

I am Triad Stage

Artistic Associate Bryan Conger is directing this season's production of Preston Lane's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. In the middle of an exciting and fast paced rehearsal period, Bryan took time out to discuss the holiday tale and share a bit more about himself.



How does *A Christmas Carol* speak to community and what lessons can we all learn from Scrooge?

BC: *A Christmas Carol* still rings true today because of the universal themes which run throughout the story. It says, "You cannot escape the ghosts of your past, but there is always a possibility for redemption and we can always be better than we are." It's what you give of your heart and spirit that really counts.

The story isn't just a holiday card; its message reminds us to take stock of how we treat other people and what we do for our neighbor. This is still a message that needs to be heard in our community and throughout our country – to make us aware that if our neighbor has nothing, we have nothing.

What excites you about directing the production?

BC: I am excited to return to this material because I love the story so much. I'm also thrilled to have most of the cast returning and to have a chance to get back in the rehearsal hall with this ensemble of actors to make new discoveries and strengthen the ones that were created last year.

What intrigues you most about Preston's adaptation?

BC: It's not a simple piece of work. Preston doesn't take the "ghost" out of the ghost story. He allows us to see the true journey that Scrooge takes from darkness to light. I also like the choice of music he has included. This is like no other adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* I have read or seen and I enjoy when material surprises and challenges me.

What do you enjoy most about directing live theater?

BC: I love the audience, and the communication between actors and audience! There's nothing like the visceral experience that's created with each performance and how no two are alike. I also like working in the theater because of the true collaboration that happens among the different artistic mediums – all working for a common goal – and the sense of community such collaboration brings with it.

Can you describe your role at Triad Stage?

BC: As artistic associate, I have various duties in the artistic department such as local casting, literary management, dramaturgy, education and assisting the artistic director. I also direct several shows in the season. I directed *The Mystery of Irma Vep* and *A Christmas Carol* and will direct *tick...tick...BOOM!* this spring.

Triad Stage Partnerships

Triad Stage has a strong belief in creating partnerships. We are committed to sharing resources, ideas and talent with other organizations to benefit the well-being of our community. Working together we can expand audiences, provide more employment for artists and strengthen the local arts community which benefits us all. Since our founding, we've enjoyed strong partnerships with the theater programs at several of the area's universities.

University of North Carolina Greensboro, University of North Carolina School of the Arts and North Carolina A&T faculty members and students account for a large portion of the creative team and cast of *A Christmas Carol*. David E. Smith, head of the Sound Design program at UNCSCA and composer and sound designer for *A Christmas Carol* shares how the Triad Stage partnership has benefited his work.

"As a practicing composer and theatre sound designer, I consider myself very fortunate to have both Triad Stage and Preston Lane in the region where I live and teach. Triad Stage maintains such a high production value in all of its shows, far beyond what would normally be expected of a regional theatre of its size. I know that this is a difficult thing to achieve as well as to maintain with every show. I am convinced that it is because of the shared vision that Rich Whittington fosters inside the organization as well as the dedication and support Triad Stage receives from its local community. This level of excellence can only be achieved by a group vision bigger than just the theatre company itself.

"Also, Preston Lane is a true gem among directors. Having worked in the past with many of the big names in both England and the United States, I have never met a director and playwright who is so smart, collaborative and hard working. I can only liken what he is doing here in Greensboro to that of Alan Ayckbourn and his theatre in Scarborough in the United Kingdom. Without Triad Stage, and especially Preston, I would have to practice my art in one of the major metropolitan cities in order to continue to design and compose at the level I seek to create. I am fortunate because I never have to leave the region I love to do any of my professional work. Triad Stage is now my home."



The cast of *A Christmas Carol* (2010). Photo by VanderVeen Photographers.

Up next in The UpStage Cabaret



**A HOLIDAY EVENT
FOR THE BIG KIDS**

by David Sedaris
adapted by Joe Mantello

directed by
Jonathan Bohun Brady
DECEMBER 6 – 23, 2011



Pictured: Jon Mozes in *The Santaland Diaries*. Photo by VanderVeen Photographers.

Nurturing the Next Generation

Since our inception more than ten years ago, Triad Stage has been committed to providing opportunities and access for students. The theater offers a special program for students called, "Student Rush." This program allows all students to purchase tickets to ANY Triad Stage performance for just \$10.

In addition to providing discount tickets, Triad Stage also strives to offer Student Matinees for performances throughout the season. Most recently, the theater opened its doors for high school students during the run of *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Doll House*. Students from Guilford County, Davidson County, and even as far away as Virginia came to special performances during the day.

Bob Dye of Davidson County Schools brought 190 students to *A Doll House* and shared, "We had a GREAT experience at the show. The students loved the production. They particularly enjoyed the staging and the use of symbolism." *A Doll House* is required reading for North Carolina 10th graders, so this performance was a unique opportunity to see the play come to life.

Wendy Lavine of Greensboro Day School was also grateful for Triad Stage's Student Matinee. "The Greensboro Day School sophomore class really appreciated the special student matinee of *A Doll House* — it sparked some great discussions, including the comment, 'the play really made me understand what we had read in the book.'"

Like "Pay-What-You-Can" nights, Student Rush tickets and Student Matinees are supported through donations to the theater. The same professional actors that perform each night make an extra commitment to come in during the day to offer this program to students. It is only through community support and the hard work and dedication of our theater professionals that Triad Stage can continue to offer programs that truly nurture the next generation.

Creating Access and Inclusion

As a professional regional theater, Triad Stage has a strong commitment to making theater accessible to all. We do so by maintaining low ticket prices and offering two "Pay-What-You-Can" (PWYC) nights for each MainStage production. On these two nights, patrons can literally pay whatever they can afford to see the performance. Amounts range from fifty cents up to the patrons who pay a little extra to support the program. "PWYC nights are my favorite nights to work in the Box Office," shares Justin Nichols, Assistant Box Office Manager. "I love to have people come up and ask, 'Can I really see this show for \$1?' Getting to say, 'Yes, you most definitely can!' is one of the best parts of my job."



In the 2010-2011 Season, more than 1,200 tickets were sold through the PWYC program. "We know that most of those people would never be able to see professional theater without PWYC," says Managing Director Richard Whittington. "The fact that so many people take advantage of this opportunity shows that theater is truly universal, and reaffirms our commitment to our community and access for everyone."

PWYC nights are supported through individual and corporate donations to Triad Stage. Corporations can sponsor the series with a \$2,500 commitment. "We truly could not maintain the PWYC series without contributed revenue through donations," states Whittington. "When you make a donation to Triad Stage, you not only support the great theater you enjoy, but also the entire community of theater patrons, regardless of ability to pay."

DONATE TO TRIAD STAGE

**Support Triad Stage's commitment to quality,
professional theater that is an active and vital
part of our community.**



**Make your 2011 Annual Campaign
pledge today!**

**Use the enclosed pledge card or contact our
Development Office at (336) 274-0067.**

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Pictured: Krista Hoepfner and Amy da Luz in *A Doll House*. Photo by VanderVeen Photographers.