

# NO HUMBUG HERE

'TIS THE SEASON FOR LAUGHTER WITH 'SCROOGED IN ASTORIA'

By **PATRICK WEBB**  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

**C**harles Dickens nailed it. “There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor.”

Cue the Astor Street Opry Co.

“Scrooged in Astoria” opens Friday, Nov. 30, and runs four weekends through Saturday, Dec. 22.

The show tells a similar story to Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” He is a devout miser until the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future appear to pry his tight-fisted hand from the grindstone.

This ASOC version is revamped in the style of an old-style TV show — complete with commercial interruptions. Scrooge is Max Krooke, Jr., the returning villain from “Shanghaied in Astoria.”

The play has been an Astoria holiday fixture for 12 years. It takes up the story of the characters in the company’s summer show “Shanghaied” some dozen years later. It was written and first directed by Judy Niland of Astoria and features original music by Phil Morrill. More recent productions were coordinated by Bill Carr, another ASOC stalwart.

“My goal for ‘Scrooged’ is to connect the audience to their personal memories of a good old-fashioned time of being home for the holidays,” Niland said. “I filled it with sentimental songs, togetherness, a house full of bright holiday decor, along with a few laughs and surprises, hoping in the end you’ll walk away with a warm fuzzy feeling that can make your spirit bright.”

This production is co-directed by Stephanie Osborn and her husband, Jon Osborn. Their daughter, Melody, appears an angel — at just 17 weeks old — and Jon’s father, Jim Osborn, appears, too.

Stephanie Osborn’s involvement began seven years ago. Though she had sung in choirs since fourth grade, she had never acted. She was cast in “Scrooged” when she and Jon were dating and contributed to subsequent productions, acting and backstage doing lights, costumes, hair and make-up.

## ‘A circus’

While appearing as key characters Eric and Virginia during “Shanghaied” a while ago, Jon interrupted a curtain call to kneel and propose marriage, cheered on by cast and audience; naturally, their wedding was



COLIN MURPHEY PHOTO

From left: Maddison Beauparland, Nate Bucholz, Zachary Sandoval, Shasta Stolle and Stephanie Osborn during a rehearsal of ‘Scrooged in Astoria.’

## IF YOU GO

Astor Street Opry Co.  
Holiday Musical Melodrama  
“Scrooged in Astoria!”

**Where:** ASOC Playhouse, 129 W. Bond St., Astoria

**When:** 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays,

held at the playhouse.

Stephanie Osborn will play Miss Yul Macie, the Ghost of Christmas Presents, a role originated by long-serving ASOC

Nov. 30 through Dec. 22; 2 p.m. Sunday matinees, Dec. 9 and 16.

Tickets online at [www.asocplay.com](http://www.asocplay.com)

Seats Fridays are \$10. Saturday and Sunday tickets, \$20 front row, any age, \$15 adult and \$10 children.

talent ChrisLynn Taylor.

Taylor has written the commercials, is helping with music while coaching Osborn.

Describing her delight before a rehears-

al, Osborn conceded directing was new. “I’m learning,” she said. “There’s a lot of work in this play.” She has cast 10 children aged 17 months to 17. “It’s a circus in here most nights . . . I absolutely love it! I have a fantastic cast.”

## Max Krooke Jr.

Zach Sandoval, an enthusiastic contributor to ASOC, won the lead role of Max Krooke Jr.

“It’s kind of a challenge to memorize my own lines,” he said, reflectively, when asked about playing his first lead.

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