



Great Stories Alive!

Performance with Passion & Purpose

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DickensChristmasCarol.net

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Actor Al LePage and Dickens' *Christmas Carol* show to debut on *OPB* radio stations this Christmas eve *New version of old classic crafted by the actor as a one-man performance, with a twist of history, to be heard throughout Oregon this holiday season*



"Englishman Thomas Hutchinson" (Al LePage) brings the classic holiday story to life as a new radio program based on the historic script, "done like Dickens!" Photo: David Krapes

Dickens' Christmas Carol comes alive by Portland actor Al LePage as he takes you back in time to the Victorian Age itself with "Englishman Thomas Hutchinson" on Christmas Eve! This shortened one-man "solo" version is based on Dickens' own historic script, and LePage does it -- just like Dickens did -- simply by using his voice, facial expressions, and animated gestures to create all 18 characters -- accents and all -- plus some of the sound effects, too! From Scrooge to Tiny Tim, from Marley's Ghost to Mrs. Cratchit, there's howls and growls, bangs and bongs, plus music and a song. The program premieres on Dec. 24th at 8 with a repeat performance at noon on Christmas day, specially produced by *Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) Radio*. The program will also be offered as a podcast from December 15-31.

"Start the Time Machine," begins actor Al LePage, "we're going for a ride! Where? The Pacific Northwest, of course, and let's not forget the Gold Rush in California, too. You see, we're heading back to what could be called the 'Victorian age' of the American West. Why? To set the stage, so to speak, with just a sprinkle of history to begin everything. And who? Why an 'Englishman,' of course, who else would be telling the story of Dickens' Christmas Carol? The really interesting question, though, is . . . how? The answer, just like Dickens did! I not only use his acting style, but also a script I developed by editing the public reading version he himself performed."

LePage's motivation – and vision – for his dramatic readings of Dickens' great story can best be summed up in two words from a scene near the end of the Carol itself, "won-der-ful happiness!" He believes bringing history to life by portraying someone from the past is a very powerful and intimate way to engage people, and connect them with the history of where they live. Great stories can make people more aware of the reality around them, connecting them with other people and within themselves, both for greater understanding and compassion. Live drama can bring these great stories to life in a way that provides both entertainment and insight. So, his performances not only give him an opportunity to use his talents but also give to others.

"Sure I'm performing," says LePage, "but it's really much more than just that for me. I want to be entertaining and tell a good story, of course, but I'm really preaching, too, you see. There's such a rich story here with lots of great messages – like generosity, the idea one can change, gratitude – messages of love and joy and . . . hope. And aren't these the kind of things that bring real happiness? So, it's like being able to give one of the best sermons I've ever heard in my life, over and over again! I'm on fire! It feels so meaningful. If people are entertained, that's great, if there inspired to greater happiness within themselves and for others, then that's even better. The new radio program, of course, allows me to share the story with a much greater audience, with everyone who lets me visit this holiday season."

Listen in this holiday season to "Englishman Thomas Hutchinson, Traveling Thespian," portrayed by actor Al LePage, for some lively laughter and heartfelt tears, for a performance with passion and purpose.

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Al LePage, actor/producer of Great Stories Alive!, began bringing history to life through improvised portrayals of real people from the past for over eight years at historic sites, museums, and other venues throughout the Pacific Northwest. He's written and produced his own one-man show historical dramas, and appeared on the nationally televised PBS "History Detectives" series in roles ranging from a bartender to Robert E. Lee. Addressing the Oregon House of Representatives on history and government as one of its early pioneer legislators has been one of the highlights of his career as well. He's also been giving dramatic reading performances of *A Christmas Carol* to benefit charity in the United States and Canada since 2006. This holiday season he'll be performing on location in Boston where Dickens himself did during his 1867 American tour at the historic Omni Parker House Hotel and also both when, on the same exact calendar date, and where the famed author did, too, at 88 Tremont Street, in today's Converse Hall. He's already looking ahead to next year, when he'd like to perform the Carol in England, just like Dickens!