

ENTERTAINMENT

5

YULE
VILLAINS

Toronto actor and producer
Ross Petty shares his
favourite Christmas villains.

ROSS PETTY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Over the past 25 years, I have played numerous bad dudes and dames during the Christmas holidays at several Toronto theatres — for the past 14 years, at the Elgin Theatre. Currently I'm the Sheriff of Nottingham in *Robin Hood, the EnvironMENTAL Family Musical*. (It continues until Jan. 3 at the Elgin. Call 416-872-5555 for tickets and details.) Thousands of Ontario families have hurled verbal abuse at me over the footlights at this most heartwarming time of year . . . and I've loved every second of it!

Ebenezer
Scrooge

The most loathed Christmas villain has to be Ebenezer Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol*. Currently portrayed onscreen by Jim Carrey, but still etched in all our minds in the chilling performance of Alastair Sim in the original 1951 classic. Reminiscent of the lovely folks who are trying to shove harmonized taxes . . . there's an oxymoron . . . down our throats.



2009's *A Christmas Carol*, top, and Alastair Sim in the 1951 version.

Henry F.
Potter

A close second is Lionel Barrymore's portrayal of Henry F. Potter in the Jimmy Stewart starrer *It's a Wonderful Life*. He became the richest man in Bedford Falls by his manoeuvrings as an evil slum baron. Potter was even willing to let a rival financial institution fail . . . good thing the public rushed in with bail-out money. Only in the movies!

Before he took umbrage with CBC's Jian Ghomeshi, Billy Bob Thornton played a nasty but funny Christmas villain in *Bad Santa*, Ross Petty says.

Bad Santa

He may not be a villain to anyone other than Jian Ghomeshi, where he dished out radio abuse as never before witnessed in the history of the CBC, but Billy Bob Thornton gets my vote for his creation of one of the funniest (in the darkest of ways) Saint Nicks in the title role in *Bad Santa*.

District
attorney

Another baddie is the district attorney in *A Miracle on 34th Street*. Christmas is the time of year when people should love one another unconditionally. You'd think lawyers would welcome any chance to be liked, yet this lawyer tries to institutionalize Santa Claus. Was he not feeling unpopular enough the rest of the year?

The other
reindeer

My final vote goes to the "other reindeer" in the song "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." I've always wondered what games reindeer play: do they borrow toys from Santa's workshop? It's simply shameful



Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

to exclude someone from reindeer games just because his nose flashes red more often than the Maple Leafs' goal light!