

Workshop Descriptions for Dickens Christmas Fair 2009

Orientation I - A Beginners Guide to Life and Times in Our London: David Batzloff

This workshop will provide a brief overview of mid 19th century London life, pointing out some significant historical happenings and people. We'll also cover some who's who, and what's where in our recreation of Dickens' London. This workshop is NOT intended for people that have been recent participants of the fair, if you've taken orientation in the last five years, please skip this workshop and leave room for the new folks. Thanks.

Orientation II - All You Need to Know about Dickens Fair – A Survival Guide: Bob Collier & Paul Sinasohn

This is an introduction for first-timers to what really happens behind the scenes. We'll tell you what you need to do first, how you can communicate with us online and who's who. We'll show you how to get around the Cow Palace and we'll fill you in on the basics of your daily routine – backstage, parking, meals, passes, security, closing routine and lots more. You'll learn what to expect on that huge stage we call “The Streets of London” and how to stay healthy while having fun and entertaining our patrons.

Children's Workshop: Surry Blackburn

This workshop is for children aged from 5 -14 to help them learn the characters of Fair; how to meet and greet their elders and the visiting public. There will be time for games, learning a song or two, how to bow and curtsy and make their own Fair toy. They will also learn how they may safely spend their fair day.

Victorian Speech: Hilary Ayer

If you aren't speaking Cockney (or another regional English dialect), Scots, Irish or "foreign", this is the class you need to take. Includes structure and pronunciation of English, how to pay a compliment - and the reverse, how to find out the name of that pretty lady in red... all the basics.

Cockney Basics - Surrey Blackburn

If you are new to playing a Cockney character, this is the workshop for you! Surrey will teach you the basics of Cockney English, as well as help you find a name for your character and the street where you live. New actors are encouraged to take Advanced Cockney after taking this class.

Advanced Cockney - Carrie Smith

In Carrie's class, we'll explore the more subtle aspects of the sounds of Cockney, as well as discuss various slang and how to make it accessible to our audience. You'll also get a feel for the Cockney's love of language and confident swagger. You'll leave this class knowing how to talk to anyone, high class or low! Prerequisite: Cockney Basics or by invitation. Carrie is also available to work with Cockney groups during rehearsals (2:30-5:30, by appointment).

Dialects Coaching - Carrie Smith:

Coaching for an array of British Isles dialects is being offered during rehearsals (2:30-5:30, by appointment). Please inquire immediately before or after advanced Cockney.

Scots & Irish Dialects: Elheran Francis & Joshua Haiman/Pat Gentry, Shannon Bennett & Shirleigh Brannon

This workshop will cover background and characteristic features of both Scots and Irish dialects of English, along with some specialized vocabulary. If your character is either Scots or Irish, this class is for you.

Physical Characterization, Dickens Style: Therese Porter/Rydell Downward

We will discuss techniques to develop and maintain a completely realized Dickens character, physically and emotionally. Knowing the character with the mind is only the first step – the actor then has to use skills, training and experience to bring the character alive. By using the body to convey class and station, physical and emotional state, manners and employment, actors can ensure that, before they even open their mouths, the audience will be interested in the character and the Victorian world. We will cover ways to develop internal "fuel" for the character in the form of a "hook," something that assists the actor to find and present the character, to show the audience who that character is and what distinguishes that individual from the rest of the panorama in the streets.

Character Lab: Therese Porter/Rydell Downward

(Physical Characterization is a prerequisite for this class)

Step into the Laboratory of the Body! This is the opportunity to explore, hone and put into practice the physical nuances of your character in a full participation workshop to be taken after the Physical Characterization class (which is mostly lecture and demo). From theoretical to physical in 60 (give or take a few) minutes!

Improv I: Ana Elizondo – (A 2 hour workshop)

(Physical Characterization is a prerequisite for this class – limited to 20 participants)

Actors will broaden learned improv skills through introduction to & practices of long form improv. The difference between long form and short form improv will be introduced. (Short form is games, & Long form is scenes or plays.) The basic rules of improv will be taught. (Character. Relationship. Objective. Where. – The C.R.O.W. & the use of “Yes, and”.) We will practice what we've learned through long form improv scene work.

Improv II: Ana Elizondo – (A 2 hour workshop)

(Physical Characterization and Improv I are prerequisites for this class – limited to 20 participants)

Actors will learn how to use improv to their benefit as their character in the Dickens Fair. A brief synopsis will be given of what was previously learned in the preceding workshops. Then we'll learn how to break the “Yes, and” rule properly, how to incorporate learned improvisation skills into Dickens' Victorian England as our character (we'll improvise scenes from our book or history), and how to use improv skills to converse with patrons in character.

Meet & Greet: Paula Christensen

Develop an all around tool kit for Meet & Greet. Learn to be aware of the kind of character you are. Learn to perceive territorial space, how to approach a customer, to perceive the nature of the customer you're approaching, and to pay attention to body language. Learn how to enter and to exit a conversation, what to say in a conversation, the “dos and don'ts” of customer interaction and how to handle trouble if it arises. Learn how to interact with them as fellow Londoners.

Don't Know Much About Dickens: Amy Liebert

Not quite sure who Nicholas Nickleby is, or why we're all so preoccupied with Debtor's Prison? Wish you knew just who all these colorful folks on the streets of London are, and how to talk to them? We'll cover a basic outline of the life of Charles Dickens as well as some of his works portrayed here at the Dickens Fair. You'll get an introduction to both the general themes and archetypes found in Charles Dickens' life and works, as well specific plot lines and characters, to be used from a performer's standpoint. Become familiar with, and comfortable moving and interacting in Dickens' London.

Scandals of the Period: Hilary Ayer

If you were alive in Victorian times, one of your chief sources of pleasure would be gossip. But what would you be gossiping about? And what would it sound like? As befits a group with a strongly developed Sense of Sin, Victorians of all classes loved talking about the private lives of -- other Victorians of all classes! Hear about the weekly newspaper "Divorce Court", about the Great Railroad Swindles and the Hunger Riots. What IS "Criminal Conversation"? ... "Inheritance Powder"? Your character has an opinion about these things - know what it is!

Costume Workshop: Liz Martin/Juliana Bradley – (A 2 hour workshop)

The Costume workshop includes all the particulars for dressing in London for the years 1840-64, our Dickensian period. This includes men, women, and children all classes and social stations, accessories, hairstyles, and footwear, and some history on why fashions of the times evolved as they did. Color charts and silhouettes will be available for perusal. Patterns, fabric and trim swatches may be adjudicated for approvability and ease of construction. Advice freely dispensed on repair, cleaning, and retrofitting of old costumes. After a short talk, the floor will be open to Q&A. Specific questions and helpful demonstrations may be scheduled for private or small group conferences and tutorials at other times. This is aimed at both new and experienced Dickensian participants.

Special costume workshops: “**Thrift Store Dickens**”, “**Thrift Store for Children**” and “**The Scum Look**” will be offered on single days; taught by Liz Martin, Alexandria Volk and Vicky Nebeker. *See the schedule.* “**Distressing Clothes**” will be taught 3rd Saturday at the Cow Palace.

Victorian Millinery: Alexandria Volk

Find or make just the right hat and decorate it appropriately. A Millinery Lab will follow this workshop – come work on your hat.

1850s-60s -- Hair Styles for Women: Bridget Bradley-Scaife

There can be lots of variation for hairstyles during the Mid-Victorian Era, but there was also a general look. This class will demo how to style your hair for the 1850s-60s with the use of hairpieces. You will also learn the basics of hairpieces, such as how to match your hair color, where to buy, and even how to make your own.

Invisibe Makeup: Denise Guterrez

Freshen up on your basic stage make-up methods. Learn some fun tips and basic transformative techniques and how to make it look like there's no makeup at all. Class will include application, some facial transformation and character make-up. Men are highly encouraged to take this workshop. **Note:** Makeup class participants are asked to bring a freestanding mirror if they have one, as well as their own makeup and brushes IF they have them.

Songs of The Times, Place, and Season: Bob & Terri Crabb

Songs of the time and the season - and a quick refresher in how not to trash your voice. We will learn and sing some important songs and some just for fun. There will be an emphasis on songs of the season with a bit of history thrown in for good measure.

Hallelujah Chorus: Bob & Terri Crabb

How to sing along with the Hallelujah Chorus on your appropriate part for your vocal range. For everyone, not just for those of you who read music.

Dance (Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced): Cathleen Myers

VICTORIAN DANCE 1: Focusing mainly on our two most popular dances: the Mid-Nineteenth century rotary waltz, and polka. We'll also briefly cover the galop (the world's simplest dance) and essential march figures. The workshop is intended for those with little or no experience with Victorian dance and also for those wishing a review or practice in teaching the dances.

VICTORIAN DANCE 2: Intermediate level Mid-Nineteenth century rotary waltz variations (footwork and partnering), the Military Schottische, Polka Mazurka, Polka Redowa, the Esmeralda, and a review of The Congress of Vienna Waltz.

Prerequisite: Dance 1 or equivalent experience. Students should already be comfortable with the turning waltz and polka.

VICTORIAN DANCE 3: Advanced Victorian Waltz, Polka and Mazurka variations, the Lancers Quadrille and our new Fezziwig set dances – "The Northdown Waltz," "Le Russe Quadrille," and "Mr. Pickwick's Fancy" (actually described in The Pickwick Papers!). Depending on the students' prowess and interest, other dance choreographies could include the Varsouvienne, the Redowa Waltz, La Cachuca, and the Bohemian National Polka, and the class will be tailored to fit the students' areas of interest and level of experience since this can vary from day to day! Prerequisite: Dance 2 or equivalent experience and complete comfort with the waltz and polka.

Dark Garden Window Workshop: Autumn Adamme

Dark Garden Unique Corsetry will once again be staging Live Mannequins in our window displays. The Dark Garden corset modeling workshop this year will be required of "new" models only. **If you are interested in modeling for us this year, but did not model last year, or if you modeled for the first time last year, please plan to attend this workshop.** Our experienced models need only turn in a completed model worksheet to Miss McAvoy at the Dark Garden booth in the Cow Palace on dress rehearsal Sunday, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. (See note below.)

Dark Garden Corset Lacing Workshop

Have you been asked to lace a lady, only to find your fingers tangled in knots? This workshop will debunk corset myths and educate you as to the proper ins and outs of ribbon and grommet. This workshop will include hands-on practice with real corsets and offers vital information gleaned from over 20 years corset lacing experience. (See note below.)

Note: The Dark Garden workshops are only given once, 2nd and 3rd periods respectively: Saturday, November 7th.

Beverage Workshop: Carol Goodman

A required preparation workshop for Beverage personnel only. **Offered only once – during rehearsal sessions (3:30-5:30) on first day, November 7th. -- Room G.**