Ebenezer Scrooge is at the center of Dickens’ classic holiday tale. His story begins in London, England in 1843. He is infamous around town for his cruel, penny-pinching ways. Scrooge himself is happy to be unpopular, and his list of dislikes is long. At the very top of that list is Christmas—a time that he believes to be a waste for poor and rich people alike. He doesn't believe in Christmas “cheer” or charity, and makes sure everyone knows it.

On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by the tortured ghost of Jacob Marley, his former business partner. Marley, who was as greedy in life as Scrooge is, comes to warn him that if he continues to live so selfishly he, too, will suffer the consequences in the afterlife. Marley tells Scrooge that he will be haunted by three spirits. These spirits—the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Yet to Come—each haunt Scrooge with visions from his life selected to help him see the error of his ways. As he visits the three chapters of his life, Scrooge has the unique opportunity to see what was, and what could still be.

Will Jacob Marley and his fellow spirits change the heart of London’s least popular man, or will Scrooge’s Christmas remain the bleak and dreary testament of a cold and wasted life?
Since it was first published in 1843, *A Christmas Carol* has been adapted again and again, each version taking a new look at Jacob Marley and his ghostly visit. Here at DTC Jacob Marley has been played by both man and woman; in *Bah, Humduck! A Looney Tunes Christmas*, Marley's character is renamed "Sylvester the Investor," and in the 1988 film *Scrooged* the famous ghost is a dead media mogul. There is even a play titled *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol* that focuses on Scrooge's dead partner and his version of the story.

Whatever the depiction, Marley's Ghost opens a door (or rather, flies through it) and allows Scrooge a glimpse into what the spirit life may hold for him: binding chains, endless wandering and great regret. His last words to Scrooge are "Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!" It is important to remember the burdened business partner who travels from beyond the grave to warn his friend Ebenezer of the after-life that awaits him if things do not change.
The Hunger of Scrooge's Time

For the destitute, hunger often forced them to seek a place in the workhouse where a diet of potatoes, cheese, bread, apples, onions and gruel was provided.

The diet of the very poor was terrible. The unemployed and those with little money survived on a diet of potato parings, rotten vegetable refuse and scraps.

Those employed on better wages and farm labourers ate reasonably well. Those on a slightly higher wage could occasionally purchase some bacon, cheese or sausage, and workers in better-paid jobs had more choice and more wholesome food. There would be meat for the midday meal and a lighter evening meal of cheese and bacon. In rural areas farm laborers ate bread and vegetables such as onions, turnips and potatoes, with cheese and bacon two or three times a week.

The rich ate a tremendous amount, and wasted even more. Meal times were an opportunity for the rich to display their wealth. This was done through rich foods, use of fine cutlery, china and servants. At the start of the period, French cuisine was in fashion, with as many as 20 dishes served at the same time in two great courses. By the 1860s tastes had changed; dishes were being placed on the sideboard and then served, one after another, by footmen. This was known as serving a meal a la russe. Dinner parties and really rich meals could include up to 70 dishes. Ice creams and sorbets were served as a refreshing break between the richer courses of meat, fish or rich puddings. Not all courses had to be eaten—some dishes could be declined. The remaining food went to the servants.

A Recipe for WORKHOUSE (WATER) GRUEL

To Make Water-Gruel

1. Take a pint of water and a large spoonful of oatmeal.
2. Mix together and let boil up three or four times, stirring it often, but do not let it boil over.
3. Strain the mixture through a sieve, salt it to your palate.
4. Put in a good piece of fresh butter, brew it with a spoon until the butter is all melted. It will be fine and smooth—some even like a little pepper in it.

The Hunger of Today

Nearly 1 in 4 Texans under 18 years of age—or 1.6 million children—do not have access to the food they need to live active, healthy lives. We have one of the highest rates of child food insecurity in the nation, tied with Arkansas and Arizona. On a monthly basis, their food pantries, which rely on the donations of others, serve enough people to fill the Cowboy Stadium 2 ½ times!

For the fourth consecutive season, Dallas Theater Center is working with North Texas Food Bank to change these numbers. Join us in the fight against hunger in Texas by making a donation at this performance, or to learn more about the many alternate ways to help visit www.ntfb.org. You can volunteer at a food distribution site or warehouse, sponsor a food drive with your school, religious community, neighbors or club, OR just tell other people about what you've learned.
A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By the Numbers

The Clothes

Over the last 7 years:
- 1 storage room, 9’ x 13½”, has stored A Christmas Carol costumes.
- More than 129 fittings have been scheduled for approximately 68 men, women and children.
- DTC’s Costume Shop has designed and re-designed Ghosts of Christmas costumes 10 times, Jacob Marley costumes 5 times, and Mrs. Cratchit’s dress 3 times.
- The winter season and historic period in which A Christmas Carol is set require many layers of clothes for several characters. At Fred’s Christmas Party, both the ladies and gentlemen are wearing at least 7 articles of clothing (women: stockings, corset, petticoat, dress, shoes, hat, gloves) (men: stocking, trousers, shirt, cravat, vest, jacket, shoes).

The Crew

- DTC has 19 people on crew.
- They need 80 minutes to set the stage and 20 minutes to clear the stage.
- There are 10 large scenic pieces to move on and off stage.
- There are 6 boxes of snow to sift from the catwalk.
- There are 3 smoke machines, 2 dry ice machines, and 1 remote control chair to operate.