A Cherished Yuletide Tradition, *A Christmas Carol*, Comes to Life On Stage at The Round Barn Theatre® at Amish Acres®

NAPPANEE, Indiana—November 10, 2011— The Round Barn Theatre at Amish Acres holiday production of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, a stage adaptation with traditional Christmas music opens November 17th and runs through December 31st. *A Christmas Carol* is a wonderful family yuletide tradition and the source of cherished memories.

Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 during the Victorian era when the celebration of Christmas had become somber and many Christmas traditions forgotten. He was influenced by Washington Irving’s *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* which depicted the warm-hearted holiday festivities that he had experienced as a child. The story of Ebenezer Scrooge’s transformation after visits from Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come revived the holiday’s secular celebration. The popularity of the tale, which has never been out of print, paved the way for today’s more lighthearted and childlike fantasy of Christmas, including the greeting “Merry Christmas.” Dickens’ secular vision of the holiday now takes its place alongside the original Biblical story and introduced the family-centered festival of seasonal food and drink, dancing, games and generosity that now enriches the church centered observations of Christmas. The novella was adapted for the stage almost immediately and made it to New York’s Park Theatre by 1844.
Dickens is further credited with saving the London’s Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children from financial crisis in 1858 by raising money through a series of lectures. Seventy one years later, the hospital received the rights from J. M. Barrie to his play *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn’t Grow Up*. When the copyright originally expired at the end of 1987, 50 years after Barrie's death, Parliament granted the hospital the right to collect royalties in perpetuity to benefit its patients.

In the spirit of this unique and unprecedented story of good deeds, The Round Barn Theatre will donate a portion of its proceeds from *A Christmas Carol* to Riley Hospital for Children. Riley is named for James Whitcomb Riley, Indiana’s poet laureate who was often seen in his Lockerby home poring over verses of one of his 1,044 published poems, or immersed in a favorite Charles Dickens’ story by gaslight. In addition, free tickets for young patients of Riley and their parents are being made available through the Joseph Stein Memorial Fund.

The Round Barn Theatre has recently joined The Christmas Carol Network, an organization of theatre companies from around the world. It brings their diverse talents and dedication together to assist hundreds of performing arts organizations and thousands of creative artists in collaboration to bring Dickens’ novella to each new generation on the live theatre stage.

Jeremy Littlejohn, artistic director, has returned to direct *A Christmas Carol*. “There are as many versions of *A Christmas Carol* as there are theatres producing the play,” said Littlejohn, “but through the Network, the script is literally from Dickens’ original tale and the traditional music is carefully selected to add layers of richness with tunes from as early as the 13th century.” Many of the carols in the production are being returned to their historical roots by music director Travis Smith. “Silent Night” and “Ding Dong Merrily on High” were secular dance tunes from the 16th Century, and “Carol of the Bells” was an ancient pagan Ukrainian New Year’s magical chant. The carols are all brought together to confirm the universality of Dickens influence on western society.

There are 51 performances scheduled between November 17th and December 31st with four of the performances being one hour Theatre for Young Audiences versions designed for area
schools. These shows are scheduled Wednesday, November 23rd and 30th at 11:30 a.m. and Thursday, December 15th at 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Study guides are provided to the attending school’s teachers before hand to help enrich the experience for students.

Children and adults alike will enjoy meeting cast members up close and in person at a special “Meet The Characters” Theme Dinner. This special event will be Friday, November 26th beginning at 12:00 noon before the 2:00 p.m. curtain and Saturday, December 2nd at 6:00 p.m. before the 8:00 p.m. curtain. A Friday night Theme Dinner with wine tasting is scheduled in The Barn Loft Wine Tasting Room on Friday, November 18th and Friday, December 16th beginning at 6:00 p.m. before the 8:00 p.m. curtain. Theme Dinners and Amish Acres Famous Threshers Dinner can be combined with tickets to A Christmas Carol at a savings.

A complete schedule and ticket information can be found on line at AmishAcres.com or by calling 800-800-4942.