A Sherlock Carol

By Mark Shanahan

Directed by

Gerald B. Browning

November 27 – December 24, 2026

Features:

Page 3 Director’s Note

Page 12 About the Playwright

Page 14 Featured Gallery Artist Aimee Schreiber

The Production:

Page 16 – Sherlock Carol Credits

Page 20 – Cast Profiles

Page 26 – Creative Team Profiles

Page 36 – Production Team Profiles

Page 37 – Individual Donors and Board List Availability

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

What happens when two of the most famous characters in English literature find themselves in the same story? Well, you get *A Sherlock Carol*, Mark Shanahan's wonderfully inventive blend of Victorian mystery, Christmas ghost story, and affectionate literary homage. On the face of it, bringing together the worlds of Charles Dickens and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle might seem a rather unlikely idea. But as it turns out, the two make surprisingly good company. The result is funny, heartfelt, delightfully clever, and just a little bit zany.

Even if you've never read a word of Dickens or Doyle, chances are you know their most famous creations. Sherlock Holmes and Ebenezer Scrooge are so firmly embedded in our cultural consciousness that they feel

almost like old acquaintances. We know Scrooge, the cold-hearted miser whose remarkable transformation helped shape our modern understanding of Christmas. And we know Holmes, the brilliant, eccentric detective who can unravel the most baffling crimes with a keen eye, a razor-sharp intellect, and an almost irritating ability to be right about everything.

But these two gentlemen have more in common than we might first imagine. Both are loners. Both have spent much of their lives keeping the rest of the world at a comfortable distance. Scrooge hides behind his money, while Holmes hides behind his intellect. Neither is particularly at ease with human emotions, and both have convinced themselves that they can get along perfectly well without

anyone else. As we know from Dickens, however, that sort of thinking can get a fellow into trouble.

A Sherlock Carol takes place in London in 1894, a fascinating time when Victorian society found itself caught between the familiar comforts of the past and the astonishing possibilities of the future. London was a city of extraordinary contrasts: magnificent homes and desperate poverty, elegant drawing rooms and dark, fog-filled alleyways, scientific breakthroughs and an almost insatiable fascination with the supernatural. It was an age when rational inquiry existed quite comfortably alongside spiritualism, séances, mediums, ghostly apparitions, and attempts to communicate with the dearly departed. And really, in a world where electricity could illuminate a room and voices could travel across great distances, was it such

an enormous leap to imagine that the dead might somehow find a way to get in touch?

Interestingly, both Dickens and Doyle were fascinated by these questions, although they came to rather different conclusions. Dickens had a lifelong interest in ghosts and the supernatural but remained largely skeptical of spiritualism. Doyle, on the other hand, became a passionate and thoroughly committed believer.

And here's where things get particularly interesting. In his 1930 book *The Edge of the Unknown*, Doyle recounts a séance during which a spirit claiming to be none other than Charles Dickens apparently offered an explanation for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the novel Dickens left unfinished when he died in 1870. Doyle considered the

encounter possible evidence of an intelligence operating independently of the living participants.

Now, I find something wonderfully ironic about the man who created the world's most relentlessly logical detective turning to a séance to solve an unsolved literary mystery. One can only imagine what Sherlock Holmes himself would have made of the proceedings. I suspect he would have had some rather pointed questions about the witnesses, the evidence, and possibly the lighting.

The year 1894 also happens to be a particularly important one in the world of Sherlock Holmes. In Doyle's *The Final Problem*, published in 1893, Holmes seemingly meets his end alongside his arch-nemesis, Professor Moriarty, at Switzerland's Reichenbach Falls. Doyle had grown tired of his famous detective and hoped to turn his attention to

what he considered more serious literary work. Unfortunately for Doyle, his readers were having none of it. Public outrage eventually helped bring Holmes back from the dead in *The Adventure of the Empty House*, published in 1903 but set in 1894.

And it's at this rather curious moment in Holmes's fictional life that Shanahan chooses to begin our story. The great detective has returned from the dead, but he's not entirely certain what to do with himself. He's restless, disillusioned, and apparently running rather short of mysteries worth solving. Imagine being the most clever man in London and finding yourself completely unable to figure out what to do next. It's a predicament that even the great Sherlock Holmes cannot solve through deduction alone.

And that, of course, is where Dickens comes in.

A Christmas Carol has always been a story about second chances. Dickens reminds us that no matter how far we may have wandered from the people and things that truly matter, it's never too late to find our way back. Shanahan takes that same lovely idea and offers it to Sherlock Holmes. Perhaps the world's greatest detective has one more mystery to solve - that of his own heart.

One of the things I enjoy most about Shanahan's play is the genuine affection he has for these characters and their literary worlds. He isn't trying to reinvent Dickens or Doyle. Instead, he's invited their creations to the same Christmas party and given them something new to talk about. Familiar faces appear in unexpected places, literary references pop up when you least expect them, and there's a generous helping of wit, mischief, and good old-

fashioned theatrical fun. The play also embraces something I particularly love about live theatre: its ability to invite us into a world where imagination can take us just about anywhere, provided we're willing to come along for the ride.

And for me, that's what makes *A Sherlock Carol* such a welcome addition to the holiday season. It gives us an opportunity to spend a little time with characters we love, enjoy a good mystery, share a few laughs, and perhaps discover something about ourselves along the way. Beneath all the cleverness and Christmas cheer is a gentle reminder that friendship, compassion, and human connection are things we all need, even those of us who insist otherwise.

Thank you for spending a little of your holiday season with us at Harlequin Productions. I hope you'll find yourself intrigued, surprised, amused, and perhaps even a little moved. Above all, I hope you'll leave the theatre with a smile on your face and a bit of Christmas spirit in your heart.

Enjoy the show, and may the spirit of the season remind us all that the most important things in life are seldom the things we can count, measure, or deduce.

— Director Gerald B. Browning

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Mark Shanahan is the author of the Off-Broadway comedy *The Dingdond, A Merry Little Christmas Carol*, and is the creator/author of original radio drama for White Heron Theatre and NPR's Ghost Light Series. He is an Edgar Award nominee for his adaptation of *The Chronology Protection Case*, and co-writer of the short screenplay *Kill Me* (Adirondack FilmFest). His directing work has been seen extensively at The Alley Theatre, Westport Country Playhouse, Irish Rep, White Heron, Florida Rep, George Street, Virginia Stage, Penguin Rep, The Fulton, Arkansas Rep, Theatre Squared, Hudson Stage and many more. As an actor, he appeared on Broadway in *The 39 Steps* and *Philadelphia Here I Come!*/ Off-Broadway in *Tryst, The Shaughran, Small World, Checkers, As Bees In Honey*

Drown, and others, and has performed on numerous regional stages. Mark is the curator of the Script-In-Hand and Radio Theatre Series for The Westport Country Playhouse and a faculty member at Fordham University and JWS, teaching courses on Hitchcock, film adaptation, and playwriting. A graduate of Brown University (BA) and Fordham (MA). www.mark-shanahan.net

FEATURED GALLERY ARTIST AIMEE SHREIBER

I paint moths to pay attention and embrace mystery. There are many worlds that exist unnoticed, and my work with moths explores this liminal space between the seen and unseen. Drawn to their intricate patterns, otherworldly colors, and evocative symbolism, I often elevate my small subjects with gold halos and dramatic scale to invite viewers into the hidden realms both outside and within themselves. Moths have become teachers and mirrors that allow me to approach some of life's most baffling difficulties: impermanence, vulnerability and the unknown. Examining these themes through the lens of creatures that display dramatic transformation so gracefully enables me to see further into the energy of hope, intuition, and connection needed during times of change and upheaval.

Drawing inspiration from both nature and mystical traditions, I pair moths with local plant life and devotional imagery like halos because they are symbols designed to make the sacred visible. I have created eight moth painting collections within this larger series over the last five years, each using different background elements and moth characteristics to explore a different theme. I hope to create portals into the overlooked wonders and bewildering beauty that surrounds us while dispelling fear, celebrating curiosity, and discovering the connective threads that unite us with reality and each other.

Aimee Schreiber is an artist, poet, and gallery director of The Copper Wolf in Tumwater, Washington.

A Sherlock Carol

By Mark Shanahan

Directed by Gerald B. Browning

CAST

Sherlock Holmes……..Aaron Lamb*

Ebenezer Scrooge……..…Corey McDaniel

Actor 1……Sam Edgren

Actor 2……Sara Trowbridge

Actor 3……..Henry Talbot Dorset

Actor 4……Helen Harvester

CREATIVE TEAM

Director……..…Gerald B. Browning

Music Director……Stephanie Layton

Scenic Design……..Jeannie Beirne

Costume/Hair/Makeup Design……..…….Gretchen Halle

Lighting Design……Olivia Burlingame

Sound Design……Gina Salerno

Properties Design…….Henry Behrens

Projection Design……..John Serembe

Dialect Coach……..…Leah Fishbaugh

Choreographer……Corey McDaniel

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Manager……..Ashley Winrod

Assistant Stage Manager……..…….Logan Simpson

Dresser/Wig and Wardrobe

Manager…….....Erika Lootens-Bill

TIME & PLACE: London, 1894

SHOW LENGTH: Two hours with one 20-minute intermission

SPECIAL THANKS to The Abigail Stuart House, Volunteer Carpenter Rich Kalman, and Melanie Ransom

*Member of the Actors' Equity Association

Originally produced by Raymond Bokhour and Drew McVety

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CAST

Aaron Lamb* (he/him) - *Sherlock Holmes*

Aaron is the Producing Artistic Director of Harlequin Productions. As an actor, he has worked in Seattle for Village Theatre, Taproot Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Seattle Shakespeare Company, and has worked regionally throughout the country. Aaron was awarded a Seattle Critics (Footlight) Award for his work as Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband* at Taproot Theatre, the Memphis Critics (Ostrander) Award for Best Actor as Jerry in *The Full Monty* at Playhouse on the Square, a Kennedy Center award for Best Actor for his work as Samuel Coleridge in *Grasmere*, and an OC Weekly Award for his work as Peck in *How I Learned to Drive*. Aaron holds an MFA in acting from California State University, Fullerton, a

BA from Washington State University, and is a member of the Actors' Equity Association.

Corey McDaniel (he/him) - *Ebenezer Scrooge/Choreographer*

Corey McDaniel returns to Harlequin Productions after appearing as Christmas Past (& Player 1) in its 2022 production of *A Christmas Carol*. Corey's Harlequin credits also include *I Am My Own Wife* (Charlotte von Mahlsdorf), as well as directing *Baskerville, Falsettos, I Ought to Be in Pictures, Murder for Two, Noises Off, Tenderly,* and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*. He is delighted to return to the Harlequin stage.

Sam Edgren (he/him) - *Actor 1 (Dr. Cratchit, Fezziwig, others)*

Sam Edgren is an actor, writer, maker, and dog-petting enthusiast from nowhere in particular. He holds an MFA in Acting Classical and Contemporary Text from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and is excited to perform with Harlequin for the first time. Some recent credits include Aufidius (*Coriolanus*, GreenStage), Peter and others (*Ten to Places*, Heart Repertory Theatre), Alex Meyers (*The Fifth Wave*, Macha Theatre Works), and Claudio (*Much Ado About Nothing*, Dacha Theatre). When not actively rehearsing, he can usually be found enjoying a cup of tea, a book of poetry, and a friendly dog, ideally simultaneously.

Sara Trowbridge (she/her) - *Actor 2 (Emma Wiggins, Windigate, others)*

Sara is thrilled to be on the boards for the second time at Harlequin, after making her debut in *A Christmas Carol* last year. Favorite roles include: Helga in *Deathtrap* (Woodinville Rep), Anna in *Closer* (SSR), Jane Banbury in *Fallen Angels* (Theater Schmeater), God in *Wild Party* (Sound Theater Company), Sissie Poe in *The Hours of Life* (Theatere22), and Annie Wilkes in *Misery* (SSR). Sara wishes you all a holiday season filled with love, light and laughter.

Henry Talbot Dorset (he/him) - *Actor 3 (Dr. Watson, Mrs. Dilber, others)*

Henry is excited to return to Harlequin, having previously performed in the 2025 productions of *A Christmas Carol*,

Rent and *Romeo & Juliet*. He has been doing theatre since he was seven years old, when he played Theo in *Pippin*. Henry received his training from the musical theatre BFA program at Central Washington University, as well as many instances of practical experience. Some of his favorite roles include Roger DeBris in *The Producers*, The Nurse in Romeo & Juliet and the Sheriff of Nottingham at Center Stage's Panto production of *Robin Hood*. "I'd like to dedicate this performance to my husband. You are my Blue Carbuncle."

Helen Harvester (she/her) - *Actor 4 (Lestrade, Countess, others)*

Helen has performed in 19 previous roles at Harlequin over 15 seasons, including Tracy Lord in *A Philadelphia Story* (2013), Maggie the Cat in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

(2014), Hedda in *Hedda Gabler* (2016), Belinda Blair in *Noises Off* (2020), Marie Antoinette in *The Revolutionists* (2023), and, most recently, Susan Hendrix in this season's *Wait Until Dark*. Regionally, she has performed with Taproot Theatre, Book-It Repertory, Theater Shmeater, Balagan Theater, Centerstage, and Bainbridge Performing Arts. Helen is a 2003-2004 Fulbright scholar, holds a BA in Drama from Vassar College, an MA from the Boris Shchukin State Theatre Institute in Moscow, Russia, and is currently the Marketing and Communications Director for Harlequin

CREATIVE TEAM

Gerald B. Browning (he/him) - *Director*

Gerald has directed over fifty productions in his career. Some of his favorite directing credits include *Buried Child, The Laramie Project, Equus, Into the Woods, Merrily We Roll Along* and Harlequin's 2025 version of *A Christmas Carol*. His production of *The Lisbon Traviata*, at Seattle's Theatre22, was named by the Seattle Times as one of "5 Plays You Need to See in Seattle." Gerald co-wrote and directed a series of three national commercials and has taught workshops on directing and directing new works for numerous organizations. His recent scenic designs for Harlequin include *Wait Until Dark* (Winner - Achievement in Scenic Design, 2026 Sound on Stage Theatre Awards), *The Foreigner* (Nominee - Outstanding Scenic Design -

2026 Gregory Awards) and *RENT*. He's designed locally at Theatre22, Centerstage, and Seattle Public Theatre. He has also served as properties designer for over twenty Harlequin Productions. Gerald has appeared at Harlequin in *Until the Flood, The Highest Tide, Love and Information, The 1940's Radio Hour*, and *The Love List*. Local and regional acting credits: Seattle Shakespeare Company, Taproot Theatre, SecondStory Rep, Mt. Baker Theatre, Theatre at Monmouth (ME), Seaside Repertory Theatre (FL), DC's Keegan Theatre (Helen Hayes Award nomination), the Smithsonian, and the Kennedy Center. He holds a Master's Degree in Directing from the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

Stephanie Layton (she/her) - *Music Director*

Stephanie is delighted to be returning to Harlequin after serving as music director for *Million Dollar Quartet, Sweeney Todd* and *A Christmas Carol*. A multi-instrumentalist & vocalist, her main gig is fronting jazz band Eden Lane, with appearances at the Rainbow Room, Joe's Pub, and Carnegie Hall (technically; it was a very fancy bat mitzvah). Other credits include Williamstown Theater Festival, Florida Repertory Theater, drums/percussion gadgets for Bill Irwin (NYC's Irish Arts Center) and Olympia's 20th anniversary installment of *Lord Franzannian's Vaudeville Spectacular*. Steph recently had the great joy of performing her original musical comedy act "A Word From Our Sponsor" for three weeks at the Seattle Moisture Festival, and is extremely grateful to be making her living in the arts. edenlanejazz.com

Jeannie Beirne (she/her) - *Scenic Design*

Jeannie has worked with Harlequin since 2014 and is delighted to be returning this season. Past designs: *Is This A Room, Sweeney Todd, Cabaret, Falsettos, Hundred Days, Building Madness, Fun Home, Hedwig and the Angry Inch,* 2021 Fall Repertory Season including *A Christmas Carol, Noises Off, Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol, Man of La Mancha, A Doll's House, August: Osage County, Little Shop of Horrors, Hedda Gabler,* and *First Date*.

Jeannie has also enjoyed working with The Olympia Family Theatre, Saint Martin's University, and South Puget Sound Community College. In Missouri, she has designed *Urinetown* and *The Music Man* with Missouri Western State University, and *The Drowsy Chaperone, She Loves*

Me, and *Damn Yankees* for Tent Theater. In Arizona, Jeannie designed Mama and Jack Carew and the world premiere of *Suocera* by Hal Corley at the Theatre Artists Studio and *Big Love* with Kim Weild at Arizona State University. Jeannie holds an MFA in performance design from Arizona State University and a BA in set design from Western Washington University.

Gretchen Halle (she/her) - *Costume, Wig, Hair & Makeup Design*

Gretchen has an MFA in costume design and technology from University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her design work includes: Costume Design for *Our Town* and *The Foreigner* and Hair and Makeup Design for *Wait Until Dark* (Harlequin Productions), Costume Design for *What The Constitution Means To Me* (Boise Contemporary Theatre),

What Would Crazy Horse Do? (Kansas City Rep), *Bernhardt/ Hamlet* (Unicorn Theatre), *As You Like It* (Illinois Shakespeare Festival), and *Henry IV Part 1* (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre). Her technology work includes custom tailoring for the Super Bowl LVIII Halftime Show in Las Vegas, the K-Pop group BlackPink at Coachella, and Dodger Stadium, as well as custom gowns for the background vocalists on the Beyoncé Renaissance Tour.

Olivia Burlingame (she/her) - *Lighting Design*

Olivia is grateful to be designing for Harlequin once again. Olivia has designed in Olympia for the last fifteen years. Some favorites include *Cabaret, The Revolutionists, Hundred Days, Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Man of La Mancha, Little Shop of Horrors, Equivocation*, and *On the*

Verge. Olivia graduated from Central Washington University with a BFA in Theater Design and Technology. She has also worked with Tacoma Opera, Theater Artists Olympia, Olympia Family Theater, Tacoma Arts Live, SMU, SPSCC, and Seattle Children's Theater. Olivia is a proud member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Thank you to all her friends and family!

Gina Salerno (she/her) - *Sound Design*

Since 2005, Gina has worn many hats at Harlequin. Her favorite hats are those of Company Manager, Stage Manager, and Sound Designer. Some of Gina's favorite projects include *The Foreigner, Wait Until Dark, Murder on the Orient Express, Romeo and Juliet* ('25), *Sweeney Todd, A Christmas Carol* ('21-25), *Time Stands Still, The 39 Steps, The Man of La Mancha* (Harlequin), *Border*

Songs (St. Martin's University; Book-It), *Equivocation, Polaroid Stories* and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (St. Martin's University). She thanks Jerry for being The Best, and sends Big Hugs to Andy and Miss Sauce for all the love and support!

John Serembe (he/him) - *Projections Design*

John has designed projection/video for *Hundred Days, Baskerville, A Christmas Carol* (2021 - 2025), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Until the Flood, The Highest Tide, Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Carol*, and *Love and Information* at Harlequin, and for Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* at ART in Los Angeles. John is also the Harlequin graphic designer, and has appeared onstage at Harlequin in shows including *Murder on the Orient Express* (Poirot), *Ken Ludwig's Baskerville, The 39 Steps,*

Hedda Gabler, The Art of Racing In The Rain, The Highest Tide, Little Shop of Horrors, and two of the Stardust series. He has appeared with Nevada Shakespeare in the Park for 10 years, on several Los Angeles stages, and briefly on the tube in *Cheers, Scrubs*, and others. John is a member of SAG/AFTRA and Actor's Equity Association. He is also publisher of Oly Arts magazine.

Henry Behrens (they/he) - *Properties Design*

Henry Behrens is an actor, editor, designer, and cat dad excited to be working with Harlequin Productions for a second time after designing for *Wait Until Dark* earlier this season. They are a member of Dacha Theatre, where they frequently act and design, and have also designed props for Pony World Theatre (*Eulogy, or how to plan your own*

funeral [and have fun doing it], coproduced by the Seattle Rep), Sound Theatre (*The Humans*), and eSe Teatro (*Cornelia's Visitors*). See more of their work and connect at henrybehrens.com.

Leah Fishbaugh (they/them) - *Dialect Coach*

Leah is thrilled to join Harlequin for the first time! A graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, Leah has been passionate about shaping speech patterns and coaching dialects for actors for almost 15 years. When they aren't working dialect magic, Leah owns a small business in Seattle where they are a licensed esthetician. Love to Brandon and all our kitties.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Ashley Winrod (she/her) - *Stage Manager*

Ashley is ecstatic to return to Harlequin! Select stage management credits include *Barefoot in the Park, Wait Until Dark, POTUS, RENT, Is This a Room, A Christmas Carol* (2024, 2025), *What the Constitution Means to Me, Pride and Prejudice* (Harlequin); *Footloose* (Central Theatre Ensemble), being awarded a certificate of merit from The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival; *A Christmas Carol... More or Less* (Lakewood Playhouse); *Barefoot in the Park* (Taproot Theatre). She holds a BFA in Theatre Design and Production from Central Washington University. She would like to thank her wonderful friends and family for their continued love and support.

Logan Simpson (he/him) - *Assistant Stage Manager*

Logan is excited to be returning for his 4th production as Assistant Stage Manager with Harlequin. Recent projects he's worked on include Assistant Stage Manager for *Our Town, Sanctuary City, The Foreigner*, Sound and Light Board Operator for *Wait Until Dark*, Stagehand for *A Christmas Carol* (2025) and *Murder on the Orient Express*, and Spotlight Operator for *Million Dollar Quartet*.

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