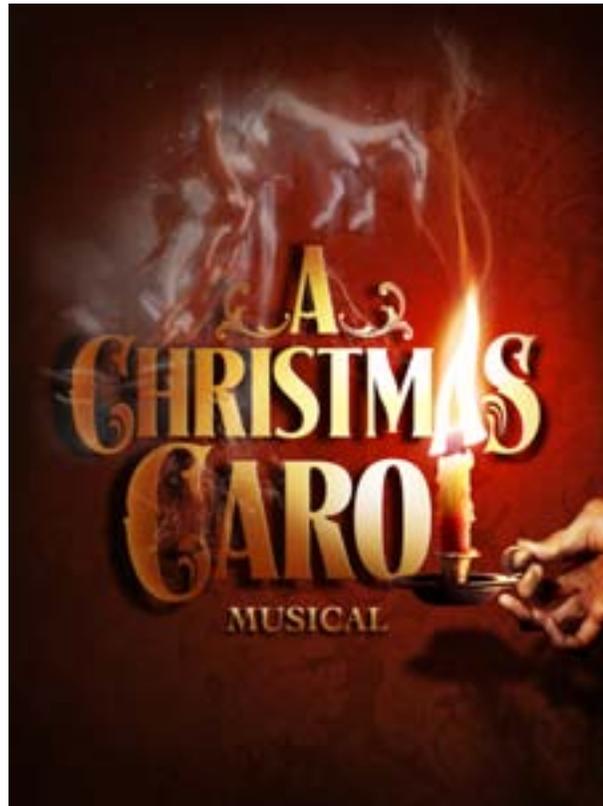


A CHRISTMAS CAROL



Book & Lyrics by
Chris Blackwood

Music by
Piers Chater Robinson

Based on the novel by Charles Dickens

LICENSEES' INFORMATION BOOKLET

International Theatre & Music Ltd
www.itmshows.com



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

List of Characters

DICKENS

LOW BARITONE Male, 45-50. The archetypal look of the older Dickens. Twinkle in the eye, caring, thoughtful, a great eye for detail. Sprightly but with much gravitas. A philanthropist. Thin and wiry. He also plays a number of roles in his story. He both narrates and performs.

Parts also played: 1st Charitable gentleman, The Schoolmaster, Fezziwig's Fiddler, Fred's Party

Guest, Man in Black #1.

EBENEZER SCROOGE

HIGH BARITONE Male, 60's, hates the world, frosty, miserly. Uncaring, love of money and little else. Disdainful. Also able to play high jollity and care. He slowly reveals the inner Scrooge as he understands what he has missing in his life. A man fighting with change.

BOB CRATCHIT

HIGH BARITONE Male, 30's, long suffering, downtrodden, a different man with his children. His family is all to him. A good hearted, caring fellow. He suffers at the hands of Scrooge and is always put-upon. Slight London accent. A man with his heart on his sleeve.

MRS CRATCHIT

HIGH MEZZO SOPRANO Female, 30's, a strong woman with a heart of gold. She is loving and caring to her family and like a lioness in her protection of them. She can stand her ground, as she does to Scrooge.

Suggested doubling: Mrs Dilber, Mrs Fezziwig

FRED

HIGH BARITONE/TENOR Male, 20's, bright, cheery, caring. Undeterred by his Uncle Scrooge's bad humour, he is determined to stay merry and playful to the last.

Suggested doubling: Young Scrooge

BELLE

SOPRANO Female, 17-18, Young Scrooge's only love. A shopgirl. Caring, thoughtful and slight. Pretty and honest. Wistful, demure, with a 'heart of gold'.

Suggested doubling: Beth (Fred's Wife), Mrs Filch

JACOB MARLEY

TENOR Male, 60's, wiry, gaunt, gloomy, haunted, a messenger of doom. Leaden and weighted down by the world.

Suggested doubling: Fezziwig, Man in Black #3

CHRISTMAS PAST

TENOR Male, 50's, quietly spoken, compassionate, thoughtful and pensive. His purpose is solely to open the eyes of Scrooge to family and friends.

Suggested doubling: 2nd Charitable Gentleman, Man in Black #2

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

WIDE RANGE BARITONE Male, 50, tall, jolly, full of life, large voice with the spirit of Christmas surging through every vein. Embodiment of goodwill. All that is bright and cheerful follows him.

Suggested doubling: Old Joe

CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

Non-speaking. Dark, foreboding, tall and malevolent.

TINY TIM

BOY TREBLE Male, 8-10, small, weak but still holding on to the joy his family brings him. Pensive and sometimes playful.

Secondary Characters

FEZZIWIG

TENOR Male, 50's, generous, fun-loving, rotund and jolly. Caring. The epitome of a good man. Playful.

MRS FEZZIWIG

HIGH MEZZO SOPRANO Female, Late 40's, the mirror image of her husband in female form.

MRS DILBER

HIGH MEZZO SOPRANO Female, Late 40's, large, Scrooge's housekeeper and laundress. Bold and brassy. Very low character.

MRS FILCH

SOPRANO Female, Late 40's, wiry, Scrooge's laundress. A foil to Mrs Dilber. Sharp features and a sharper way about her.

SAM BILLIKIN

BARITONE Male, 30's, a kind hearted, good natured man. Low character. Owner of a chestnut stall and in debt to Scrooge. He tries to keep his good humour when all else fails.

OLD JOE

BARITONE Male, 50's, a 'fence' of stolen goods. Very low character. Back street underhand dealings are his game. He is the typical criminal class in a Dickens novel although he tries to be genteel.

The Cratchit Children

BELINDA

ALTO/SOPRANO Female, 10, a young happy little girl. Loves her mother dearly.

MARTHA

ALTO/SOPRANO Female, 15-18, is employed in a milliner's shop. Hard working and caring. She is considerate and kind.

PETER

BOY TREBLE Male, 12, the 'man' of the family when his father is not there. Playful and jolly.

There are many speaking roles within the ensemble such as street vendors, well-to-do passers-by, party guests, shop girls and boys, children etc. A BALANCED ENSEMBLE OF SOPRANOS/ALTOS/TENORS/BASSES

Christmas Carol Synopsis

Act I

As the streets of London make ready for their Christmas celebrations (*Prologue/Christmas Cheer/Ebenezer Scrooge*) the miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, dampens the spirits of the gathering crowds by giving his philosophy of the festive season.

In his counting house, he goes further by spurning family links with his nephew, Fred, who hoped that his uncle would join him and his wife for Christmas Day. Everyone wants something for nothing, including his clerk, Bob Cratchit, who expects to be paid even though he doesn't work Christmas Day (*Shillings, Pound and Pence*).

Bob Cratchit takes his son, Tiny Tim, to get their Christmas fare, and though Tim is sick, they celebrate the love and joy they feel when they are together (*Good Things Come*).

On his doorstep, Scrooge encounters two gentlemen who are collecting for the poor. Scrooge lets them know what he thinks in no uncertain terms. He pays taxes towards the Poor House and expects those who cannot look after themselves to go there (**Reprise-Ebenezer Scrooge**). As they leave, Scrooge is confronted by the face of his former partner, Jacob Marley, appearing on his door knocker. As he reaches out to touch it, it fades and Scrooge is left shaken but is still able to berate his house keeper and his laundress as they try to get him into the Christmas spirit.

As he sits, in his nightgown, to take his supper, he is visited once more by Jacob Marley, loaded with chains of his own making, who tells Scrooge that unless he changes his ways, Scrooge's fate will be worse than his (*Link by Link*). Marley tells him Scrooge that he will be given one chance to make amends; he will be visited by three ghosts that very night.

Woken by the first phantom, The Spirit of Christmas Past, (*Shine a Light*) Scrooge starts his journey of self discovery. He is shown his own solitary schooldays and his loving little sister, Fan, a girl who was to die in childbirth, leaving Scrooge the only surviving family he has; Fred, his nephew. He is shown his youth as a clerk for the Fezziwigs, and at their annual Christmas party (*Pride of the Ball*), he meets his only true love, Belle (*Heart of Gold*). As the years roll on, Scrooge is shown his younger self growing cold with the love of money and Belle, not seeing the man she once loved in him, breaks off their engagement. Scrooge is left to feel the anguish he felt then once more as he watches his younger self (*Remember*).

Finding himself back in his bedchambers, Scrooge is visited by a booming fellow, The Ghost of Christmas Present, who raises him high above the streets of London to see how the rest of the world celebrates Christmas (*Drink It In*).

Act II

The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge the joy with which others celebrate the festive period (*Reprise-Good Things Come*). Scrooge is shown the humble home of the Cratchit family and their love as a family (*Do as the Cratchits Do*) and, even though Scrooge treats Bob so terribly, Bob raises a toast to him much to the dismay of his family. As the children go to bed, Tiny Tim says his prayers, untouched by his own suffering (*God Bless*). Scrooge shows a chink in his armour when he is told that if nothing is done, Tiny Tim will not see another Christmas. Christmas Present shows him the ignorance and heartlessness of the world, as a sad band of orphans pass by with their master, and rebukes Scrooge's outlook on the poor. Scrooge needs forgiveness and, even as he starts to understand, the Ghost of Christmas Past starts to fade away, leaving him alone (*Am I that Man?*).

Alone, in the street, a dark figure approaches Scrooge and, though it does not speak, he knows he is in the presence of the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come. Scrooge is shown a number of former business associates who speak heartlessly of a man who has recently died. He watches his laundress and housekeeper take goods stolen from the dead man's bedchamber to a villain in the backstreets of London. All three are glad that the old man has died as he is worth more to them dead than alive (*Just Desserts*). Scrooge comments on them, saying the man of whom they speak must have been a monster. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to come takes him to a graveyard where Bob mourns his son, Tiny Tim, by his graveside. As Scrooge mourns too, he is shown a gravestone on which his own name is engraved. As the horror hits him, he is flung into blackness as the spirit fades away (*Turn Back the Clock*).

Back in his bedchambers, Scrooge wakes to find that he is alive and vows to be a changed man. As he skips about, merry with the thoughts of what he will do, his laundress and housekeeper enter (*The Man is Mad*).

Out in the street, Scrooge cancels all debts and makes his way to the Cratchits to make amends. He offers them a prize goose and raises Bob's salary. As the celebrations start, he gives a generous donation to the poor and asks forgiveness of his nephew, Fred. Now Scrooge has family and will become the man everyone knows is the spirit of Christmas (*Finale*).

Special Effect Moments in Christmas Carol

Each effect can be achieved in a number of ways. This document is just a guideline as to the numerous techniques that can be utilised in order to accomplish the effect. I will class the effect in SFX and FX on each method. (Including page references as to where they appear in the script.)

Obviously, all these are thoughts and can be taken under the guidance of a magical advisor and/or FX builder. The document is merely to show what can be achieved to make each ghostly happening a little more special. There may be easier or more complex ways of achieving these effects when discussed with magic and FX specialists.

All sounds can be enhanced with the use of surround sound speakers to the sides and back of the audience.

1) Door Knocker Marley (Pg 24)

- a) FX : A neoprene or latex panel can be inserted into the door which allows anything that is pressed against it to stretch forward in a three dimensional way. Lighting from the front will pick out the features. A cast of Marley's face can be moved behind the latex/lycra/neoprene to give an added dimension. The false panel can be painted to achieve the door effect. In addition, the cast can be lit within to produce an eerie glow. The lighting should be of an underworldly glow. Something green to accentuate the pallor of the long dead soul.

SFX: There should be an unnatural distort of the voice of Marley as well as the sounds of creaking wood as the face stretches into the door and moves.

- b) FX: A two way mirror effect can be used so that the actor would be able to perform the part in the mirror plane.

SFX: The same as above.

- c) FX: A gauze can be inserted into the door allowing, with the correct lighting, the actor to stand behind and perform.

SFX: As above.

- d) FX: A projection of the face could be used on the door.

SFX: As above

- e) FX: A hologram could be used within the door. Eg. Musion Eyeliner 3D Holographic Projection (can be found on webpage) This may be something that can be utilised for the ghost of Christmas Past's entrance.

SFX: As above

2) Marley's Entrance (Pg. 26)

As Scrooge is listening for the sounds after the bells have gone silent, suddenly a door flies open (SFX) slamming loudly. This should cause a jump just before:

- a) FX: The actor is flown speedily up and over the gantry and his chains are pulled taut when he is in position. It should give the effect that he is tethered to something. The actor never really touches the floor but he hovers slightly above. The lighting effect should be underworld green. The use of dry ice could be utilised to add atmosphere. Shadows of chains and padlocks can be projected onto the cyclorama.

SFX: The voice of Marley should be distorted still. There should be the hint of ice wind sound as Marley moves.

- b) FX: The fireplace could be raised slightly on a deck as with the whole of Scrooge's bedchamber. This will allow slits in the fireplace (the mantle, the clock upon it etc) to spew forth dry ice as Marley enters through the grate stepping up so that the actor does not have to stoop. It also allows chains to be tethered into the fireplace and to be used to drag him back into hell. Green lighting state.

SFX: The crackling of flame and howling wind as he appears. Distorted Marley voice.

- c) FX: Marley rises through the floor and upward by means of a trap and lift. This would allow for flame and smoke as if he were rising from hell. The floorboards around should open as if being split. If there is no "floor trap" available within the stage floor, then a portable "stair trap" can be built. This is a portable five-stair platform with a hole at the top for the Marley to appear through. A stagehand, seated directly beneath the contraption, cranks the elevator up or down the opening. A fog machine is then employed under the platform for the needed "steam effect".

SFX: As above. Creaking and splintering wood.

3) Marley's Departure (Pg. 31)

We should get the feeling that he is being pulled back to hell. During the song, the other ghosts could dangle their chains over the gantry so that Scrooge can be caught up like a puppet and moved accordingly in marionette style. The back of the stage could have the material blowers to represent flame as Marley is dragged back to hell.

- a) FX: Rising into the air, Marley's chains are pulled taut and as he grasps at the air around he is pulled away into the lighting state offstage of gathering flame. It should feel as if he is going into the flame. The cyclorama could be used to give the feeling that the whole of the back of the stage is hell opening up. Even the moon could turn red.

SFX: Howling and crying and flame crackle, also the wind once more all to finish with an almighty bang which should sound like a vault being closed for good.

- b) FX: The fireplace starts to billow dry ice and Marley's chains are pulled taut, as he reaches for Scrooge he is pulled backwards into the fireplace howling as he goes. This could have the added effect of Scrooge being grabbed by hands that come from the fireplace pulling at him

before he pulls free and they are gone. The reds and orange of the fires of hell are shining through the fireplace.

SFX: As above

- c) FX: Marley is pulled back into the trap as the flames rise higher. There could be billowing material blown upward as he goes, lit to look like flame. He slowly disappears through the floor.

SFX: As above

4) Christmas Past Entrance (Pg. 32)

The curtains of the bed moving on their own can be achieved with a simple pulley system. Christmas Past should be clothed as a gentleman in white. His wig should have the feeling of a flame. A little like Jack Frost.

- a) FX: Christmas Past is seen through a 'magic mirror effect' (Snow White) but only vaguely as the light grows brighter, all is obscured and with a pyrotechnic, the ghost appears beside Scrooge, stepping from an unseen hiding place. This would probably require two actors, one as the 'dummy' Past and the real actor as the one who appears beside Scrooge. Again, fog or mist can be used behind the mirror. Pepper's ghost effect. In order for the illusion to work, the viewer must be able to see into the main room, but not into the hidden mirror room. The edge of the glass may be hidden by a cleverly designed pattern in the floor. Both rooms may be identical mirror-images; this approach is useful in making objects seem to appear or disappear. This effect can also be used to make an actor reflected in the mirror appear to turn into an actor.

SFX: Sound of crackling flame and the glissando of bells. Past's voice when in the mirror should have the feeling of glass. There should be a bright blinding light during this sequence to be used to mask any movement of the ghost.

- b) FX: The curtains of the bed could be pulled in place by Scrooge and when they are opened once more by themselves the ghost in bright light could be sitting in the bed. A false back to the bed would be utilised. Maybe not as effective.

SFX: Glissando of bells and crackling flame.

- c) FX: Lightweight white curtains can be used which are lit appropriately and billowed during which the actor appears between them.

SFX: As Above

5) Christmas Present Entrance (Pg. 48)

On the structure mentioned following, a large projection of Christmas Past's face can be employed to start the proceedings fading out in time for the actor to reveal himself within.

- a) FX: A large pile of Christmas goodies complete with twinkling coloured lights is trucked on. It should take the shape of a Christmas tree with the top cut off and jagged with 'goodies'. Within this structure, on wires, is Christmas Present. As Scrooge watches the spirit is drawn up from within until he takes pride of place at the top. A golden glow lighting state

SFX: Sleighbells. Voice to be booming

- b) FX: The same structure but complete in the triangulation. It revolves to reveal Christmas Present sitting amongst the 'goodies'

SFX: Sleighbells. Voice to be booming

- c) FX: The same structure but Christmas Past's costume is made to camouflage amongst the 'goodies' and he reveals himself at the given moment. A golden glow lighting state

SFX: Sleighbells. Voice to be booming.

- d) FX: The actor can appear at the back of the stage on wires, at first standing on the ground, until he is lifted and a detachable cape of goodies can rise up in tiers below him as he is lifted upwards. This can be jettisoned as the scene unfolds. It can then be pulled off by the stage hands, masked by the street crowds. This cape can be LCD lit as a starcloth. A golden glow lighting state

SFX: Sleighbells. Voice to be booming.

6) Christmas Yet to Come Entrance (Pg. 66)

- a) FX: Below the gantry is rigged a dry ice machine, allowing for a 'waterfall' effect of mist. Upon this can be projected the ghost, allowing for the actor ghost to step through. The actor could use plasterer's stilts to give height or be a shoulder puppet.

SFX: An unearthly hiss to be heard round the audience. A death rattle. Whenever this ghost 'speaks' it is an unearthly hiss.

- b) FX: A shadow appears rising across the cyclorama of a cowed figure. A pile of rags rises from the floor to rise above Scrooge. An internal puppet affair. The rags could be over a trap and the figure grows under the costume by being lifted on the elevator. An actor within controls it.

SFX: As above

- c) FX: A hovering spirit on a wire with internal light and trailing mist with it. Down lit and with maybe a gobo beneath giving the effect of swirling mist. The 'puppet' would be rigged with a mist machine and internal light. Arriving slowly from the flies. Projections across the cyclorama, like the gathering of crow, which fly off into the direction where the spirit will enter.

SFX: As Above

- d) FX: A large sized rod puppet, making sure that the ghost is always in half-darkness, controlled by a number of cast members in full blacks. This would allow the figure to float on and creep from behind scenery. Also allows for more interaction movement-wise with Scrooge. This should appear after a shadow across the cyclorama.

SFX: As above

7) Gravestone (Pg. 72)

- a) FX: A ground mist gathers. Dry ice and the gravestones are trucked on. The last one is trucked through the middle from behind. It is a large gravestone with a grim statue of the angel of death, wings closed around it. It appears to have no name on it. As a crack of lightning and thunder is heard, the name of Scrooge appears on the stone. This can be done with lights within the stone slowly fading up and shining through strategic cuts in the prop headstone unnoticeable to the eye. Icy blue light through the stone. As the writing comes to an end, the angel of death statue unfurls its wings suddenly. This can be achieved by a mechanism within the stone.

SFX: Thunder and scratching like nails down a chalkboard as the writing appears and the sound of dry wings unfurling.

- b) FX: Atop the headstone, an actor can be disguised, somewhat like the Commendatore in Don Giovanni (or 'street statues' actor) then at the given moment can unfurl it's wings and loom over Scrooge. If needs be, the tombstone could rise through the stage.

SFX: As before

- c) FX: The writing could appear in projection upon the stone.

8) Snowfall (Pg. 85)

- a) FX: Usual snow box in flies. Or snow machine with evaporative snow.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

ORCHESTRATIONS / BAND PARTS

A Christmas Carol may be accompanied by a solo keyboard or with a variety of orchestrations.

See below for details of our popular Backing Track CD.

4-piece Band Parts

Keyboard 1; Keyboard 2; Double bass; Drums / percussion

8-piece Band Parts

MD/Keyboard 1; flute/Bflat clarinet/soprano/tenor sax; Horn in F; Bflat trumpet/flugel horn; violin(s); cello(s); double bass; Drums / percussion

9-piece Band Parts

Same as the 8-piece (above) plus 2nd Keyboard.

Optional Conductor's Score available to hire from info@itmshows.com (at Concert Pitch or Transposed Pitch).

NB. We supply these band parts as PDFs that you download and print out.

BACKING TRACK CD - without vocals

You may prefer to use our popular, top-quality Backing Track which features 32 tracks that are indexed against the music cues in the script and the vocal score.

Many licensees like to use the backing track in rehearsal even if they intend to back their performances with a live band whilst others use a combination of the two.

We can supply the backing tracks as MP3 audio files, uploaded via the internet, or we can send you a CD in the post – the choice is yours.

CAST RECORDING CD - with vocals

All 19 songs and choruses. Recorded in 2010 on ITM Records

Available to purchase - please email info@itmshows.com for more details.

All of the tracks can be heard on the Christmas Carol SONGS page, on this website, and they are also available on YouTube - search for "*ITM Shows A Christmas Carol*".

There's no need to spend time and money commissioning a special design for your posters, leaflets and programmes - use our official ITM Shows graphic / logo (see below).

We will provide ordering and pricing information when you submit your NO COMMITMENT [Licence Enquiry](#).

