

# CENTER STAGE THEATRE

cstheatre@gmail.com

ENTERTAINING WAYNE COUNTY AND BEYOND SINCE 1978

[www.cstheatre.org](http://www.cstheatre.org)

# THE CUE

Center Stage Theatre's Monthly Newsletter  
December 2022 | Issue 11



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# MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS AUDITIONS

JANUARY 2 & 3, 7:00 PM  
THE WAYNE COUNTY MUSEUM  
116 N WILLIAM ST., GOLDSBORO NC

## CAST DESCRIPTIONS:

Hercule Poirot, M, 55-65

Monsieur Bouc, M, 30-59

Mary Debenham, F, 30-40

Hector MacQueen, M, 30-40

Michel the Conductor, M, 35-59

Marcel, M, 35-59

Princess Dragomiroff, F, 60-79

Greta Ohlsson, F, 25-60

Countess Andrenyi, F, 25-39

Helen Hubbard, F, 40-65

Colonel Arbuthnot / Ratchett, M, 35-59

(ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND  
ON THE AUDITION FACEBOOK EVENT PAGE)

## PRODUCTION DETAILS:

February 24th and 25th at 7:30 PM  
February 26th at 3:00 PM

The Wayne County Museum  
116 N William St. Goldsboro, NC

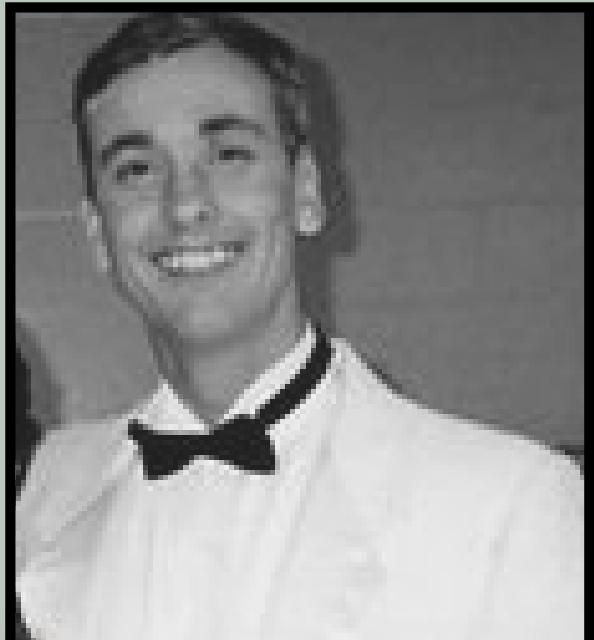
## PRODUCTION CREW:

(AS OF DECEMBER 20TH, 2022)

Director - Gene McLendon  
Assistant Director - Kat Jensen  
Producer - Hannah Smith  
Stage Manager - Vanessa Therrien  
Props - Ann Marshall  
Costumes - Rachel Smith  
Lights - Tom Anderson

THE CREW IS EXCITED TO SEE THE TALENTED  
AUDITIONEES FOR THIS PRODUCTION. IT IS  
SURE TO BE A THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND  
CAPTIVATING PERFORMANCE TO PARTICIPATE  
IN OR WATCH THIS SEASON!

# Member Spotlight



## *Gene McLendon*

When Gene first moved to Goldsboro, he visited the Arts Council, who connected him with the theatre. After performing in plays at ECU, where he obtained a degree in theatre, Gene was excited to continue doing something he was passionate about. After going to a meeting (and seeing the most beautiful girl in the world, Debbie), he decided to join the group. Ever since then, Gene has been a mainstay in the Center Stage world, working both on stage, and behind the scenes. Gene has portrayed many, many characters on stage, but fondly remembers playing Elwood P. Dowd in Harvey, and says it is his favorite role.

However, Gene holds directing close to his heart, and he has been a mentor to several up and coming directors through the years. Gene has even worked closely with aspiring directors during the One Act Play Festival for several years. Having a chance to direct several small pieces with guidance is a great way to get involved and to see if directing is something they can be passionate about. Gene says that if he could do any show, he would choose A School for Wives, and participate both as a director, and as an actor.

Gene would, of course, like to give a shout out to Debbie McLendon for being his partner in comedy. And in drama. Oh, and in horror.

## DECEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Our next meeting is Monday, January 9 at 7 p.m.

- **A Christmas Carol** was a huge success with 1146 tickets sold (school show about 800) and breaking the previous Christmas Carol ticket record.
- Auditions are Jan 2-3 Monday and Tuesday. Gene is inquiring about doing two weekends for his show.
- CST offers a scholarship for anyone going into a theatre arts program. Anyone involved in a CST production can get a theatre cord to wear with their cap and gown
- Sandra needs non-wire hangers for the warehouse!

Join our next meeting for more information!

Membership Fees:

Individual: \$15 per year Family: \$20 per year

Lifetime: \$100 one-time payment



@cstgoldsboro



@cstheatre



[www.cstheatre.org](http://www.cstheatre.org)

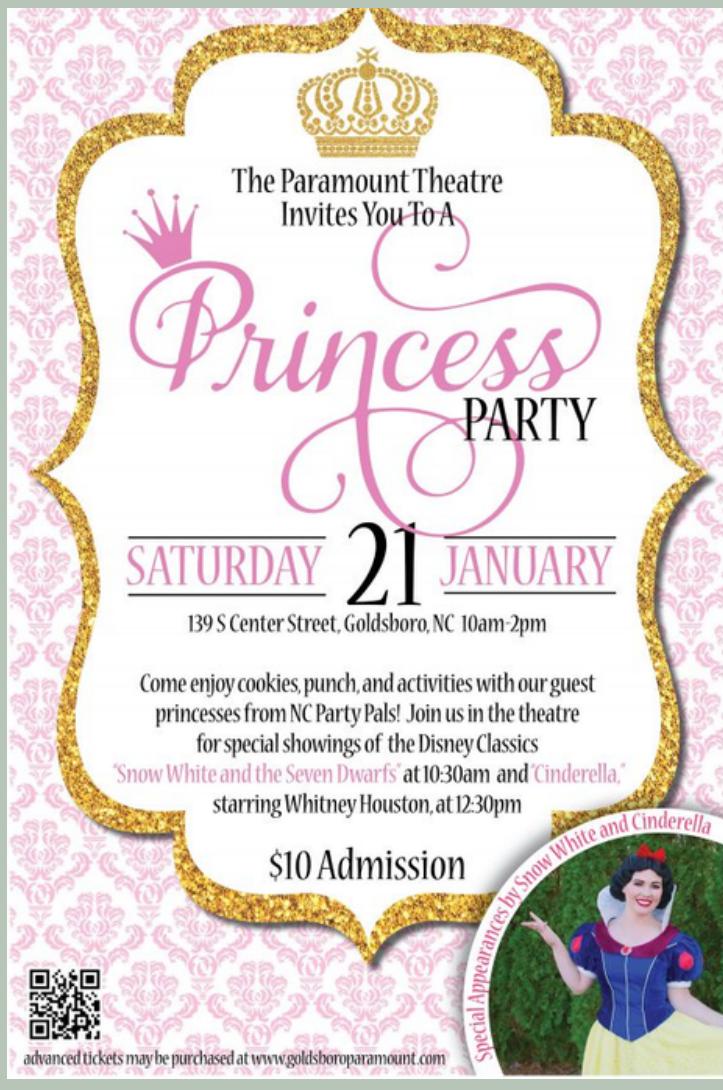
# Play Selection Committee

## A Note from Sandra:

If anybody is interested in being on the committee, please email Sandra at [cstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:cstheatre@gmail.com).

Meetings will begin soon.

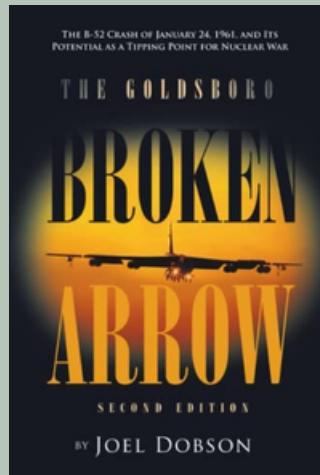
## COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2023



The Paramount Theatre Invites You To A  
**Princess PARTY**  
SATURDAY 21 JANUARY  
139 S Center Street, Goldsboro, NC 10am-2pm  
Come enjoy cookies, punch, and activities with our guest princesses from NC Party Pals! Join us in the theatre for special showings of the Disney Classics "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" at 10:30am and "Cinderella," starring Whitney Houston, at 12:30pm  
\$10 Admission  
Special Appearances by Snow White and Cinderella

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Wayne County Museum  
January 28, 2-4 pm  
Special Speaker Joel Dobson, author of Broken Arrow



# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

DECEMBER 9-11TH, 2022 | GOLDSBORO PARAMOUNT THEATRE



With wonderful acting and really cool special effects (HOW CREEPY WAS THE MARLEY SCENE?!?), this is one "Christmas Carol" that won't be forgotten any time soon!



# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

- Production Pictures by Phillip Rhodes -



# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" Through the Years...

BANKS PEACOCK  
DECEMBER 2022

*For a recent *Language Matters* column in support of *A Christmas Carol*, I asked several people involved in past CST productions of *A Christmas Carol* for the history of the productions, anecdotes about the play, and reflections on what the play has meant to them. Space only allowed me to include excerpts in the column, but the editors of *The Cue* kindly have given me space to include their full responses, with minor editing. So, in no particular order...*

## Gene and Debbie McLendon

Gene and Debbie were nice enough to meet me for lunch, while we discussed past *A Christmas Carol* shows. They provided me with names that I was able to contact for further quotes. Sadly, my notes from the interview are pretty crappy. I'm sorry, but it's Christmas day, I still have the cartoon to finish, so I'm going to include them pretty much unedited and hope they are worth something. Thanks again you two.

CST had previously done *A Christmas Carol* before the streak started in 2008 (See Vincent Bridger's comments below for more on the origins of the ten-year run)

Started streak in 2008 for ten years straight.

2008 was performed at Herman Park.

Samuel French (Play publishing company) provided the play 2008-2009. Wordy, lots of lines. Gene directed

2010 Ruth Mills directed musical Kelsey Grammer version.

2011 Ricky Dills directed professional version

Nathan Bradshaw's script was used for the next six shows.

2012 Gene directed 2012.

2013-2014 Vincent Bridgers directed.

2015 Sandra Evans directed

2016 David Langston directed.

2017 Keith Parrish and Heath Radford directed

2022 Heath Radford directs

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# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" *Through the Years...*

## McLendon Notes Continued:

Scrooges:

2008 Gene McLendon at Herman Park. - He stole the Dr. Smith accent from Lost in Space

2009 Winslow Hoffman

2010 John Clifton--musical version

2011 Keith Davis

2012 Donald Sutton had a ridiculous fake nose. He went along. (More below with pictures!)

2013-2014 Keith Parrish

2015 Gene McLendon

2016 Sue Nobers

2017 Geoff Hulse

2022 Rich Horton

Other Christmas Plays

2018 It's A Wonderful Life

2019 A Christmas Story

2020 A Covid Christmas. Four Actors with Keith Parrish as Scrooge

2021-A Christmas Journey play written by Gene McLendon with carols

## Vincent Bridgers

A Christmas Carol started off as just another Center Stage Theatre show for me. We performed the show on the stage in Herman Park Center, a venue that will forever be attached to CST as it was truly a home for the organization for so many years. I was CST board president at the time, and we soon saw an opportunity to make a holiday tradition for the organization with A Christmas Carol. After talks with the board, the organization as a whole, and a few community members including David Weil with the Paramount Theatre Foundation, we moved forward with it being an annual production. I know things have changed since I left Goldsboro in 2016, but the show went through a few wonderful iterations in the years after that production at HPC.

# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" *Through the Years...*

## Bridgers Continued:

Starting with that first smaller scale production, I ended up being involved in a total of six productions of A Christmas Carol. During that time the show went from a simple licensed play to Hallmark musical to an original adaptation by one of our own CST members at the time, Nathan Bradshaw. I love Nathan's adaptation; plus, it came with added perks like complete creative control and no licensing fees (which can really eat into a small community theatre's budget quickly).

In those years I played Scrooge's nephew, Fred, Young Scrooge, Fred (...again), was an assistant director, and directed the show two years in a row. One of my favorite on-stage memories from the show was having to turn my back to the audience during a school performance to hide laughter when I was playing Young Scrooge and heard an eighth grader blurt out "oooh burn" after my on stage fiancé handed her engagement ring back. Another is having a strange out of body experience as I recited the classic "I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last..." lines as Fred, almost on autopilot, while my attention was drawn to a crew member who decided they just HAD to slightly adjust a set piece during the scene because it was about six inches off its mark.

Being on stage is one thing, but to this day, the opportunity to direct the show was truly one of the most amazing highlights of life so far and a high point from my time in performing arts, as I've had to step away from acting and directing since leaving Goldsboro. I could start listing off names from the literal hundreds of people that made the show possible, but instead I'll just say I'm proud to this day of the incredible casts and crews I had the opportunity to collaborate with.

The show can be a special thing. When brought to life on stage, Charles Dickens' simple novella can bring powerful feelings of anger, sadness, fear, despair, and joy that can truly be unforgettable.

If you can't already tell, I have many fond memories of the show. If pressed, I could probably talk about my Christmas Carol experiences for hours on end. It may sound corny, but the show truly brought me into the Christmas spirit. Before being involved, I was that curmudgeon who never wanted to hear the holiday music, never was big on the Christmas get-togethers, but after being involved so heavily in this production over the years, I welcome all that with a smile.

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# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" *Through the Years...*

## Geoff Hulse

I truly was honored to play Scrooge a few years ago and really appreciated the advice previous Scrooges gave me, but also Gene McClendon who had been involved in so many of the previous productions. I enjoyed camping up the character a little bit but keeping it true to the story, especially as it concerns his transformation upon seeing his own gravestone. It is a wonderful role, taking a bitter hurt old man and allowing him to see what is really important at Christmas and year-round. It was a bonus to have my daughter Hallie play the Ghost of Christmas Past and to share that really cool scene.

## Donald Sutton

My exact memories are foggy, so I started writing freehand with the feelings guiding me. Hope it's usable and fits the bill!

The time I got to spend with Scrooge was irreplaceable. It was, as of this year, a full decade ago for me, and it was, without a question, the largest role I had ever taken on. How daunting, at the time! I spent hours upon hours sitting with the lines, finding just the right hunch in his back, working out how arthritic his hands were, etc.

It's odd, when I look back at almost any other role I've done since 2009, I find things to pick at - "I could've done x," "I could've done y," "I wish I could try z over again" - but not Scrooge. I revisit those memories from time to time, and I just smile at them.

As an actor, I was learning for the first time how to truly trust my choices and, maybe more importantly, trust that the folks around me would be there to catch me if I fell. It was a formative time! And in more ways than just onstage, seeing as how underneath all the prosthetics and makeup, my Scrooge was really a 16-year-old boy learning how to drive, freaking out over college admissions, and wondering who the next Doctor was going to be after the 50th anniversary. You know, classic Victorian England goings-on.

# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" *Through the Years...*

## Sutton Continued:

I wouldn't change a thing about the experience and can't help but be happy anytime my own Ghost of Christmas Past takes me back there. It's a period of time filled with personal growth, sure; but also, unrelenting warmth and love, radiating from the CST family as we all got the privilege of basking in an annual tradition that brought us all together.

P.S. - In the ballroom scene, you could always catch me doing a slowed down version of Gangnam Style if you watched for long enough. Xoxo, we love an easter egg here.

In reply to this, I remarked to Donald that Gene McLendon "said they made you wear a very bad fake nose because you looked so young." Donald replied and sent pictures:

Oh my gosh, not just the nose, but the chin too! If you give me a few minutes, I can dig it up. Sheila Knotts [costumer and backstage guru!] and I learned the hard way the proper ways to use spirit gum for that process--lol; I had a rash for days.



(ABOVE) FOUR SCROOGES: LEFT TO RIGHT -  
KEITH DAVIS, GENE MCLENDON, DONALD SUTTON,  
AND KEITH PARRISH

(RIGHT) NOSE: DONALD SUTTON AS SCROOGE



# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" *Through the Years...*

## Keith Parrish

Center Stage Theater's A Christmas Carol is a show that is very close to my heart. During its ten-year run starting in 2008, I only missed two productions, a record I shared with Gene and Nick Froats. I played at various times a Londoner, Jacob Marley, the Ghost of Christmas Past (twice), Mr. Fezziwig (with my wife Karen by my side as Mrs. Fezziwig) and Scrooge twice. While all of them have fond memories attached to them (in particular having my students from Rosewood MS come to see me perform), it is Scrooge that holds the place closest to my heart.

There are many memories I have of playing the part. One was the time that another actor who had just left the stage went to the rest room, not realizing their microphone was still on. Everyone heard a flushing toilet just as the 12-foot Ghost of Future came on stage. Another was the year that we had a hearing-impaired audience member. During intermission, I asked a cast member how to say Merry Christmas in sign and communicated that during the show.

But by far the most special memory of playing Scrooge was the year I proposed to Karen via my bio in the playbill of the 2014 production. She was taken so by surprise. We went on to have a Christmas Carol-themed wedding where we were married by the Ghost of Christmas Present; the members of CST pitched in and made it a special day for us.

## John Clifton

A major part of my memory about that 2010 production of the musical version of "A Christmas Carol" was the collaboration with Neuse Little Theatre in Smithfield. Ruth Mills came over with a imaginative technical staff, a talented supporting cast, and directed a most entertaining and insightful version of this iconic Christmas production. Of all the 6 productions of this show I have been involved with over the years, this was the best in helping me grow as an actor, and appreciate the importance of a good director.

# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" *Through the Years...*

## Rich Horton

Getting to play Ebenezer Scrooge in the 2022 Center Stage Theatre production of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol has given me pause to look at Scrooge in a way I never have before. I see Scrooge's story as a relatable tale of what can happen to any of us if we let the difficulties of life harden our hearts.

Young Ebenezer endured some hard knocks growing up. He was rejected by his father early in life and sent away to boarding school. He only got to eventually return home at the urging of his sister, whom Ebenezer considered the only person who truly loved him for himself. She later died in childbirth, leaving him feeling heartbroken and alone in the world. Unwilling to risk such hurt again, young Ebenezer slowly learned to shield his inner self by becoming busy with worldly concerns. As the years went by, his armor thickened, causing him to reject the love of his life along the way, and to lose any and all compassion toward his fellow man.

At the opening of the play, old Scrooge is a bitter, cold, selfish old miser who appears to have no sympathy for anyone and to be completely beyond redemption. However, at one point in his encounter with the ghost of Jacob Marley, his deceased business partner, Scrooge cries out for mercy. Surprisingly, mercy comes to him in the form of being able to miraculously relive the major, formative moments of his life that made him who he was, to truly see the people in his life from whom he had shut himself away, and to get a glimpse of what is to come if he does not mend his ways. All this translates into one last chance for redemption, if he will only break down the barriers he has built around his soul and let the transformational love of God and the Christmas season into his heart and into his life.

Any of us can be prone to let worldly cares and concerns rob us of the joy and magic of being part of the human family. The true gift of Christmas, if we will accept it, is to open our hearts to the love that surrounds us and to help us keep that awareness the year through.

# CST'S "A CHRISTMAS CAROL" Through the Years...

## Horton Continued:

Scrooge's story is our story taken to an extreme by master author Charles Dickens, who weaves the magic of Christmas into a timeless tale of mercy, redemption, and enduring love. It is an honor to give voice to this classic character on stage and to help bring home the lesson that none of us are beyond the saving power of God's love.

Here are a few words about finding Scrooge's voice.

*Having never played Scrooge on stage before, I am relying heavily on Director Heath Radford's vision of the story for cues on how to develop Scrooge's character. As an American, though, an even bigger challenge for me has been in finding Scrooge's voice. I was fortunate enough to be stationed in England for almost seven years with the United States Air Force. During that time, I lived in Norfolk, England, and worked in the neighboring county of Suffolk. As a result, in my interpretation of Ebenezer Scrooge's character, a person from the United Kingdom might detect a little bit of Norfolk twang to his speech, along with a few phrases that are typical of the local dialect.*

M

*I hope you have enjoyed these responses. Community theater is not just putting on a show. It touches hearts and changes lives!*

BANKS PEACOCK HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SOME WAY COMMUNITY THEATER SINCE ABOUT 2006. HE HAS SOMEHOW FOUND HIMSELF WRITING FOR IT.

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# THEATRE COMIC BY BANKS PEACOCK



The Ghost of Christmas Present's loss of his throne is Gina's gain, as she gets a really comfy chair in the back hallway...

## Youth Committee Corner

### A Note from Grace:

We had a great turnout of younger actors for "A Christmas Carol." Big shoutout to Isabelle Pullen, Jack D'Entremont, Madison Miller, Elijah Higgins, Gage Landing, Cora Price, Lucas D'Entremont, Skylar Ratliff, Bentlee Campbell, Charles Mayo, Piper Shoop, Neriah Griffin, and Sadie Albright!

We hope to see you all again in future productions!



@cstheatre

# Theatre World: Stay "In the Know"

## Song Recommendation: #AddItToYourPlaylist



## Frank Sinatra's Bio-Musical:

A new musical about the life of Frank Sinatra is currently in the works. The project is being developed by Universal Music Group in association with Tina Sinatra (Frank Sinatra's daughter) and Frank Sinatra Enterprises.

According to press materials, the story of "Sinatra The Musical" begins on New Year's Eve 1942 as a 27-year-old Frank Sinatra readies himself to step on the stage of the famed Paramount Theatre. The musical follows his ascendancy to fame, the ups and downs of his marriage to Nancy, his affair with Ava Gardner, blows to his career, and his determination for a comeback.

There is no public timeline for this musical at this time.

## 2023 Tony Awards Update:

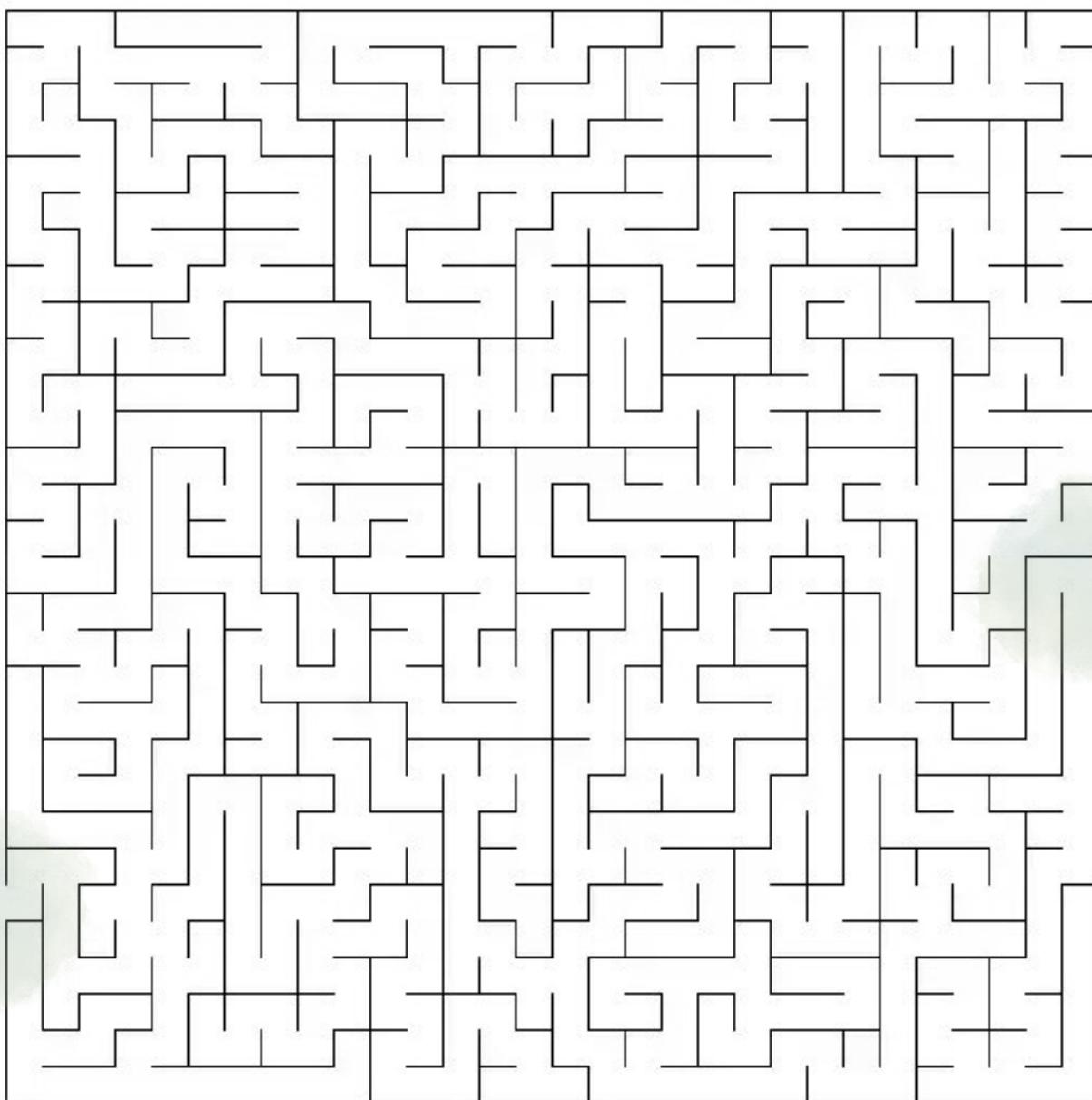
The 76th Annual Tony Awards will take place on June 11, 2023. The ceremony will be held at the uptown New York City venue United Palace, marking the first time the awards have been presented at this theater. The Palace is the fourth-largest performance venue in Manhattan, with a capacity of 3,400 seats.

Nominations will be announced on May 2, 2023.



# SCROOGE'S JOURNEY

Help Scrooge as he walks through town to join Fred for Christmas!



*Do you want your CST Committee featured?*

Easy! Just message [csatheatre@gmail.com](mailto:csatheatre@gmail.com).

"A Christmas Carol" pictures were provided by Phillip Rhodes and also the private production Facebook page.

## MAZE ANSWER KEY



### Sources for Page 6:

Fierberg, Ruthie. (01 December 2022). Broadway News. Frank Sinatra's Bio-Musical in Development.  
<https://broadwaynews.com/2022/12/01/frank-sinatra-bio-musical-in-development/>

Fierberg, Ruthie. (13 December 2022). Broadway News. Tony Awards Sets Date and New Venue for 2023.  
<https://broadwaynews.com/2022/12/13/tony-awards-sets-date-and-new-venue-for-2023>

*Thanks for Reading!*  
- The Editors, Brooke Mayo Shenk & Tamara Baltazar