

**A DIFFERENT KIND OF DICKENS IN THE
AUDREY SKIRBALL KENIS THEATER AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE:
*A CHRISTMAS CAROL WITH CHARLES DICKENS***

**ONE-NIGHT PERFORMANCE OVERLAPS WITH EXTENDED PRODUCTION
OF *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, CHARLES
DICKENS AND COUNT LEO TOLSTOY: DISCORD***

LOS ANGELES (November 6, 2014) – The Geffen Playhouse presents **Independent Shakespeare Co.’s** production of ***A Christmas Carol with Charles Dickens***, featuring David Melville as Charles Dickens, adapted by David Melville and Melissa Chalsma and directed by Melissa Chalsma. ***A Christmas Carol*** will have a single performance on Monday, December 1 at 7:00 pm in the Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse.

Melville is already playing a different Dickens in the extended run of ***The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord*** by Scott Carter, which continues its run through December 7. In the play Dickens, Thomas Jefferson, and Leo Tolstoy are brought together and have a blistering battle of wits over the Bible and other topics.

A Christmas Carol with Charles Dickens is performed by Independent Shakespeare Co. (ISC) co-founder David Melville as Dickens, playing nearly every character in the story with musical accompaniment and dramatic interjections by Julia Aks. ***A Christmas Carol with Charles Dickens*** will also be performed on other December dates at the Independent Studio (www.iscla.org).

In his lifetime, Charles Dickens was recognized not only as a great writer, but as an actor. His greatest successes on the stages of Britain and the United States were his solo performances of his own work. Women were known to faint in horror at his portrayal of Sikes murdering Nancy when he performed *Oliver Twist*. One of the first pieces he presented to great acclaim was *A Christmas Carol*.

In what has become a holiday tradition, ISC re-creates (with a little artistic license) the experience of a public reading given by Mr. Dickens himself, based on the novelist’s own adaptation. This is ISC’s tenth year presenting *A Christmas Carol with Charles Dickens*.

Melville said, “It’s humbling how many people return every year to see it and that they’ve made it their Christmas tradition. What’s unique about it is that because it’s presented by Charles Dickens, you hear Dickens’ narrative as he wrote it rather than as a dramatization that leaves his voice out of it. It contains a surprising amount of humor and his attitude towards his characters is perhaps not as sentimental as you might think. But it’s always moving because it’s about an act of forgiveness and redemption.”

The performance is full of the acting pyrotechnics Dickens was famous for as the two actors conjure a magical evening full of wry humor, ghosts, romance, and redemption.

David Melville is co-founder of Independent Shakespeare Co. and the *Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival*. Roles for ISC include Hamlet, Richard II, Iago, Macbeth, Henry V, Benedick, Dr. Pinch, Feste, 8 seasons as Charles Dickens performing *A Christmas Carol*, a one-person *Nicholas Nickleby*, Charles Dickens in *Discord*, WH Ireland in the one man show *Solemn Mockeries* and Beauty Smith in the original musical *Red Barn*. As a composer David has written the music for most of ISC’s Shakespeare productions, *Red Barn* and many of the songs for Dr Pinch’s vaudeville show. London appearances include the Almeida Theatre productions of *Hamlet* (also Broadway) and *Ivanov* (both of which featured Ralph Fiennes), *Mother Courage* (with Glenda Jackson) and Henry VI in *The Wax King* (The Man in the Moon). TV and film includes: *Lawrence of America*; *Ironclad*; *The Understudy* and *Perfection*. Earlier in his career, David was a private detective and then brand ambassador for Bombay Sapphire – traveling the United

States preaching the virtues of gin and discussing golf with liquor executives. David trained at the Webber-Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

A Christmas Carol with Charles Dickens

Based on the Acting Text of **Charles Dickens**

Adapted by **David Melville** and **Melissa Chalsma**

Directed by **Melissa Chalsma**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Monday, December 1, 2014 at 7:00 pm

TICKET INFORMATION

Ticket prices are currently \$28 and are available in-person at the Geffen Playhouse box office, via phone at 310.208.5454 or online at www.geffenplayhouse.com. Fees may apply.

LOCATION

Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater at the Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024

BIOGRAPHIES

ABOUT INDEPENDENT SHAKESPEARE CO. (ISC)

ISC was founded in 1998 and has been producing accessible, imaginative performances of classical plays since that time. First performances were located on the Lower East Side of New York though the stripped down production style of these early productions allowed for easy travel with tours through Europe that eventually concluded with an invitation to perform *Macbeth* for four weeks at The King's Head Theatre in London. The Los Angeles relocation in 2001 came with the support of the city's Department of Recreation and Parks and the Department of Cultural Affairs who partnered with ISC to launch Free Shakespeare in Barnsdall Park. Audience demand grew and in 2010 the event was re-christened the Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival. ISC has produced 21 fully staged productions over nine summer seasons and grown its audience from under 1,000 in the first year to over 45,500 attendees over 40 nights of free Shakespeare last year alone. For more information, please visit www.iscla.org.

ABOUT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

The Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the Geffen Playhouse continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates, and is currently helmed by Artistic Director Randall Arney, Managing Director Ken Novice, Chief Development Officer Regina Miller and Co-Chairs of the Board Martha Henderson and Pamela Robinson Hollander. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen Playhouse welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains an extensive education and outreach program, designed to engage young people and the community at large in the arts. For more information, please visit www.geffenplayhouse.com.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Tim Choy, Davidson & Choy Publicity
t.choy@dcpublicity.com 323.954.7510 ext. 13