HARLEQUIN

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Holmes for the Holidays: Sherlock Meets Scrooge in a Holiday Whodunit

Olympia, WA – October 27, 2026 – Harlequin Productions presents *A Sherlock Carol* by Mark Shanahan, starring Artistic Director Aaron Lamb* as Sherlock Holmes. Gerald B. Browning will direct.

Moriarty is dead, to begin with. And Sherlock Holmes is a haunted man. But, when a grown-up Tiny Tim asks Holmes to investigate the death of Ebenezer Scrooge, the Great Detective must use his gifts to solve a Dickens of a Christmas mystery. Six actors take on the beloved characters of Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens in this heartwarming and highly theatrical holiday treat for all ages.

Mark Shanahan's *A Sherlock Carol* brings together two of English literature's most celebrated creations in one story, weaving Victorian mystery, Christmas ghost story, and literary tribute into a single inventive tale. Director Gerald B. Browning, who is also Harlequin's Director of Production, knows his way around a Dickens classic, having directed Harlequin's *A Christmas Carol* last year. In his Director's Note for the production, Browning describes Shanahan's play as "funny, heartfelt, delightfully clever, and just a little bit zany," and points out that the two famous gentlemen at its center have more in common than we might expect. The two classic characters share a misanthropic disdain for human society, each sure the world could do without him and perfectly happy to return the favor. Both are in dire need of reclamation, redemption, and renewal. As Browning puts it: "*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."

A Sherlock Carol is deeply personal for playwright Mark Shanahan. In his 2022 essay about the play's creation, entitled "A Detective, A Miser, and a Kid in the Back Row," he recalls escaping with his ailing father to Saturday movie double features, where Basil Rathbone's Sherlock Holmes "suggested that somehow, a solution was always on the way - and I believed him." Decades later, he paired Doyle's detective with Dickens's Scrooge, "writing as if I was introducing old friends to each other at a Christmas party - and hoping like hell they'd all get along." His aim was to return the favor: "Now, I felt I would write a play to remind my hero that he, too, could always find a way through hard times." His promise to audiences? "Sherlock Holmes always shows up when you need him most. It's as simple as that. In fact, it's elementary."

Publicity photos: https://harlequinproductions.org/a-sherlock-carol-publicity-photos/

Show page: https://harlequinproductions.org/show/a-sherlock-carol/

Production Information

WHAT: Harlequin Productions presents *A Sherlock Carol* by Mark Shanahan. Directed by Gerald B. Browning.

WHEN: November 27 - December 24, 2026

WHERE: State Theater, 202 4th Ave East, Olympia, WA 98501

TICKETS: Available online at harlequinproductions.org, by phone at 360-786-0151, or in person 12-5:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday at the State Theater Box Office.

General admission: $59
Senior 60+/Military: $55
Student/Youths Under 25: $39
Rush Tickets (2 hours prior to showtime): $29.50 General/$5 Under 20

Early Bird Special: Through October 31, use code **EarlyXmas** for 25% off General admission tickets

SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE:

Opening Night: Friday, November 27 at 7:30 pm
Pay-What-You-Choose: TBA prior to Opening
Community Talkback: Sunday, November 29 at 2:00 pm
Closed Captioning: Sunday, December 6 at 2:00 pm
Audio Described: Sunday, December 20 at 2:00 pm
Closing: Thursday, December 24 at 2:00 pm

CATEGORY: Holiday Mystery Comedy

AGE RECOMMENDATION: All ages

CAST:

Sherlock Holmes	Aaron Lamb*
Ebenezer Scrooge	Corey McDaniel
Actor 1 (Dr. Cratchit, Fezziwig, others)	Sam Edgren
Actor 2 (Emma Wiggins, Windigate, others)	Sara Trowbridge
Actor 3 (Dr. Watson, Mrs. Dilber, others)	Henry Talbot Dorset
Actor 4 (Lestrade, Countess, others)	Helen Harvester

SELECT BIOS:

Gerald B. Browning (Director) 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 holds a Master's Degree in Directing from the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

*Denotes a member of the Actors' Equity Association

A SHERLOCK CAROL is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Dramatists Play Service. www.concordtheatricals.com

Harlequin Productions is a professional not-for-profit theater company in Olympia, WA. We seek to invigorate, educate, and empower our community and all people to feel more, think more, play more, and judge less through the mirror of real live theatre.