A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Book & Lyrics by
Chris Blackwood

Music by
Piers Chater Robinson

Based on the novel by Charles Dickens

International Theatre & Music Ltd

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Cast

Dickens

doubling as 1st Gentleman, Schoolmaster, Fezziwig’s Fiddler, Fred’s Party Guest & Businessman 1

Ebenezer Scrooge

Bob Cratchit

Mrs Cratchit
doubling as Mrs Fezziwig & Mrs Dilber

Fred
doubling as Young Scrooge

Belle
doubling as Beth & Mrs Filch

Jacob Marley
doubling as Mr Fezziwig & Businessman 3

The Ghosts

Christmas Past
doubling as 2nd Gentleman & Businessman 2

Christmas Present
doubling as Samuel Trimble & Old Joe

Christmas Yet To Come Non-speaking

The Cratchit Children: Martha, Peter, Belinda, Tiny Tim

Ensemble of street urchins, debtors, stall holders, party guests etc.
A Christmas Carol – Licensed Script

Musical Numbers

Act I

1. Prologue / Christmas Cheer / Ebenezer Scrooge
   Cast
2. Shillings, Pounds and Pence
   Scrooge, Fred & Cratchit
3. Good Things Come
   Cratchit, Tiny Tim & Cast
4. Incidental Music (a. & b.)
   Marley
5. Link by Link
   Marley, Scrooge & Tortured Souls
6. Shine a Light
   Christmas Past
6a. Incidental Music
   Scrooge’s Schooldays
7. The Pride of the Ball
   The Fezziwigs & Guests
8. Heart of Gold
   Belle
8a. Incidental Music
   Belle and Young Ebenezer’s Parting
9. Remember
   Young Scrooge & Scrooge
10. Drink It In
   Christmas Present, Scrooge & Cast

Act II

11. Entr’acte
   Dickens
12. Reprise - Good Things Come
   Cast
13. Do as the Cratchits Do
   The Cratchit Family
14. God Bless
   The Cratchit Children & Children of London
14a. Incidental Dance Music
   Fred’s Party
15. Am I That Man?
   Scrooge
16. Just Desserts
   Old Joe, Mrs Dilber & Mrs Filch
16a. Incidental Music
   The Graveyard
17. Turn Back the Clock
   Scrooge
18. The Man is Mad
   Scrooge, Mrs Dilber & Mrs Filch
19. Finale
   Scrooge & Cast
Act I

An icy blue mist floats across an empty stage. A moon can be seen on the cyclorama. We hear footsteps echoing along a cobbled street and through the mist appears the owner of the footsteps walking towards the front of the stage. As his silhouette is seen, we hear the slow chime of a clock and a Roman numeric clock face is seen appearing on the face of the moon. The lone figure is CHARLES DICKENS.

Music Cue 1. Prologue / Christmas Cheer / Ebenezer Scrooge - Cast

Music starts underscoring. Dickens comes to a halt and speaks clearly. He is the Dickens of all the pictures we know; he is a benevolent and fatherly figure. General note, this libretto gives an indication of who sings what and when, so in rehearsals please see the score for the exact vocal pattern.

Dickens

Once upon a time... For time is all we have, and how we choose to use it is our own business but remember, time is precious. You can't own it, but you can use it. You can't keep it, but you can spend it. And once you've lost it you can never, ever, get it back.

A lamplighter drags a solitary lamp onto the stage and reaches his pole to light it.

But...what if you were given a second chance to live your life again? What choices would you make? This is the story of a gentleman who is given that chance. A chance to change what went before, a chance to make amends. A chance to turn back the clock. Once upon a time...

Lamplighter

Five o'clock and all's well

Dickens

Once upon a time – of all the good days in the year...

Lamplighters

Five o'clock and all's well
Five o'clock and all's well
Five o'clock and all's well

A brazier is seen through the fog. A number of ragged youths and men stand round it, warming their hands.

Ragged Youths

Blimey, it's parky
Blimey, it's cold
We're like brass monkeys
If truth be told

Dickens

Once upon a time – of all the good days of the year – on Christmas Eve, when the bleak alleyways of London were bedecked with holly sprigs and berries which crackled in the lamp-heat of the shops and stalls...

A young lad with a lamp runs across the way towards a man and woman holding out his hand

Lamp Lad

Light your way, sir,
Light your way, sir
For a penny

They shoo the boy away. He looks about him for another potential customer.

Lamplighters

Five o’clock and all’s well (etc please see score)

The Lamp Lad runs toward Dickens and stops, holding out his hand once more.

Lamp Lad

Light your way, sir,
Light your way, sir
For a penny

Dickens smiles and laughs, giving the boy a penny from his waistcoat.

Dickens

Merry Christmas, boy.

Lamp Lad

God Bless you, Guv’nor
May you be blessed
You’re one in a million
Not like all the rest

The boy runs off into the fog, as the ensemble sing their various calls in counterpoint.

Dickens

The gruff old bell in the ancient church struck the hours and the quarters in the clouds as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head.

Ragged Youths

Blimey, it’s parky
Blimey, it’s cold
We’re like brass monkeys
If truth be told
And although the weather was cold, bleak and biting and the
people were wheezing up and down beating their hands upon
their breasts and stamping their feet on the pavement stones to
warm them, their hearts were full of Christmas cheer.

A gentleman scurries across past the lamplighter.

Lamplighter  

_Five o'clock and all's well_

Gentleman  
Pardon me, I can’t help but notice that you have been calling five
for quite some time now. Surely it must be later.

Lamplighter  

That’s right, sir, but I only get paid by the hour.

_Five o'clock and all's well_

Dickens  

Every single man with joy in his heart, a spring in his step and,
above all, a desire to spread good will, for one day at least in the
whole three hundred and sixty-five days of the year.

A number of lit barrows are pulled on and the sides of the buildings in the
street are seen. With lights glowing from windows
and the barrows, the stage starts to brighten in the evening glow of lamps. A
stall with wrapped steam puddings

Pudding Man  

_Comes see the wares we proudly show_

Our festive Christmas grub

Woman  

_I tried his figgy pudding once_

And now I’m in the club

Various  

_Your final chance to make this Christmas_

_What it ought to be_

_Filled with peace and goodwill and harmony_

_Peace and goodwill_

_Filled with hope and peace and generosity_

A poulterer stops a large woman and her small husband and waves a large
goose by the neck at them.

Poulterer  

_A stately goose fit for a king_

_We always sell the best_

Large Woman  

_Just take a look, it’s just the thing_

Husband  

_A plump and ample breast_

_The woman grabs him by the scruff and drags him to another stall._
All  

Your final chance to make this Christmas  
What it ought to be  
Filled with peace and goodwill and harmony  
Peace and goodwill  
Filled with hope and peace and generosity  

Lamplighter  

Five o’clock and all’s well  

Out of the crowd comes a small man, who lifts his cap to the ladies politely and smiles. He hurries towards Scrooge’s office. This is BOB CRATCHIT, an amiable man, overworked and flustered, he is only truly at home with his family and friends.

Sam  

Bob Cratchit! I’m surprised the old miser let him out at this time of day.

Woman  

It’s Christmas Eve.

Sam  

You think old Scrooge cares what day it is? You don’t know him very well do you? (To Bob, as he passes) Bob.

Bob  

Mr Billickin.

Sam  

(joking) Mr Scrooge give you time off for Christmas shopping?

Bob  

We’ve been at the stock exchange all day. I’m to get back quick sharp and make sure the books are balanced before I go home tonight.

Woman  

But it’s five o’clock already…

Bob  

Nevertheless, Mr Scrooge likes everything in its place…

Woman  

But it’s Christmas…

Bob  

All the more reason to get it done and get it done quickly so Good Day to you both and Merry Christmas.

Both  

Merry Christmas to you, Bob.

Bob hurries into the office.

Woman  

Poor man.

Sam  

You can say that again.

Woman  

You know, I think it’s time to be getting home. Don’t want to catch me death on Christmas Eve.

Sam  

We’ll have snow before the day is out. Mark my words.

_I didn’t think this day could get much colder_  
And all I have to show for it is I’m a little older  
Though the winter chills me to the bone  
And ice is turning water now to stone  
I have the very thing to warm my heart  
For Christmas time is now about to start_
So

Chorus  
Don’t give a fig about the weather
Come sing; the time is near
Come sing a little song together
Fill the air with Christmas cheer

Women  
Don’t sing about the bitter bleakness, frosty and cold
Christmas will bring a little weakness in young and old

Men  
Take out the mistletoe and this’ll be the time for a kiss
Who could beget a better reason in the season of bliss

All  
Sing a yuletide greeting
Just one day each year
Though it may be fleeting
Make the time for Christmas cheer

Fat Man  
Goose with tons of trimming
Vendor  
Port wine, brandy, beer
Drunk  
Oh, my head is swimming!
Vendor  
That’s the spirit
All  
Christmas cheer

The drunk makes a number of attempts to take money from his pocket. In the end he places one had over his eye and takes out the money and waves it in the vendor’s face.

Vendor  
Found something I can get for you, sir?
Drunk  
I’d like something icy and full of gin
Vendor  
(shouting) Doris, someone to see you, love.

A buxom lady (Doris) grabs the drunk lustily and whirs into a dance as the others join in. Dance section.

All  
Ring out the bells of love and laughter
Joy has no equal here
Chime for now and ever after
Sounding forth the Christmas cheer
Deck out the halls with all the jollity and joking and jest
Fill ev’ry stocking with a shocking lot of love and the rest
Let us be cheery ‘stead of weary’, stead of gloomy and glum
Come raise a glass to present, past and all the things yet to come
Goodwill, peace on earth to
All those far or near
All this I would wish you
Wrapped up in this Christmas cheer
Through the crowds, waving his stick to clear the way, comes EBENEZER SCROOGE, a man who lowers the already sub zero temperature with his presence. A stiffened gaited, pointed nosed, blue lipped, red-eyed skinflint.

Scrooge
Out! Out of my way! Haven’t you people got better things to do?

Man
It’s Christmas, Mr Scrooge.

Scrooge
Bah! Humbug! Take yourselves from my doorstep or I shall have you all forcibly removed.

Dickens
(to the audience) Oh, but he was tight-fisted old miser, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!

Scrooge
(to Dickens) Have you quite finished? I’m not deaf, you know.

Man
Blimey, he can hear us.

Woman
Frosty so-and-so!

All
Yes when Scrooge is near us
It’s like eight degrees below

Scrooge
This whole damned world is suffering from an appalling case of optimism but I have the cure.

Shall I tell you something wonderful and new
All about this precious time which causes much ado?
Scrimping for those pennies, spending come what may
And growing poorer in effect by every Boxing Day
Gluttonous and heaving, smacking at your lips
Adding extra inches to those ever growing hips
Creaking tables full of port, puddings, peaches, plums
Never thinking forward when you’ve naught to eat but crumbs
Who’s the man who saves you when the debts to pay are huge?
Benevolent as always Mister Ebenezer Scrooge

Poor Man
Could I have a moment of your time, Mr Scrooge?

Scrooge
Time is money, sir, and you have already cost me a farthing. Out of my way!

Scrooge pushes him away with his stick and walks on only to stop a few steps away and spin on his heels.

Wait! You owe me twenty pounds.

Poor Man
Yes, sir, it was about that…

Scrooge
I want no sob story, man. The balance is due.

Poor Man
I... I cannot pay you, sir. My wife, you see, sir, is ill, sir…
Scrooge

Your wife’s ill health is not my concern. My concern is what will become of my twenty pounds, sir.

Poor Man

I… I don’t know, sir, really I don’t.

Scrooge

Debts are to be paid on time. Read the small print.

Poor Man

Give me more time, sir, I beg you.

Scrooge

Time is something neither of us have. I run a business, sir, and it is not my business to let people like you fleece me out of all I own. Pay your debt in full or find yourself celebrating Christmas Day in prison, sir.

Poor Man

But…

Scrooge

Good day.

Poor Man

Please…

Scrooge

(with a finality) Good day.

Bus’ness is my bus’ness, man is nought to me
Let others smile and doth their caps and talk of charity
Swift to pick my pocket when the rent is due
But miserable pleaders when I turn the screw
How’s a man to profit? How’s a man to thrive
When they’re grasping for my pennies, should I help the dogs survive?
Frittr’ing all their earnings, wasting it away
Have they any put aside to brave that rainy day?
Well, here it comes, that stormy cloud, here’s the big deluge
Who’ll save you drowning for a price? Ebenezer Scrooge

All

Debts are getting larger and his terms are bloomin’ huge
And the only one to profit

Scrooge

Who?

All

Ebenezer

Man

Nasty geezer

All

Ebenezer Scrooge

Scrooge has opened the door to his office and turns in the doorway.

Scrooge

Humbug!

Scrooge slams the door on the merrymakers. Quietly the merriment slowly starts anew.

All

Don’t let that jolly appetiser
Spoil all that you hold dear
Block out that melancholy miser
Banish him with Christmas Cheer
Take up the holly and be jolly, raise a glass, make a toast
Stoke up the fire and retire to the place you love most
London is stating that it’s waiting for the festivity
Wrap up the present, pluck the pheasant, let us trim up the tree
Here’s a Christmas wish
To all who you hold dear
Make this time deli-(delish)
- ous laden down with Christmas Cheer
One last time, (shouting) let’s shout it
Sing out, let us hear
We won’t go without it
Very Merry Christmas Cheer

Music Cue 1a. Scene change underscore

Tableau and play out as light cross-fades to Dickens as the merrymakers start
to disperse or go back to what they were doing. Ragged youths turn the truck of Scrooge’s
office. The inside is dimly lit.

Dickens
And although the merrymakers went about the frosty evening
with enough warmth in their hearts to heat the houses of
Parliament, it had no influence on Scrooge. No warmth could
warm him, nor wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was
bitterer than he.

Scrooge is counting pennies into a lockbox, speedily and muttering figures to
himself. Bob, still in his muffler, sits high on his stool above his clerk’s desk,
scribbling frantically in a large ledger with a quill. It tickles his nose and he
sneezes.

Scrooge
Keep sneezing like that and I shall dock your pay. I don’t pay
you to sneeze. Sneeze all you like in your own time. This is my
time and I will not have sneezing.

Bob
Of course, sir. Sorry, Mr Scrooge, it’s just my little fire seems to
have gone out. Could I trouble you for…

Scrooge
Want, want, want! What is it about this time of year? Everyone
wants something for nothing.
Scrooge moves to a large locked box. He takes out an enormous bunch of keys and selects one. He opens the box, making sure Bob does not see the contents.

Scrooge

Hold out your hand.

Bob does so and Scrooge takes out a pair of tongs with which he holds a tiny piece of coal. He drops it into Bob’s hand.

Scrooge

And don’t burn it too quickly. I’m not made of money. On second thoughts…

Scrooge grabs the coal with his tongs and snaps it back into his box.

Scrooge

(locking the box) Use the candle.

Bob wanders, dejectedly, back to his desk. He lights his candle and warms his frozen hands before picking up his quill once more and scribbling as before. The door is flung open and Scrooge drops a penny on the floor beneath his desk. He scrabbles to find it. Fred appears, all in a glow; his face ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkle with humour. He grins at Bob Cratchit who raises an eyebrow, surprised to see him.

Fred

Hi-ho! Still at work, Bob? What’s to become of all the little Cratchits? Christmas postponed?

Bob

I should hope not, sir.

Fred

Scribbling when you should be merrymaking? Where’s that old uncle of mine? I’ll tell him a thing or two.

Bob points to below Scrooge’s desk to direct Fred. Fred stands next to the desk and shouts.

(cheerily) A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

Scrooge bangs his head on the desk as he jumps up. He has the penny in his hand.

Scrooge

(placing the penny in the box and slamming it shut) Bah! Humbug!

Fred

(with mock shock) Christmas a humbug, uncle? You don’t mean that, I am sure.

Scrooge

(locking the box and squirreling it away) I do. Merry Christmas! What reason have you to be merry? You’re poor enough.
Fred  
Come, then. What right have you to be dismal? You're rich enough.

Scrooge  
(he has no answer but…) Bah! Humbug.

Fred  
Don't be cross, uncle.

Music Cue 2. Shillings, Pounds and Pence – Scrooge, Fred & Bob

Scrooge  
What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money and a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer? If there's one thing that makes me lose my usual good natured humour it's a man with a ruddy complexion spouting seasonal clap-trap!

I'm a gentleman who's gentle as a gentleman can be  
The epitome of what you'd call respectability  
I'm a man who's fairly frugal  
And who's careful to a fault  
And I think that I would class me  
As a man who's worth his salt  
But there's one thing that will put my humour into an eclipse  
It's those lunatics who go about with Christmas on their lips  
So take your season's greetings  
And the joy that you dispense  
Only one thing raises spirits and that's shillings pounds and pence  
The only thing makes sense  
Is shillings, pounds and pence  
Take your stockings and go hang 'em  
Hang those garlands on your fence  
And go hang yourself and leave me to my shillings pounds and pence  

Scrooge  
If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

Fred  
You are missing one of the most wonderful times of the year, Uncle. Come, spend it with me and my family.

Scrooge  
Family? One of the reasons I live alone!

Scrooge  
Why must I be bothered by an endless family  
Full of grasping rotten apples falling from the family tree?  
They will tap you for a fiver  
They will squeeze you for a quid
A Christmas Carol – Licensed Script

And swear blind each time you ask them
That they're sure they never did
They will live the life of Riley on the money that you earn
They will borrow on your name as if they’ve got the cash to burn
And when you’re in the poorhouse
For the miscreants’ offence
They’ll be in the South of France
With all your shillings, pounds and pence

Fred Uncle, surely you don’t think that?
Scrooge I’m sure I do.

Scrooge The only thing makes sense
Is shillings, pounds and pence
Relatively speaking
Relations make me tense
So, I’d rather spend an evening with my shillings, pounds and pence

Fred Uncle, I ask nothing of you. Why cannot we be friends? Come dine with my wife and me tomorrow.
Scrooge Wife? What possessed you to take a wife?
Fred I fell in love.
Scrooge You fell in love! Fool. Saddled with another drain on your resources.
Fred I love her.
Scrooge Women! Never a moment’s peace! There is a reason why English is called the Mother Tongue, sir; Father never gets a chance to use it.

Scrooge A wife is like a millstone that is hung about our necks
And her endless jibber-jabber turns us into nervous wrecks
She’ll want a brand new parlour
And all that it entails
With all the gaudy splendour
That would shame the Prince of Wales
And when she’s spent a fortune, she will drive a man insane
For she’ll just decide it’s not quite right and do it all again
Pack her bags and hats and dresses
Tell the woman ‘Get thee hence’
And keep your thieving fingers off
My shillings, pounds and pence
The only thing makes sense
Is shillings, pounds and pence
You’ll find she’s growing bigger
With a figure that’s immense
And the only figures that I love are shillings, pounds and pence
So take your Merry Christmas
And stick it where you will
Confounded love unbounded
Is a thing that makes me ill
You may call me what you like and you may laugh at my expense
I’m the one who’s sitting pretty on my Crowns and guineas, notes and pennies
Florins, sovereigns, silver sixpence
Shillings pounds and pence

Scrooge

There, I have said my piece and let that be an end to it.

Fred
Uncle!

Scrooge
Let me be!

Fred
Whatever you say, I am determined to give you joy of the season.

Scrooge
Much good it has done you!

Fred
There are many things from which I might have derived good and by which I haven’t profited, I daresay, Christmas among them, but I’ve always thought of Christmas time as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time and, therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe it has done me good and will do me good and I say, God bless it!

Bob applauds spontaneously and Scrooge whips around to fix him in his sight.
Bob suddenly pretends that it was the cold that made him clap and continues to clap his arms and stamp his feet, blowing on his hands.

Scrooge
Let me hear another sound from you and you’ll celebrate Christmas by losing your job. (To Fred) You’re quite a powerful speaker, sir, I wonder you don’t go into Parliament.

Scrooge sits back at his ledger.

Fred
Uncle, come, will you dine with me tomorrow or no?

Scrooge
I’d sooner find myself stoking the very fires of Hell.

Fred
I’ll take that as a no, then. Well, I’m sorry to find you so resolute, but I’ll keep my Christmas humour to the last so Merry Christmas, Uncle!

Scrooge
Good afternoon!
Fred

And a Happy New Year.

Fred kisses Scrooge on the top of his head quickly which incenses the old man.

Scrooge

Get out!

Fred leaves but turns in the doorway.

Fred

Merry Christmas, Bob!

Bob

A Merry Christmas to you, sir.

Scrooge eyes Bob malevolently from his ledger as Fred exits. Bob begins to scribble furiously at his desk. The clock strikes seven. Bob hurriedly grabs his coat and clears his desk. Scrooge looks up.

Scrooge

That clock is fast.

Bob looks at him. Scrooge slams his ledger shut.

You’ll be wanting all day tomorrow, I suppose?

Bob

If it’s quite convenient, sir.

Scrooge

It is not convenient and it’s not fair.

Scrooge gets up and Bob grabs Scrooge’s coat and starts to help him into it.

Scrooge

If I was to stop you half a crown for it, you’d think yourself ill-used, I’ll be bound?

Bob smiles weakly.

And yet, you don’t think me ill-used when I pay a day’s wages for no work

Bob

It is only one day a year, sir.

Scrooge

A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December!

Scrooge counts out a number of coins and places them into Bob’s hand.

Be here all the earlier the following morning!

Bob

Of course, sir, thank you, sir. Merr—

Bob stops himself as Scrooge looks at him furiously. Bob scuttles out.
A Christmas Carol – Licensed Script

Scrooge (muttering to himself) There’s another fellow! My clerk! Fifteen shillings a week, a wife and a clan of squealing brats and still he talks of a Merry Christmas! I’ll retire to Bedlam, so I will! I’ll find more sense!

A small voice is heard singing ‘God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen’ outside the door. Scrooge takes up his cane, opens the door and chases the small boy away.

Scrooge Get away from me with that confounded caterwauling!

He turns to lock the door.

Boy Where’s your bloomin’ Christmas spirit?
Scrooge (turning sharply and waving his cane) Here it is! Take care you don’t feel it on your backside! Scoundrel!
Boy Miserable old goat!
Scrooge Why you little…

As he turns, Scrooge sees Sam Billikin smirking.

Samuel Billikin! (taking out a small notebook and pencil) How fortuitous!

Sam (instantly sober) Ah, Mr Scrooge…
Scrooge Your debt is due. Five shillings.
Sam It’s been a bad week.
Scrooge A bad week? Since when does a chestnut seller have a bad week at Christmas?
Sam I’ve been giving more credit than usual, sir. Some people can’t afford…
Scrooge I do not lend money so that others can seem charitable, sir. That is a luxury neither myself nor you can afford. Five shillings!
Sam Couldn’t you extend a little kindness, sir?
Scrooge It will cost you two shillings more for the trouble.
Sam But, Mr Scrooge…
Scrooge I could take your stall.
Sam Two shillings it is then.
Scrooge A very astute business man.
Sam Thank you, Mr Scrooge.

The boy returns and blows a raspberry at Scrooge and Scrooge sets off after him, waving his cane; the other vendors physically moving from him. Bob enters with Tiny Tim on his shoulder.
Bob: Well, Tim, my dear, what is it to be? Where shall we start?
Tim: Christmas isn’t Christmas without a pudding, Pa.
Bob: You’re right, my boy. But wait, what about the goose?
Tim: We need that as well.
Bob: A goose and a pudding! Well, it seems like we’re going to have to toss a coin. Heads, the pudding; tails, the goose.
Tim: Don’t lose it, Pa, or we’ll have none at all.
Bob: Clever lad! What would your mother say if we came home empty-handed?

*Bob tosses the coin and catches it. He looks at it.*

*Goose, it is then!*

*Tiny Tim looks a little down-hearted.*

Goose first, pudding after!

*Tim smiles and Bob lifts him aloft once more. They approach the Poulterer’s stall.*

Poulterer: (smiling) Mr Cratchit! Master Cratchit!
Bob: Show us your finest Goose, Mr Parry!
Poulterer: I’ve got birds that would make Her Majesty’s table look bare.
Bob: I’m sure you have, Mr Parry, but consider the size of our table. What’ve you got for a shilling?

**Music Cue 3. Good Things Come**

Tim: We will have a Merry Christmas, won’t we, Pa?

Bob: Good things come
To those who wait
No matter who from me and you to heads of state
But all I know
This much is true
That all the good things now are bundled up in you
When you are near
My world’s complete
And ev’ry minute with you in it is a treat
These moments come
And all too few
But they’re enough when you have me and I have you

Both: Now, lighter than a feather
We’re a happy band of laughing cavaliers.
When we are both together
We have love to guide us both throughout the years

Bob (spoken)  Now, Tim, what else do we need?
Tim  (gleefully)  The pudding, Pa. The pudding.
Bob  (teasing)  No! Who’d have thought it? A pudding? On Christmas Day?
Tim  There has to be a pudding, Pa. You said so yourself.
Bob  And how very right you are, Tim! What is Christmas without?
And we shall have the very best… well, the best a penny can buy.

Bob and Tim pick out a Christmas pudding. They sing to it and Bob gives the vendor a penny.

Bob  Good things come
     To those who wait
Tim  The grandest Christmas pudding ever on your plate
Bob  As sweet as you
Tim  And bigger too
Bob  And we’ll be dining like the Maharajahs do
     We’ve bought the goose
     We’ll feast like lords
Tim  And Mum’ll make a dinner that could win awards
Bob  But all the things
     That we could buy
     They don’t compare to what we have both you and I
Both  Now, lighter than a feather
     We’re a happy band of laughing cavaliers.
     When we are both together
     We have love to guide us both throughout the years

As they pass the toy stall which is laden with brightly coloured toys, a number of spoilt children are telling their mother what they want. Tim and Bob stop to watch.

Spoilt child#1  I want a train
                I want a boat
Spoilt child#2  I want a dolly with a purple velvet coat
Spoilt child#1  That soldier there
                Made of wood
Parent  Well, good things only come to children if they’re good
Bob and Tim pass the drinks cart. A woman is trying to drag her drunken husband from its clutches.

Drunk: I want a drink
Wife: Well times are tough
Drunk: I think I'll have a gin
Wife: I think you've had enough
Tim: No gifts galore
     Or presents new
     I have the gift of love to share from me to you
Both: Now, lighter than a feather
     We're a happy band of laughing cavaliers.
     When we are both together
     We have love to guide us both throughout the years
All: Good things come
     To those who wait
     No matter who from me and you to heads of state
     But all I know
     This much is true
     That all the good things now are bundled up in you
     When you are near
     My world's complete
     And ev'ry minute with you in it is a treat
     These moments come
     And all too few
     But they're enough when you have me and I have you
Vendors: We have enough when you have me and I have you
Bob: They're world enough when you have me and I have you

As the crowds disperse, Scrooge crosses towards his front door, followed by two gentlemen. One is Dickens in overcoat and top hat and the other a very portly fellow with a long muffler.

Dickens: Ah, Mr Scrooge, I believe
Scrooge: You may believe what you wish to believe.
Dickens: Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge?
Scrooge: Pleasure? I can assure you, sir, it is not my pleasure and I'm sure it will not be yours.
Gentleman#2: Nonsense, Mr Scrooge, we always gain pleasure from the generosity of our friends.
Scrooge: Generosity? What is this?
Gentleman#2: We represent the Benevolent Society for the Prevention of Poverty, sir!
Scrooge
Bah!

Dickens
At this festive season of the year, Mr Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some small provision for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time.

Gentleman#2
Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

Scrooge
Are there no prisons?

Gentleman #2
Plenty of prisons, sir.

Scrooge
And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

Gentleman#2
They are, sir. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

Scrooge
Oh, I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course.

Gentleman#2
Excuse me?

Scrooge
You’re excused!

Dickens
Er… A few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when want is keenly felt and abundance rejoices.

Gentleman#2
What can we put you down for?

Scrooge
Nothing!

Gentleman#2
You wish to be anonymous?

Scrooge
I wish to be left alone.

Gentleman #2
We were hoping you would give a little something, sir, to help your fellow man…

Scrooge
Give something? (There has been a cut here) I don’t make merry myself at Christmas and I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned. They cost enough. And those who are badly off must go there.

Dickens
The poorhouse, sir? Many can’t go there. And many would rather die.

Scrooge
If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population.

Gentleman #2
Sir, we are here on Earth to do good for others.

Scrooge
Then what are the others here for? Not a penny!

Dickens
(almost pleading) Mr Scrooge, are you sure you won’t reconsider?

Scrooge
I know my mind, Gentlemen, and I know my business. So let me go about mine, and I will leave you to yours. Good evening!

The gentlemen shake their heads and exit.

Scrooge
Parasites and leeches! What is it about Christmas that brings them oozing from every nook and cranny. The streets are infested with ‘em! Makes my skin crawl.