

Actor celebrates a decade as Scrooge

By Lindsay Norman

Kim Bennett has been a professional actor for the last 25 years, but playing Scrooge has provided him with a sense of family.

During this holiday season the Herberger Theater Center will host the 18th season of "A Christmas Carol" starring Bennett, who has played Scrooge for the last 10 years.

Bennett said he realized he loved acting and the theater in high school. He went on to study theater in college at the University of Washington where he was accepted to Professional Actors Training. He graduated with a BFA in theater.

It was then that he also met his future wife Nancy, who also had a love for acting.

When the couple relocated to Phoenix in 1999 for her career as a Starbucks executive, Bennett found the Actors Theatre and became Scrooge.

Bennett said he loves this character.

"He goes through an arc...he starts out as an old miser and finds redemption in the end," he said.

"This is invigorating and exciting as an actor."

Bennett has played such other leading roles as Sherlock Holmes, Cyrano de Bergerac and Antonio Salieri.

He said he chooses roles based mostly on friendships and loyalty.

"I have gotten really lucky because I have been offered some pretty cool roles," but he said if a friend asked him to take a role he would almost always say yes.

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Kim Bennett has hoisted Tiny Tim, this year played by Casey Likes, for a decade as Scrooge in the Actors Theatre's production of A Christmas Carol.

Scrooge

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One such friend is artistic director Matthew Wiener.

Wiener runs Actors Theatre, which rents space and has performed in the Herberger Theater in downtown Phoenix for the last 20 years.

He personally casts all the characters in his productions. He especially likes "A Christmas Carol" because, "It never gets old," and, "It has a great message that we all have the ability to change our lives and those around us."

He said he always looks forward to getting the crew back together for the production as many of the actors have been playing the same roles for many years.

Jenny Hintze joined the cast when she was 12 and played a beggar child. Now at 26 she is coming back to the show to play Scrooge's lost fiancé, Belle.

Hintze said the show has changed some since she was a child, "It used to be a very dark play, now it is bright and happy, which is great around the holidays."

"It really is a reminder of what Christmas is all about," Hintze said.