



Rose Theatre stages music, misers and holiday cheer

By **ASHLEY GOODFELLOW**
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It's a show Charles Dickens would be proud of, if he were still around.

At least that's how the cast of *A Christmas Carol — The Musical* describes the Rose Theatre's upcoming production running Dec. 15 to 18. For Sweeney MacArthur, who plays the classic holiday miser Ebenezer Scrooge, the upbeat, fast-paced musical show is an opportunity to be entertained while taking in important social messages. Messages, he says, that are still relevant more than a century after they were first penned by Dickens in the book, *A Christmas Carol*.

"The story was written in 1843 right after England declared the poor law in 1836," explains MacArthur, "and this is Dickens' commentary on the need for us all to be our brothers' helpers."

But, it's a lesson stocked with falling snow, whimsical dances, flying ghosts and big sounds. Danny Harvey, the show's artistic director, describes the piece as a "very fun, very quick and very upbeat version of *A Christmas Carol*."

It's a change, he says, from *Scrooge! The Musical*, which the Rose Theatre staged in 2009 and 2010, but offers the audience an opportunity to see a new take on the beloved holiday show.

"This show is just number after number after number— it's basically non-stop and there's no opportunity to get bored or disinterested," he said. With most of the text told through song, it appeals to everyone.

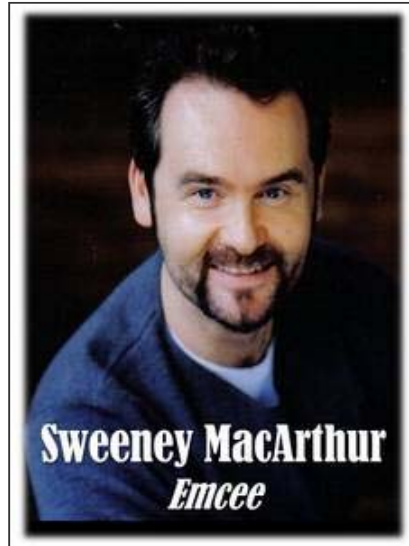
"I absolutely guarantee you are going to leave smiling," he said.

On stage, audiences will see a huge ensemble— some familiar faces like MacArthur and Scott Carmichael (who plays Bob Cratchit), and some newer faces, who Harvey says bring a great amount of energy and fresh talent to the stage.

And, for a full-scale, professional production, it's an affordable way to spend a little time enjoying the holidays with family and friends.

"This entire show, it's about a gentleman who pushed everything away is brought back to see the value of his own family," said Harvey. "We are all so busy running around, we forget what the holiday season is about. This is another opportunity to sit and enjoy Christmas as a family."

The show runs Dec. 15 to 18. For tickets and information call 905-874-2800 or visit www.rosetheatre.ca.



Sweeney MacArthur. Sweeney MacArthur plays Ebenezer Scrooge in the Rose Theatre's *A Christmas Carol — The Musical* running Dec. 15 to 18.

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