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One Christmas Carol staged for limited engagement

Dec 09, 2010 12:33 pm | By [Dave Whitfield](#) | Rocky Mountain Outlook

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Yes, it's that time of season, when the airwaves are chock full of seasonal cartoons like the Peanuts gang and classics like Miracle on 34th Street – you've seen them all.

What you haven't seen, though, is actor Joe Morris' solo portrayal of the entire cast of Dickens' classic A Christmas Carol. Morris staged One Christmas Carol at Cornerstone Theatre and Restaurant last year for the first time in the Bow Valley and is offering a pair of repeat performances, Dec. 17-18.

This time around, though, One Christmas Carol will be accompanied by dinner.

Morris was most recently seen as the lead in Pine Tree Player's staging of Lucky Stiff at the Canmore Miners' Union Hall and is a regular in Cornerstone productions.

Over most of the last decade, Morris has performed A Christmas Carol in one form or another, including his theatre company's rendition in an 1830s bed and breakfast in Coburg, ON.

At that time, a maximum audience of 40 would move around the B & B, following the story and cast of up to a dozen as it moved from room to room.

In staging One Christmas Carol, though, Morris has taken on his most challenging theatrical endeavour.

Last year, Cornerstone artistic director J.P. Thibodeau told Morris about a one-man Christmas show he liked and asked if he'd be interested.

"I cried with fear, then said 'sure'," said Morris. "J.P. ordered the script, read it, then handed it to me. I started in on the script and realized it was by far the biggest project I'd done."



submitted
Joe Morris in One Christmas Carol.
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He started memorizing the script in July, while working on other shows, and at the beginning of November, 2009, gave it all his attention. "Then I really started to hone in on it.

"It's the most difficult thing I've done, by far, theatrically, and the most physical and emotionally draining. At the end of a show, I'm drained."

This year, in capturing the 33 characters in *One Christmas Carol*, Morris said it's another challenge. "All the characters are in my head, it's just a matter of accessing them.

"And I think it's more exciting this year, because I took a look at last year and said, 'I climbed a mountain last year' and this year I want to put my name on it.

"The second time around, you can bring out the things you wish you had done last year. This year, the characters will be more distinct and broader. It's just one costume, three chairs, lighting and sound. The play is brought to life through that.

"The thing is, the play is so well known and popular and still loved today that the concern is if you can do it justice. There is a hysterical undercurrent and the sadness of the Cratchits, the ghosts and the history of Scrooge and Marley."

Morris would like to see *One Christmas Carol* as an annual event, but that will largely depend on sales and how this year's edition, complete with family-style dinner, fares.

Tickets are available through Cornerstone by visiting www.atthecorner.ca

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