porpoise Productions). Set design by **Jake Gow** (Assistant Technical Director, Canadian Opera Company). Associate produced by **Rose Hopkins** (recipient of the 2016 City of Hamilton Arts Award for Emerging Theatre Artist).

No Porpoise Productions creates fun, physical theatre that showcases the "magic" of theatre, proving how unique it is compared to its friends, film and television. By producing pieces that are dynamic, memorable, and as entertaining for the artists as it is for the audience, they strive to prove movies cannot replace what theatre can achieve.

SHOW INFO FOR A CHRISTMAS CAROL COMEDY:

Venue: **Newmarket Old Town Hall** (460 Botsford Street, Newmarket)

Dates: Wednesday **Dec 21 @ 2pm & 8pm** / Thursday **Dec 22 @ 2pm & 8pm** / Friday **Dec. 23 @ 8pm**

Tickets: **\$30** General, **\$20** Youth/Senior – tickets available **online** at www.noporpoiseproductions.com and **in person** at the box office. **Please note this show is wheelchair accessible by reservation.*

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Media Contact: **Rose Hopkins**, noporpoiseproductions@gmail.com, 333-333-3333



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History of the Production & Playwright's Notes

Like most people, I have seen many different versions of *A Christmas Carol*, but I had never read the book. I was struck by how funny it was. I legitimately lol'd many times, which is not my usual memory of watching *A Christmas Carol*. In spite of its serious examination of poverty and the welfare of children in his time, Dickens clearly meant for this story to be a comedy.

Even the idea of "dead as a doornail" is such a blatant good joke and ridiculous adjective – How dead can a *doornail* be that that comparison would clarify anything? A ghost story at Christmas? Who'd have thought? At the time it was a brilliant comedic touch, but our contemporary perspective has grown up with it so we're immune to the novelty of it. There is so much humour to be mined by looking at it with a fresh, modern perspective that doesn't subscribe to a conventional attitude of "*It's Victorian and a classic so we must take it seriously and cannot mess with it.*" Our play is an irreverent love-note to Dickens' classic tale. I think he would approve.

One cannot have an actor of Sean's talents and not use them to the extreme which is where the physical comedy aspect of it came in (also my natural inclination as a playwright and performer having grown up on pantomimes, Charlie Chaplin and the Three Stooges).

The initial draft was finished in 2 months in the Fall of 2013. We couldn't stand to wait for a whole year before sharing it with audiences, so we did two dramatic - *ahem - *comedic* readings in Toronto and at Trinity United Church in Newmarket. Despite being the first night of *the* historic ice storm, the Newmarket audience was thrilled with what we offered. The 3-year-old loved it as much as the 83-year-old.

In 2014, we took the show to Waterford, Ontario, where Claire Senko, the Old Town Hall, and community welcomed us with open arms, a beautiful lunch tray and standing ovations. Sometimes when I am writing promotional materials, I wonder if I am overselling it – is it really as funny as I am saying it is? I only need to think back to Waterford and remember the laughter and huge smiles to know that this show is everything we promise it is.

We are thrilled to take *A Christmas Carol Comedy* on the road and to be working with the Simcoe Street Theatre, Simcoe Little Theatre, Staircase Café and Newmarket's Old Town Hall to give new life to an old classic to boost Christmas spirit and love of theatre in each of these four communities.

#ChristmasCarolComedy

Katie Leamen

Playwright, producer, founding member of No Porpoise Productions



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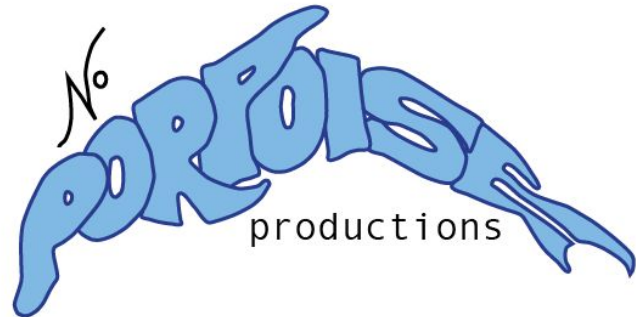
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Company History

NO PORPOISE PRODUCTIONS

No Porpoise Productions is a theatre collective who believes there is just as much merit in silly theatre as there is in "daring new theatre", both for the audience, the actors, and the sustainability of theatre in a world of TV and movies. While some theatre has always been serious, some theatre was the original sitcom. This tour of *A Christmas Carol Comedy* is our third production, second original adaptation and most ambitious effort since forming in 2013.



We believe that theatre, as a form of entertainment, should be entertaining. We love theatre. We think you should too. We also think that we have the brains, the heart and the courage (not to mention the ruby shoes) to make theatre that you might enjoy. If No Porpoise is being totally honest and not just cheeky with a pun: the purpose of No Porpoise will always be to create quality theatre that is imaginative, inventive, and a joyful celebration of what it is to be ridiculous human beings. How lucky are we that life is such a series of adventures?! www.noporpoiseproductions.com

Though most of our team lives in Toronto/GTA, we love to work with smaller communities and organizations to make professional theatre accessible and so that students in particular learn there is more to theatre than just Shakespeare.

Productions:

- **A Christmas Carol Comedy – 2016 Tour** – in association with Simcoe Street Theatre, Simcoe Little Theatre, Staircase Café, and Newmarket Old Town Hall*.
**Thanks to Newmarket Celebrates the Arts for their support of this production.*
- **A Christmas Carol Comedy** – December 2014 in association with the Old Town Hall, Waterford.
- **Alice in Wonderland: A Tale with No Porpoise** – February 2014 at Dancemakers, Toronto.
**No Porpoise partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters Toronto and The Mary Centre to offer speciality performances.*

In Development:

- **Worthy** – Kidney transplant meets King Arthur coming Spring 2018

Photographs



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High resolution promo photos are available here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskGiN8Q3>



Photos by John Gundy

Production photos will be coming. Please email noporpoiseproductions@gmail.com



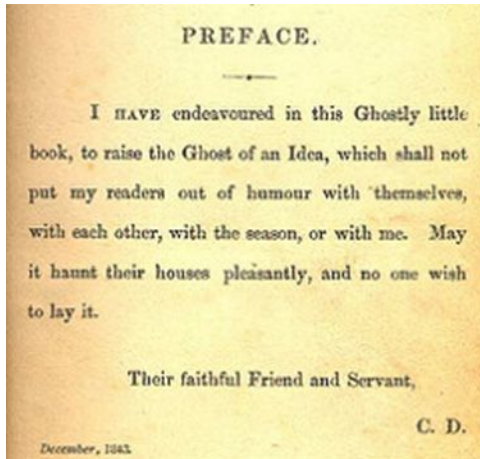
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The Legacy of *A Christmas Carol*



A Christmas Carol in Prose, Being a Ghost-Story of Christmas, commonly known as *A Christmas Carol* was first published in London by Chapman & Hall on 19 December 1843.

While the phrase "Merry Christmas" was popularised following the appearance of the story, and the name "Scrooge" and exclamation "Bah! Humbug!" have entered the English language, Ruth Glancy argues **the book's singular achievement is the powerful influence it has exerted upon its readers**. In the spring of 1844, *The Gentleman's Magazine* attributed a sudden burst of charitable giving in Britain to Dickens' novella; in

1874, Robert Louis Stevenson waxed enthusiastic after reading Dickens's Christmas books and vowed to give generously; and Thomas Carlyle expressed a generous hospitality by staging two Christmas dinners after reading the book. In America, a Mr. Fairbanks attended a reading on Christmas Eve in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1867, and was so moved he closed his factory on Christmas Day and sent every employee a turkey. In the early years of the 20th century, the Queen of Norway sent gifts to London's crippled children signed "With Tiny Tim's Love"; Squire Bancroft raised £20,000 for the poor by reading the tale aloud publicly; and Captain Corbett-Smith read the tale to the troops in the trenches of World War I.

According to historian Ronald Hutton, **the current state of observance of Christmas is largely the result of a mid-Victorian revival of the holiday spearheaded by *A Christmas Carol***. Hutton writes that Dickens "linked worship and feasting, within a context of social reconciliation". In advocating a humanitarian focus of the holiday, Dickens influenced many aspects of Christmas that are celebrated today in Western culture, such as family gatherings, seasonal food and drink, dancing, games and a festive generosity of spirit. With the appearance of the Oxford Movement and the growth of Anglo-Catholicism, a revival in the traditional rituals and religious observances associated with Christmastide also occurred.

This simple morality tale with its pathos and theme of redemption significantly redefined the "spirit" and importance of Christmas, since, as Margaret Oliphant recalled, it "*moved us all those days ago as if it had been a new gospel*." The tale helped resurrect a form of seasonal merriment that had been suppressed by the Puritan quelling of Yuletide pageantry in 17th-century England.

Source: Wikipedia



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Cast & Creative Team

CAST

Jesse Buck	Scrooge
Sean Sullivan	Actor (everybody else)

CREATIVES

Katie Leamen	Playwright, Producer, Assistant Director
Lynne Griffin	Director, Costume Designer
Rose Hopkins	Associate Producer, Stage Manager
Jake Gow	Set Design
Ashleigh Russell	Graphic Design
John Gundy	Photography



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Artist Bios

JESSE BUCK

Jesse has almost twenty-five years of performing experience. He has played to international audiences in more than twenty-five countries. As a creator/producer Jesse has developed more than a dozen shows working in the styles of Clown, Commedia, and Bouffon. Most of these have premiered at Ottawa's Arts Court Theatre. His one man show *Bubkus* was accepted into the New York Clown Festival, the Toronto Festival of Clowns, the North American Clown Fest in Nanjing, China, as well as the Pivot Fest in Whitehorse, YK and the Uno Festival in Victoria, B.C. Jesse has worked extensively with Ottawa companies Odyssey Theatre and A Company of Fools and enjoyed almost five years of touring as a principle Clown in Cirque du Soliel's *Alegria*. Film credits include Lee DeMarbe's cult film *Smash Cut*. He completed the two-year program at Ecole Philippe Gaulier in Paris, France. He also attended Dell Arte School of Physical Theatre's summer program as well as partaking in numerous workshops with international artists of many disciplines.



SEAN SULLIVAN

Sean's life has revolved around the theatre from birth; his mother was an actress, director of education and dramaturge at the Tony Award-winning Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, CA. Sean's professional career began there as well, performing in twelve plays. Favourite roles include; the first production of *A Christmas Carol Comedy* (No Porpoise Productions), his award-winning solo play *Baby Redboots' Revenge*, (directed by his wife, Lynne Griffin and touring North American and Central Europe), Norman in *The Dresser* and Davey/Leon in *The Voice of the Prairie*. This last summer he played Pantalone in *A Servant of Two Masters* at Odyssey Theatre, Ottawa. Sean's recent Toronto productions; *The Castle*, *The Merry Wives of*

Windsor, *Liver*, *Out At Sea*, *A Midsummer Nightmare*, *Potosi* and *The Seagull*. Selected film credits: *God and Country*, *Wayne's World*, *Back To The Future III*, *Who's That Girl?*, *Foolproof* and *The Howling VI*. Selected TV credits: *Damien*, *Hemlock Grove*, *Good God*, *The Associates* (Gemini nominee, series regular), *Across The River To Motor City*, *Poor Tom is Cold*. Sean won the inaugural Masters In Mime Tournament in California and went on to study, then tour with Richmond

Shepard, ('American's Foremost Mime'). He studied classical theatre in the Professional Training Program at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco.



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KATIE LEAMEN

Playwright, producer, performer and founding member of No Porpoise Productions, the theatre collective that has produced two of Katie's scripts including *Alice in Wonderland: A Tale with No Porpoise* and *A Christmas Carol Comedy*. Her first commissioned script, *Treasure Island* (Dora nomination "Outstanding Ensemble", TYA Division), opened Solar Stage's 2015/2016 season with a remount this Christmas. Commissioned by the Hamilton Wentworth District Schoolboard, this fall Katie is working with students at Glendale Performing Arts High School to create an original script and soundtrack to educate grade 7-11s about the pathways in education, specifically skilled trades. Her next project,

Worthy, is being co-written with her dad, Randy Leamen, fusing kidney transplants and organ donation with the legend of King Arthur. Katie is the Director of Coordination and Communications at Generator, a teaching, mentoring, innovation incubator increasing the capacities of artists, producers and leaders where her primary role is the creation and coordination of the Artist Producer Training Program. Katie is a graduate of the University of Windsor BFA Acting program.



LYNNE GRIFFIN

Lynne has directed her husband Sean in his award-winning, well-traveled and highly praised production of *Baby Redboots' Revenge* for which he was chosen Best Solo Performer in the 2013 San Diego Drama Critics Awards. They are re-visiting the joy of working together on *A Christmas Carol Comedy* in their tour this December. Her other directing credits include *Alice in Wonderland: A Tale with No Porpoise* (also adapted by Katie Leamen), and *The Voice Of The Prairie*. Acting credits span forty years, appearing in theatres across Canada and the U.S. Her favourite role remains The Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, which she has played four times. Film credits include the cult hits

Black Christmas, *Strange Brew* and *Curtains*, and her TV series' include *Happy Town*, *Wind At My Back*, *Riverdale* and



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Michael: Tuesdays and Thursdays. She has played Mrs. Santa Claus in two ABC-TV movies that air every Christmas, called *Santa Baby* and *Santa Baby 2*, as well as the Christmas movie *Fir Crazy*. Lynne and Sean have been married for nearly 22 years and easily have as many artistic collaborations.



ROSE HOPKINS

Rose Hopkins is an actor, creator, and producer. She is the founder of Mooncalf Theatre, a company dedicated to producing original work by local artists to audiences in Hamilton and across Ontario. She is the creator and performer of *The Rabbit Done Died* ("Best of Galleries", 2015 Hamilton Fringe; RHIZOMES, In The Soil Festival, St. Catharine's), director of *The Distance Between Us and the Sun* (2016 Frost Bites Festival), and co-creator/performer of *What Happens in the Backroom* (2016 Hamilton Fringe). After graduating from the University of Windsor's Acting Program, she has continued her theatre education with Toronto Fringe's TENT program, Hamilton Fringe's ALERT Program, and Generator's Artist Producer Training

program. As a producer, she has worked with hammer theatre, Why Not Theatre's RISER Project, Open Heart Surgery Theatre, No Porpoise Productions, Company Blonde and Pyretic Productions, and others. Rose recently received the 2016 City of Hamilton Arts Award for Emerging Theatre Artist and is currently creating another site-specific piece for the upcoming Frost Bites Festival to take place at the Art Gallery of Hamilton in February 2017.



JAKE GOW

Jake Gow has been an active member of the theatre industry for several years, and has grown his experience as a theatre technician, carpenter, designer, and artisan across Canada and the GTA. He is a graduate of the Sheridan College Technical Theatre Production program and his recent positions include Carpenter at The Upper Canada Playhouse, Properties Intern at The Juilliard School and most recently, touring across Canada as the Technical Director for Canada's Ballet Jörger. He continues to spend time at a small carpentry shop he started with a few colleagues last year. Jake currently



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holds the position of Assistant Technical Director at the Canadian Opera Company.



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