

Live webcast of Sherlock Holmes Christmas story

By John Farrell

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At a time when Christmas stories are a dime a dozen, it's nice to know there are still tales that are more about adventure than seasonal cheer.

One such piece, a classic, is "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," the one Sherlock Holmes story set in the season of forgiveness; the one Christopher Morley, noted author and founder of the Sherlock Holmes society the Baker Street Irregulars more than 70 years ago, called "The Christmas story without slush."

Among Sherlockians it is a sometime tradition to read the story as an anodyne to the season: rationality amid the Christmas of Charles Dickens.

The Long Beach Shakespeare Company has managed to get hold of both ends of that stick, having just finished a run of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" at its Richard Goad Theatre and now presenting at the same venue, in a live web broadcast at 8 tonight, "Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle."

Not incidentally, this evening's hour-long production stars Richard MacPherson, the man who was Scrooge in the earlier performances.

"Blue Carbuncle" will inaugurate Long Beach Shakespeare's series of monthly live audio webcasts, presented in the same way radio was done in the golden age, with sound effects and live music.

The productions, featuring new adaptations of classics, also will be broadcast live at www.lbshakespeare.org and will be available later as podcasts and as

downloads to be listened to via computer.

"Blue Carbuncle" is one of the best known and most beloved of the 60 stories Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote about Sherlock Holmes, one of the first series of short stories that made Holmes world famous.

In the story, Holmes, using only a battered and stained hat recovered by a client, finds the hat's owner and uncovers a sensational crime in the process, finally allowing the criminal, now repentant, to go free in the spirit of the season.

"We've done these broadcasts before, and they have proved very popular," said



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company artistic director Helen Borgers, who adapted the story.

The company did a presentation of Orson Welles' version of "The War of the Worlds" live in October.

After "Blue Carbuncle" in the monthly series will be "Harry Lime," based on the Welles show created after the phenomenal success of the 1949 movie "The Third Man," which starred Welles and Joseph Cotten. That broadcast is set for 8 p.m. Jan. 13. Then at 8 p.m. Feb. 3, the company will present another show based on a Welles classic, "The Shadow Knows."

Other productions are yet to be scheduled. All are being adapted by Borgers.

John Farrell is a Long Beach freelance writer. More of his articles can be read at <http://byjohnfarrell.typepad.com>.

Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

What: Live radio-style broadcast of the Sherlock Holmes story starring Richard MacPherson, presented by Long Beach Shakespeare Company.

When: 8 tonight.

Where: Richard Goad Theatre, 4250 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach.

Tickets: \$10.

Information: 562-997-1494 or www.lbshakespeare.org.

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