

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**From the Tony and Olivier Award-Winning Director of
Les Misérables and *Nicholas Nickleby* John Caird
and the Tony Nominated Composer of *Jane Eyre* Paul Gordon:**



**A World Premiere Streaming Holiday Musical that
Uniquely Blends Theatre, Film and Cutting-Edge Animation**

For a first look at the Trailer, click here: Estella Scrooge

EUGENE, OR – Just in time for the holidays, Oregon Contemporary Theatre brings audiences a magical musical created with new cutting-edge technology that is sure to become new a holiday tradition – the World Premiere of *Estella Scrooge: A Christmas Carol with a Twist!* *Estella Scrooge* is now available for streaming through the holidays. Tickets are now on sale and may be purchased at <https://bit.ly/OCTEstellaScrooge>, or visit OCT’s website at octheatre.org.

The production features a cast of 24 award-winning Broadway notables, and is the creation of **John Caird**, (the Tony and Olivier Award-winning director of *Les Misérables* and *Nicholas Nickleby*), and Tony Award nominee **Paul Gordon** (*Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*). Caird and Gordon also paired to create *Daddy Long Legs*, which played at numerous regional theatres throughout the country and in four countries before enjoying a successful Off-Broadway run where Caird received a Drama Desk.

The story follows Estella Scrooge, a modern-day Wall Street tycoon with a penchant for foreclosing. A hotelier in her hometown of Pickwick, Ohio has defaulted on his mortgage and Estella fancies the idea of lowering the boom personally. Arriving at Harthouse on Christmas Eve, Estella discovers that the defaulting party is her childhood friend Pip Nickleby (Duncan). A good and generous soul, Pip has

transformed the property into a refuge for the sick, dispossessed and homeless. A freak snowstorm forces Estella to take refuge. That night, just as it happened to her ancestor Ebenezer, she is haunted by three visitations...and oh, what uninvited houseguests they are!

A modern day take on Charles Dickens' beloved 1843 novella, *A Christmas Carol*, *Estella Scrooge* also wittily incorporates characters and plot lines from Dickens' other great novels, *Great Expectations*, *Little Dorrit* and *Bleak House*, among others.

Betsy Wolfe (*Waitress*) stars as Estella, a descendent of her famous great great-great-grandfather Ebenezer. **Clifton Duncan** (*The Play That Goes Wrong*) stars as Philip 'Pip' Nickleby. 2020 Tony Award nominee **Lauren Patten** (*Jagged Little Pill*) stars as Dawkins. The production also stars Tony Award nominees **Patrick Page** (*Hadestown*) as Mr. Merdle, **Carolee Carmello** (*Parade*) as Marla Havisham and **Danny Burstein** (2020 Tony Award Nominee, *Moulin Rouge!*) as Ebenezer Scrooge.

Tickets are \$29.99 for 72-hour viewing for each household, or \$44.99 for a VIP Premium Theatre Experience, which includes unlimited viewings, a download of the CD and exclusive behind-the-scenes footage.

Estella Scrooge is the first digital theatre piece filmed entirely during the pandemic, utilizing cutting-edge technology. The fully realized production, a dazzlingly cinematic musical theatre adventure, was filmed using tracked green screen techniques, with 3-D surreal digital environments created in post-production merged with the actual footage of the actors to bring the story to life in a brand-new way.



Danny Burstein as Ebenezer Scrooge, Betsy Wolfe as Estella Scrooge in ESTELLA SCROOGE: A Christmas Carol with a Twist. © Tyler Milliron

The cast also includes **Megan McGinnis** (*Little Women*) as Betty Cratchit, **Adam Halpin** (*Dear Evan Hansen*) as Bob Cratchit, **Sarah Litzsinger** (*Beauty and the Beast*) as Sissy Jupe, **Tom Nelis** (*The Visit*) as Dedlock, **Em Grosland** (*Emotional Creature*) as Smike, **Phoenix Best** (*Dear Evan Hansen*) as Charity & Mercy, **David Bryant** (Original Marius in Broadway's *Les Misérables*) as Mr. Podsnap, **Gabrielle Reid** (*Beautiful: The Carol King Musical*) as Mrs. Pumblechook, **Samuel Lee Roberts** (*Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Spectacular*) as Mr. Flopson, **Michael Francis McBride** (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater) as Mr. Dombey, **Michele Lee** (*Nutcracker Rouge*) as Mrs. Noggs, **Kristen Faith Oei** (*The King and I*) as Ms. Skiffins, **Meg Gibson** (*The Gabriels*) as Molly, **William Youmans** (*Wicked*) as Magwitch & Bagstock, **Kevyn**

Morrow (*Moulin Rouge!*) as Jasper Jagers, **Joziyah Jean-Felix** (*The Lion King*) as Young Pip, **Brooklyn Shuck** (“Evil”) as Young Essy and **Willow McCarthy** (*The Ferryman*) as Tiny Tammy.

Director/co-book writer **John Caird** says, “I’m so happy to bring this new musical to life in the midst of these mad and maddening times. The creative team nimbly learned new techniques to bring the actors and their characters together. It’s wonderful to provide employment for the theatre community while we enliven the classic Christmas Carol story, refashioned with a new twist for today. At a time of great conflict and hardship, I hope we can shine a little ray of optimism into the surrounding darkness.”

Co-book writer/composer **Paul Gordon** adds, “This piece was a joy to create, from the first beat of the idea to the culmination of the film. Discovering how these Dickensian characters (from different novels) would interact together and tell a cohesive story with a distinct musical voice was both a challenge and a thrill. I believe in finding new ways of sharing the magic of musical theatre with the world and now it’s more important than ever to escape for a few hours with a message of love and hope. I’m proud to be part of this creative team and to bring our community together in a responsible way during these challenging times.”

Estella Scrooge is produced by **Streaming Musicals** in association with **Michael Jackowitz** of WitzEnd Productions, **Michael Alden** and **David Bryant**. Executive Producers are **Jeffrey Grove** and **Kevin Surace** and for StreamingMusicals, **Tom Polum** and **Stacia Fernandez**. Co-Executive Producers are **Jeffrey Grove**, **Allan Herzog** and **Dawn Smalberg/Bev Ragavoy**.

It was originally developed through over two holidays seasons at **Rubicon Theatre Company** in Ventura (**Karyl Lynn Burns** and **James O’Neil**, Artistic Directors), with further development and support from **Rhinebeck Writers’ Retreat**.

According to Jackowitz, “**Estella Scrooge** was born after a conversation with our Executive Producer Kevin Surace. We thought, ‘wouldn’t it be great if there was a way to shoot something in a safe, isolated fashion, but put everyone together in the same frame?’ An experiment was done to test the concept and push the boundaries. Was it possible to shoot an entire musical this way? The answer was YES and what audiences will see are the fruits of that exciting labor.”

For over three years, StreamingMusicals has been creating content that is a hybrid between theatre and film, with in-theatre and soundstage captures that provide worldwide access to musicals that would not be as widely seen otherwise.

In April, over 160,000 people watched the premiere of Streaming Musicals’ production of Paul Gordon’s musical adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Executive Producer **Tom Polum** said, “Streaming Musicals is pleased to be a part of this groundbreaking new approach to recording an original musical. This incredibly talented and inventive team of artists have fashioned a story that is not only a reflection of our times, but a nod to great iconic figures of the past. The cutting-edge technology utilized in **Estella Scrooge** will create dazzling moments that will make viewers feel like they are in the 10th row of a theatre.”

Estella Scrooge features musical supervision by **Brad Haak** (*Mary Poppins*), choreography by **Natalie Lomonte** (*Every Woman Biennial*) and casting by **Tara Rubin Casting** (*Dear Evan Hansen*). Director of photography and editor is **Tyler Milliron** (Streaming Musicals’ *Pride and Prejudice*), production art

design is by **Zach Wilson** (*Beauty and the Beast*), costume design is by **Somie Pak** (“Mélange”), hair and makeup design is by **Dena Olivieri** (*Forbidden Steps*) and props design is by **Katherine White** (Streaming Musicals’ *Marry Harry*).

BIOGRAPHIES

John Caird (*Book, Direction*) is an Honorary Associate Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Principal Guest Director of the Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm and a freelance writer and director of plays, musicals and operas. His National Theatre productions include *Hamlet*, *Money*, *Humble Boy*, *The Seagull*, *Stanley*, *Trelawney of the Wells*, *Peter Pan* and his own Olivier Award-winning version of Bernstein’s *Candide* which is now playing in multiple productions world-wide. His recent directorial credits include *Knights’ Tale* and *Hamlet*, both in Tokyo, *Don Giovanni* at WNO in Cardiff, *McQueen* at the Haymarket Theatre, *Tosca* in Chicago, Houston and LA, *Love’s Labour’s Lost* at the Stratford Festival in Canada, *La Bohème* in San Francisco and Toronto, *Parsifal* in Chicago, *Twelfth Night* in Tokyo, and his own musical *Daddy Long Legs* Off-Broadway, in Tokyo and all across the U.S. His directorial work for the RSC has included over 20 productions of Shakespeare as well as classic and new plays, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Beggar’s Opera*, *Twelfth Night*, *Peter Pan*, *Our Friends in the North*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Les Misérables* - the last two productions winning numerous awards in the West End, Broadway and all around the world. At Dramaten in Stockholm he has directed *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Dance of Death*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Gertrud* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Other productions include *Macbeth* at the Almeida Theatre, *Becket* at the Haymarket and *Song & Dance* at the Palace Theatre. For BBC TV, he adapted and directed “Henry IV” Parts I and II. John is also the Founder of the Mustardseed Arts and Educational Trust, a UK charity that raises funds for artistic and educational projects all around the world.

Paul Gordon (*Book, Music & Lyrics*) was nominated for a 2001 Tony Award for composing the music and lyrics to the musical *Jane Eyre*. He won the 2015 Jeff Award for Best New Work for his book, music and lyrics for *Sense and Sensibility*, commissioned by Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. He is the recipient of the 2009 Ovation Award for his music and lyrics to *Daddy Long Legs* which has had productions all over the world and was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards, an Off-Broadway Alliance Award and three Outer Critic Circle Awards. Paul has been an advocate for capturing theatre on film while creating new revenue streams for theatre artists. His company, StreamingMusicals.com, has been on the forefront of this movement and his musicals *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma* and *No One Called Ahead* can currently be streamed on Amazon Prime and other online platforms. *Knight’s Tale*, written with John Caird, opened at the Imperial Theatre in Tokyo, 2018 and is slated for its second production in 2021. His other shows include: *Being Earnest*, *Analog and Vinyl*, *The Front*, *Juliet and Romeo*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *The Circle*, *Rabbit* and *The Sportswriter*. In his former life, Paul was a pop songwriter and wrote several number one songs. paulgordonmusic.com

Brad Haak (*Musical Supervisor*). Brad’s Broadway credits include music direction for Disney’s *Mary Poppins*, *An American in Paris*, Elton John’s *Lestat*, *Il Divo - A Musical Affair*; and as a pianist: *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and *The Full Monty*. Brad has conducted national tours of Disney’s *The Lion King* and *Miss Saigon*. Other collaborations with John Caird and composer Paul Gordon include music supervision and orchestrations for *Knights’ Tale* (Tokyo, and with the Tokyo Philharmonic), *Daddy Long Legs* (Off Broadway, London, Tokyo, Seoul) and *Jane Eyre* (Tokyo). Other international credits include *Sousatzka* (Toronto), *An American in Paris* (Paris) and *Honk!* (Singapore and the

Philippines). Highlights of his numerous regional theatre credits include *Follies* and *Sunday in the Park with George* (at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre; Jeff Award for music direction), eight productions at the famed 10,000-seat outdoor Municipal Theatre of St. Louis, *Children of Eden* at the Kennedy Center, and most recently *Ragtime* at Houston's Theatre Under the Stars. Brad's concert work has included performances with such singers as Audra McDonald, Ashley Brown, Kristin Chenoweth, Heather Hedley and Sir Paul McCartney. His arrangements and orchestrations have been performed by the Boston and New York Pops, L.A. Philharmonic and National Symphony at the Kennedy Center. Brad trained at Northwestern University and is a native of Chicago.

Tyler Milliron (*Director of Photography and Editor*) is a Creative Director based out of New York City. He merges extensive experience in Film, Theatre, Painting, Glass Art, and Music with focused, streamlined business acumen to create Artful solutions in today's media market.

Zach Wilson (*Production Art Design*) is a designer specializing in theatrical projections. He grew up in Northern California and has worked on a wide variety of productions. A lover of all and a practitioner of many aspects of the arts, Zach has worn countless hats throughout his career so far as a projection, scenic and graphic designer, as well as a performer, technician and editor (to name a few). Although versed in a wide gamut of design styles, Zach often has a way of bringing a sense of whimsy into his work, and has been known to whisk an audience off into the story. Zach has a great appreciation for all art forms, but musical theatre certainly has his heart. www.zachwilson.info

Somie Pak (*Costume Design*). Despite her penchant for period costumes and her love of theatre and fashion, costume design did not enter Somie's life until mid-2014 when she was asked to be the costume designer for two world premiere plays, *Shades of Blue* and *What Was Lost*, presented by Beautiful Soup Theater. And then, as they so shrewdly say, the rest is history. In 2016, she interned with the Tony and Academy Award-winning designer Ann Roth on *Shuffle Along, or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*. In 2018, she designed the highly anticipated television pilot, "Mélange," directed by Emmy Award-winning director Gary Donatelli and Tony Award-winning producer Tim Kashani, and starring Morgan Fairchild. In 2019, she was nominated for the Henry Hewes Design Award by the American Theatre Wing for her design of *Mary Stuart*. A self-proclaimed nerd and geek, Somie is a graduate of the University of Michigan and is based in Manhattan. In her spare time, she enjoys running her cosplay repair center as Nurse Patchit at New York Comic Con, dressing models for photoshoots and NYFW, dabbling in wardrobe on and off Broadway, and picking out the right sash for her World Domination poster.

Dena Olivieri (*Hair and Makeup Design*) is a NYC-based makeup artist for film, television and theater, and is an alumna of the Make Up For Ever Academy NY and Cinema Makeup School LA. Dena has studied under some of the most well respected make-up artists in the industry such as Ve Neill, Dany Sanz, Craig Lindberg, Rod Maxwell, etc. Dena has worked on various TV shows, theater productions, short/feature films, commercials and live events. Efficient in camera ready makeup as well as specialty SFX & theatrical styles.

Katherine White (*Props Design*) is a NYC-based Prop Designer and Food Stylist. Her most recent work can be seen in *Marry Harry* and *Emma* on Streaming Musicals. She has worked with various companies throughout New York including; New York City Children's Theater, Hunter College, New York University,

Astoria Performing Arts Center, and Queens Theater in the Park. She is delighted to be a part of *Estella Scrooge* and is excited to start creating art again!

Natalie Lomonte (*Choreography*). Recent Collaborations: 2019 *Every Woman Biennial* (La Mama Galleria) – Choreographer; 2019 *Sentiments of the Shooting Stars* (Ailey/Fordham BFA Fall Concert) – Choreographer; 2020 *Goddess Logic* (Music Video) – Choreographer; 2020 *Iron & Coal* (Gerald W. Lynch Theater) – Director, Choreographer; 2020 *Rise from Our Hearts* (collaboration with visual artist & musician, The Soap Gallery, Youngstown, OH) – Choreographer. Current Collaborations: *CL Dance Dimensions* (studio, company) – Associate Creative Director. Projects Postponed: *Boys Will Be Boys* (The Pond Theater Co.) – Choreographer at 59e59 Theaters, NYC - original dates March-April 2020; *Pieces of the Moon* (One Year Lease Theater Co.) – Choreographer at Stages Repertory Theatre, Houston - original dates August-September 2020.

Tara Rubin Casting (*Casting*). Broadway: *Sing Street*, *Ain't Too Proud*, *King Kong*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Aladdin*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Band's Visit*, *Indecent*, *Jersey Boys*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Prince of Broadway*, *A Bronx Tale*, *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Cats*, *Falsettos*, *School of Rock*, *Billy Elliot*. Regional: Yale Rep (16 seasons), The Old Globe, Asolo, La Jolla Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse.

Michael Jackowitz, WitzEnd Productions (*Producer*). Current: *Diana* (Longacre Theatre/Broadway). *Once on This Island* (Tony Award). Recent: *Escape to Margaritaville* by Jimmy Buffett, *Lifespan of a Fact* starring Daniel Radcliffe, Cherry Jones and Bobby Cannavale. Upcoming: *The Hawaiian Goddess* by Keali'i Reichel, Patrick Makuakane and Roslyn Catracchia; *Poseidon* by Jonathan Prince and Andrew Lippa; *Dark of the Moon* by Jonathan Prince, Lindy Robbins and Dave Bassett. Past: *Tuck Everlasting* (Broadway); *Daddy Long Legs* (Off-Broadway, Davenport Theater), the first show ever live-streamed from NYC; *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, an opera by Stephen Schwartz (Lincoln Center, Opera Santa Barbara); *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Broadway) starring Daniel Radcliffe, Darren Criss and Nick Jonas (Tony Nomination); *Pippin* (Menier Chocolate Factory, London); *The Best Is Yet To Come/The Music of Cy Coleman* (Drama Desk Award); *My Fairytale* by Stephen Schwartz; *My Antonia*; *It's Only Life* by John Bucchino, directed by Daisy Prince; and the West Coast Premiere of *tick, tick...BOOM!* Michael served as the Musical Theater Liaison for the Harold Prince Musical Theater Program at The Directors Company in New York (1993) and is a graduate of the Commercial Theater Institute's Producing Seminar (1996) in New York. He continues to serve as Rubicon Theatre's Director of New Work in California. He is the Founding Partner of WitzEnd Productions, formed in 2013 for the creation of New Work with partners Marvin Kahan, Jeffrey Grove, Laura Dean-Koch, Anne Towbes and Kevin Surace.

David Bryant, David Bryant Productions (*Producer*). Past Productions: Broadway: *Getting the Band Back Together* (starring Marilu Henner and directed by John Rando), *Come From Away* (under Michael Alden Productions), *A Time to Kill* (based on the novel by John Grisham, his first novel-to-play adaptation and production with lead producer Daryl Roth), *A Tale of Two Cities*, the musical. Off Broadway: *Daddy Long Legs*, John Caird and Paul Gordon musical, (Drama Desk Award); *Wiesenthal* (starring Tom Dugan, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations); *Lonesome Traveler*, the musical (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations). Streaming/Television: *Emma*, the musical, and *Pride and Prejudice*, the musical, both written by Paul Gordon and available through StreamingMusicals.com. Film: *Lilly* (written and directed by Rachel Feldman, lead producer J. Todd Harris). *Lilly* is a dramatic feature film based on the remarkable life of Lilly Ledbetter, the woman for whom President Obama named his first piece of

legislation - The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act. Television: "Noisey Nation," a digital rap series competition around the US, partnered with Vice, Viceland, A&E Network and RocNation. Other projects via Dorian Productions (digital series in development) "Country Soundstage" and "Latin Soundstage." As an actor, David performed on Broadway in *Amadeus*, *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Show Boat*. He starred as the original Marius in the Broadway company of *Les Misérables*. He also appeared in the Off-Broadway play, *Appear and Show Cause*, for which he won the Audelco Award for Best Actor. Spanning an acting career of over 30 years on stage, film and television, David has had the pleasure of working with Sir Peter Hall, Sir Ian McKellan, Stephen Sondheim, James Lapine, Sir Trevor Nunn, Bernadette Peters, Mandy Patinkin, Hal Prince, Frank Langella, Elaine Stritch, John McMartin, Jeremy Northam, Marissa Haggerty, Vincenzo Natali, among others. He can be heard on the original Broadway recordings of *Les Misérables* and the revival of Hal Prince's *Show Boat*.

Michael Alden (*Producer*). Broadway: *Come From Away*, *Disgraced* (Pulitzer Prize 2013), *Grey Gardens*, *Bridge & Tunnel* on Broadway by and with Sarah Jones (2006 Special Tony Award). West End: *Come From Away* (2019 Olivier for Best Musical), David Seidler's original play, *The King's Speech* and the multi-award winning *Bat Boy the Musical*. Off-Broadway: *Not That Jewish*, *Becoming Dr. Ruth*, *Spalding Gray: Stories Left to Tell*, Sarah Jones' *Bridge & Tunnel*, *Bat Boy the Musical*, *Save It For The Stage: The Life Of Reilly*, written and starring Tony Award winner Charles Nelson Reilly. Film: *UnZipped*, *Just Cause*, *The Zookeeper*, *Kissing Jessica Stein* and *My Beautiful Stutter*. In Development: feature length documentaries *When Reagan Killed Roosevelt*, *Just Say Yo!* and the supernatural feature film, *Cursed*.

www.MichaelAldenProductions.com

The three-year-old **Streaming Musicals** is dedicated to presenting new, original musical theatre content, bringing live theatre to international audiences. The productions are filmed on theatrical and sound stages in high definition video and sound. Streaming Musicals also supports the creative artists who provide the site's content with a revolutionary profit-sharing model.

Streaming Musicals is made up of a group of artists who want to make it easier for audiences to watch musicals and plays. They do it because they love theatre and want to share it with the world. The company captures the magic of theatre on film and bring it directly to viewer's devices. The company focuses on storytelling, character, and music. The company has also pioneered revolutionary new profit-sharing models that support the artists. StreamingMusicals.com.

For further information about ***Estella Scrooge***, please contact OCT Associate Producer Tara Wibrew: tara@octheatre.org. To purchase tickets, go to <https://bit.ly/OCTEstellaScrooge>.

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