

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
October 22, 2007

VENUE: 533 Sutter Street, @ Powell  
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### MRS. BOB CRATCHIT'S WILD CHRISTMAS BINGE

By Christopher Durang

Directed by Joy Carlin

**Opens (Press Night) December 1, 2007 through January 12, 2008**

The POWER of CONNECTIONS

San Francisco, CA (October, 2007) – SF Playhouse (Bill English, Artistic Director; Susi Damilano, Producing Director) are pleased to announce casting for the San Francisco Premiere of *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* by Christopher Durang.

This zany Christopher Durang play turns Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol on its ear, systematically and hilariously deconstructing the turgid holiday rituals that stand in the way of true connections. As director, Joy Carlin, a veteran of Christmas Carols at ACT will bring her vast experience to this affectionate send-up of the Dickens masterpiece.

Joan Mankin\* stars as Mrs. Bob Cratchit and Victor Talmadge\* as Scrooge, additional cast includes, Keith Burkland, Lizzie Calogero, Olivia Scott Dahrouge, Jean Forsman, Arthur Keng, Henry Kinder, Gideon Lazarus, Madeleine Pauker, Cathleen Riddley\*, Brian Degan Scott, Megan Smith\*, Terry Rucker. (\*appear courtesy of Actors Equity).

Terry Rucker will provide Musical Direction. Designers include: Brandi Bishop, Christianna Gunn (properties), Kim A. Tolman (set), Valera Coble (costumes), Steven Klems (sound), Jon Tracy (lights).

*Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* is a playful, cracked look at the perennial Dickens Christmas classic about mean Ebenezer Scrooge and his discovering the true meaning of Christmas through the visitation of Three Ghosts. In Durang's giddy version, the Ghost's magic is off, consistently transporting Scrooge and the Ghost to the wrong time and place. Mrs. Bob Cratchit – no longer loving and long suffering, is in a rage: She's sick of Tiny Tim (the goody-goody crippled child), she hates her twenty other children (most of them confined to the root cellar), including oversized Little Nell, and she wants to get drunk and jump off London Bridge. As the Ghost loses more control, the plot morphs into parodies of Oliver Twist, "The Gift of the

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*Continued:*

Magi” and It’s a Wonderful Life. And to make matters worse, Scrooge and Mrs. Bob seem to be kindred souls falling in love. With a dénouement that is two parts Touched by an Angel and one part The Queen of Mean, Scrooge’s tale of redemption and gentle grace is placed squarely on its head.

**For tickets** \$38 regular, and \$20 preview performances) or more information, the public may contact the SF Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596**, or visit **www.sfplayhouse.org**, **TicketWeb.com**, or the **TIX** box office on Union Square.

**CHRISTOPHER DURANG** is a playwright whose plays include *A History of the American Film* (Tony nomination, Best Book of a Musical, 1978), *The Actor’s Nightmare*, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You* (Obie award; off-Bway run 1981-83), *Beyond Therapy* (on Broadway in 1982, with Dianne Wiest and John Lithgow), *Baby with the Bathwater* (Playwrights Horizons, 1983), *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* (Public Theatre, 1985; Obie award, Dramatists Guild Hull Warriner Award), *Laughing Wild* (Playwrights Horizons, 1987), *Durang/Durang* (an evening of six plays at Manhattan Theatre Club, 1994, including the Tennessee Williams’ parody, *For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls*), *Sex and Longing* (Lincoln Center Theatre production at the Cort Theatre, 1996, starring Sigourney Weaver), and *Betty’s Summer Vacation* (Playwrights Horizons, 1999; Obie award).

His most recent works are *Mrs. Bob Cratchit’s Wild Christmas Binge*, which premiered at City Theatre in Pittsburgh in 2002. And the musical *Adrift in Macao*, with music by Peter Melnick and book and lyrics by Durang, which premiered at New York Stage and Film in summer 2002, and is under option for off-Broadway 2003-04.

Durang is also a performer, and acted with E. Katherine Kerr in the N.Y. premiere of *Laughing Wild*, and with Jean Smart in the L.A. production. He shared in an acting ensemble Obie for *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*; and with John Augustine and Sherry Anderson has performed his crackpot cabaret *Chris Durang and Dawne* at the Criterion Center, Caroline’s Comedy Club, Williamstown Summer Cabaret, and the Triad, winning a 1996 Bistro Award. In the early 80s,

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he and Sigourney Weaver co-wrote and performed in their acclaimed Brecht-Weill parody, *Das Lusitania Songspiel*, and were both nominated for Drama Desk awards for Best Performer in a Musical. In 1993 he sang in the five person off-Broadway Sondheim revue, *Putting It Together*, with Julie Andrews at the Manhattan Theatre Club. And he played a singing Congressman in the Encores presentation of *Call Me Madam* with Tyne Daly at City Center. In movies, he has appeared in *The Secret of My Success*, *Mr. North*, *The Butcher's Wife*, *Housesitter*, and *The Cowboy Way*, among others.

He has a B.A. from Harvard College, and an M.F.A. in Playwriting from Yale School of Drama. In 1995 he won the prestigious three-year Lila Wallace Readers Digest Writers Award; as part of his grant, he ran a writing workshop for adult children of alcoholics. In 2000 he won the Sidney Kingsley Playwriting Award. Since 1994 he has been co-chair with Marsha Norman of the Playwriting Program at the Juilliard School in Manhattan. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild Council.



**Joy Carlin** (Director) An actor and director at A.C.T. since 1969, Joy served as its Associate Artistic Director from 1987 - 1992. From 1981-1984 she was an Actor and Resident Director at the Berkeley Rep and served as its Interim Artistic Director from 1983-1984. At the SF Playhouse she has appeared in *Kimberly Akimbo* and directed *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*. Her directing credits at A.C.T. and Berkeley Rep include *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, *Golden Boy*, *Marco Millions*, *Hapgood* and the world premiere of Jane Anderson's *Food and Shelter*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Awake and Sing*, *Too True To Be Good*, and *Beyond Therapy*. At the Aurora Theatre she directed *Rocket to the Moon*, *Nora*, *Benefactors*, *Dublin Carol*, *The Old Neighborhood*, *The Price*, *Bosoms and Neglect* and *Hysteria* and she has also directed productions at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Seattle's A Contemporary Theater, and the Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe where she directed *You Can't Take It With You*. Ms. Carlin is the recipient of the 1997 Bay Area Critics Circle Barbara Bladen Porter Award for continued excellence in her career as Actor and Director.

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*Continued:*

Founded by **Bill English and Susi Damilano** in 2003, **SF Playhouse** is Union Square's intimate, professional theatre. Using professional actors and world class design, the SF Playhouse, which won the Bay Guardian's 2006 Best Off Broadway Theatre Award and about which the *San Francisco Chronicle* raved, "San Francisco's newest theatre isn't just another tiny stage carved out of a storefront . . . its an enticing introduction to a new company," has become an intimate theatre alternative to the traditional Union Square theatre fare, garnering 20 Bay Area Theatre Critic nominations in its first year. Providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theatre lovers converge, SF Playhouse, hailed as a "small delicacy" by *SF Weekly* and "eclectic" by the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, strives to create works that celebrate the human spirit.

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**Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge**  
**by Christopher Durang**  
*Continued:*

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** Bring in the Holidays with the San Francisco Premiere of Christopher Durang's  
*Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge!*

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**DATES:** Previews: **November 28, 29, 30, 2007**  
Open: **December 1, 2007**  
Close: **January 12, 2008**

**SHOWS:** Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., plus Saturdays 3p.m.

**WHERE:** **The SF Playhouse**  
533 Sutter Street (one block off Union Square, b/n Powell & Mason)

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$38 regular, \$20 previews) or more information, the public may contact the SF Playhouse box office at **415-677-9596, TicketWeb.com.**