

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

SCENE 1 -

(SOUND CUE)

CHARLES DICKENS enters and takes a deep bow, addressing all three sides of his audience.)

DICKENS: Thank you, thank you. You are too kind. Ladies and Gentlemen allow me to introduce myself. I am Charles Dickens, renown author, writer extraordinaire and of course...your humble servant. *(Bows again.)* I shall begin today's reading of A Christmas Carol. *(Opens book, clears throat, elaborate preparation...)* "Marley was dead to begin with, there can be no doubt of that."

(CHESTNUT enters.)

CHESTNUT: Hey! What are you doing?

(FIGGY, HOLLY, MISTLETOE and PEPPERMINT enter following, each as indignant as CHESTNUT.)

FIGGY: Hey, who are you?

HOLLY: This is our show!

MISTLETOE: Yeah, we've been rehearsing all week.

PEPPERMINT: What's the big idea?

DICKENS: *(Utterly astounded.)* Your show? My dear little friends. I assure you I am the famed, prestigious and illustrious writer Charles Dickens and this is indeed... my show.

CHESTNUT: Mrs. Drama Teacher!

STORYTELLERS: Mrs. Drama Teacher!

(TEACHER enters, embarrassed, trying to keep up a big smile for the audience.)

TEACHER: Now, kids. This isn't how we rehearsed it, is it?

FIGGY: But he's stealing our lines!

HOLLY: Yeah, we're the storytellers!

MISTLETOE: He can't just barge in here and take over like this.

TEACHER: *(Overly polite.)* Oh, dear. Mr. Dickens. We're honored to have you... It's just that they were planning to be the storytellers today.

DICKENS: Well who the dickens do they think they are. *(Points to book.)* It says right there: A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens Yours Truly.

TEACHER: So it does, Mr. Dickens. I wonder if we might ask you a favor.

DICKENS: This story is all about generosity. Of course, I will grant you a favor.

TEACHER: Well...

PEPPERMINT: We want to do it our way!

CHESTNUT: Yeah! We want all the kids to play the parts. And we want the audience to be part of the show!

DICKENS: Oh dear. That's a little... unusual, isn't it?

FIGGY: And we want everybody to sing Christmas Carols with us!

HOLLY: So that everybody can have a good time!

MISTLETOE: After all, it's Christmas, isn't it? *(She repeats/speaks to the audience.)* Well, isn't it?

(AUDIENCE replies, "Yes!")

DICKENS: Very well, then. In the spirit of the season. (To TEACHER.) Uh-hum. Perhaps you should take your...

TEACHER: My what...? My seat! Yes of course! Break a leg, kids!

(TEACHER exits, sits in audience.)

DICKENS: And the rest of you?

(All STORYTELLERS sit together in an upstage corner of the playing area. Only PEPPERMINT remains.)

Now as I was saying. Marley was dead...

PEPPERMINT: *(Tugging at his sleeve.)* Excuse me, Mr. Dickens.

DICKENS: *(Trying to keep temper, to himself.)* Patience. Patience. What is it?

PEPPERMINT: There's a great deal to come before that, sir.

DICKENS: All right then. (To STORYTELLERS.) How do you think the story should begin?

PEPPERMINT: On Christmas Eve!

(SOUND CUE)

CHESTNUT: Snow was falling everywhere!

FIGGY: Kids were throwing snowballs!

HOLLY: People were putting up Christmas trees!

MISTLETOE: Hanging the mistletoe!

PEPPERMINT: Buying presents!

CHESTNUT: And hurrying home to get ready for...

STORYTELLERS: Christmas Day!

MISTLETOE: Everybody! Sing with us!

SONG: *We Wish You a Merry Christmas.*

BLACKOUT SCENE CHANGE

SCENE 2 -

DICKENS: But on this bitterly cold day there was one man who did not wish anyone a merry Christmas.

(Pulling on his hat and coat, SCROOGE enters...)

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug! *(To the audience.)* To the lot of you! Bah!

HOLLY: Ebenezer Scrooge was sitting in his counting house...

(SCROOGE sits, hunched over his desk with pencil and paper.)

MISTLETOE: He loved to sit and figure and count how much money he had.

PEPPERMINT: Because Scrooge loved his money.

DICKENS: Scrooge had one man who worked for him...

CHESTNUT: Poor Bob Cratchit...

(CRATCHIT enters, pulling on a tattered coat. Goes to his desk.)

FIGGY: He had only a piece of coal...

(FIGGY puts a piece of coal in the "stove".)

HOLLY: *(Bringing candle.)* And the light of one candle...

(HOLLY pretends to light candle and blow out the match. CRATCHIT tries to warm his hands by the candle.)

...to keep him warm.

CRATCHIT: Master Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Dare you speak to me when you should be working?

CRATCHIT: I'm sorry, Master Scrooge, it just that...

SCROOGE: What? What? Out with it!

CRATCHIT: I was wondering if I might...

SCROOGE: So! You want Christmas Day off again this year do you?

CRATCHIT: It would be ever so nice of you to grant it to me. All of my children and my dear wife, well... it would make them very happy, sir.

SCROOGE: Very well, I'll *think* about it. Back to work!

DICKENS: Suddenly there was a cheerful voice!

(NEPHEW enters carrying a Christmas wreath.)

NEPHEW: Merry Christmas, Uncle Scrooge!!

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!

NEPHEW: What do you have to be cross about?

SCROOGE: This *Christmas* that you love so much is robbing me blind! No one pays their bills! No one pays their rent!

NEPHEW: But Uncle, surely you're rich enough!

SCROOGE: I lose money every Christmas and it takes me half the year to make it up. Just ask him, Cratchit over there. He's planning to steal a day's wages for this Christmas foolery.

NEPHEW: Oh, hello, there Mr. Cratchit. Merry Christmas to you.

(CRATCHIT begins to answer.)

SCROOGE: Don't say it. Not under my roof!

NEPHEW: I came to ask you to Christmas dinner, Uncle.

SCROOGE: I'll be too busy, doing his job and mine too!

NEPHEW: Well, if you change your mind...

SCROOGE: I won't. Good day to you.

NEPHEW: I asked you last year and I'll ask you again next year. Maybe someday you will accept.

(NEPHEW hangs wreath on Scrooge's desk.)

Say Merry Christmas to your family for me, Mr. Cratchit.

CRATCHIT: You're very kind, sir.

(NEPHEW exits. SCROOGE takes wreath and throws it on the ground.)

DICKENS: Next came two unsuspecting gentlemen. Mr. Merry and Mr. Glee.

MERRY & GLEE: Merry Christmas. Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas one and all!

MERRY: Mr. Scrooge, we are here to collect for the poor...

GLEE: Just half a shilling will feed a family...

SCROOGE: Are there no prisons? No workhouses?

MERRY: But the children, sir!

SCROOGE: Are there no orphanages?

GLEE: It's a very cold winter. Some of the poor among us may die without our help.

SCROOGE: That is no business of mine. Good day, Gentlemen.

MERRY & GLEE: *(Sadly.)* Merry Christmas, sir.

(MERRY and GLEE exit.)

SCROOGE: Humbug.

(CRATCHIT blows out his candle.)

What are you doing?

CRATCHIT: If you please, sir. It is my quitting time, sir.

SCROOGE: And you leave right at the minute? You expect me to give you a whole day and you can't give me a minute?

CRATCHIT: I'll come early the morning after, sir.

SCROOGE: See that you do!

(CRATCHIT takes his hat and tips it to SCROOGE, begins to speak...)

Don't say it!

(CRATCHIT nods and hurries out. He sees wreath where SCROOGE has thrown it, picks it up and hides it under his coat as he exits.)

DICKENS: Again, Scrooge heard a cheerful sound.

(SOUND CUE)

MISTLETOE: Carolers were right outside his window.

PEPPERMINT: It sounded as if the whole town was singing....

CHESTNUT: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen...

SONG: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

*During the end of the song SCROOGE closes his books, rubs his eyes under his spectacles, throws a scarf around his neck, locks up and walks alone, around the perimeter of the playing area. **SOUND CUE ENDS.** As the song ends he growls at the audience...)*

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!

SCROOGE exits.

SCENE 3 - (SOUND CUE)

DICKENS: It was a cold night and the fog and frost hung about Scrooge's old house like a mournful ghost as he made his way to the front door.

(SCROOGE enters rummaging in his MERRY for a key.)

FIGGY: Old Scrooge once had a partner named Jacob Marley,

HOLLY: But Marley had been dead for seven years.

(DOOR and KNOCKER face on screen)

MISTLETOE: Scrooge didn't miss Marley or even think about him.

FIGGY: But for some reason this night...

HOLLY: Scrooge looked at his door knocker and saw Marley's face.

SCROOGE: Marley!

(He yelps and jumps back. He turns his back and cowers, covering his face. He gains courage and turns slowly to look again.)

SOUND EFFECT STOPS

You must be getting old Scrooge. There's no face in that knocker. Bah!

(Slowly he looks again, hand across his face, peering through his fingers.)

(Feebly.) It's nothing. Bah.

SCROOGE looks back to see nothing there.

(Snaps his fingers.)

Ha! Pooh! Humbug!

MISTLETOE: Now there was a portrait of Jacob Marley that hung in Scrooge's

bedroom.

SCROOGE speaks as he gets ready for bed, putting on his nightcap.)

SCROOGE: There was a man who knew how to keep Christmas! What was it you used to say, Jacob? Christmas is a poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every year. How true, how true.

PEPPERMINT: Maybe the door knocker didn't frighten him.

SCROOGE: Humbug!

CHESTNUT: Maybe the darkness didn't spook him.

SCROOGE: Bah!

HOLLY: Maybe the shadows didn't scare him...

SCROOGE: *(Snaps fingers.)* Ha!

MISTLETOE: But he double locked his door just the same.

(SCROOGE's hand shakes wildly as he jiggles keys in imaginary door and quickly jumps in bed. Bed can a bench or a few benches together. He takes blanket and holds it beneath his chin, peering out into the darkness.)

SCROOGE: Come blessed sleep, come!

(SOUND CUE)

DICKENS: At last Scrooge drifted away, and it seemed a choir of angels sang him to sleep.

SONG: *Silent Night*

SCENE 4

*SCROOGE closes eyes and snores. **SOUND CUE ENDS.** When song is done the bells begin.*

SOUND CUE #5: *Long low toll of church bell: Dong... Dong...*

SCROOGE jumps from the bed covers his ears.)

SCROOGE: What can it mean? What can it mean?

(Suddenly all bells cease)

SOUND: *bell changes to chains and eerie sounds, continues through following scene.*

Huh?

SOUND EFFECT

SCROOGE: Who is there? Who?

SOUND EFFECT

SCROOGE: Who? Who is there?

SOUND CUE ENDS.

MARLEY speaks loudly...)

MARLEY: IT IS I...

(MARLEY steps into SCROOGE'S bedroom.

SCROOGE screams in horror!)

SCROOGE: AAAhhhh! What do you want from me?

MARLEY: Much!

SCROOGE: Who are you?

MARLEY: Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE: Who were you then?

MARLEY: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE: It can't be true!

MARLEY: You don't believe in me!

SCROOGE: (*Straightening himself up.*) Not at all. You're nothing but a stomach cramp, a bit of undigested beef...

MARLEY: EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHHHHBEEENEEEEZZERRRR!

Scrooooooooooooooooooggggg!

(*SCROOGE screams and falls in horror as MARLEY looms over him.*

SCROOGE is shaking like a leaf.

SOUND EFFECT - *Chains rattle horribly throughout the room.*

SCROOGE: Oh ghost, oh ghostly thing, oh terrible, terrible ghostly thing....

MARLEY: Marley!

SCROOGE: Marley! Why, why have you come to me this way?

MARLEY: I am doomed.

SCROOGE: Duh... duh... duh... dooooooomed?

MARLEY: In life I showed no kindness, I offered no happiness. Now I am doomed...

MARLEY: (*Echoey.*) DoooooOOOOOooooooooommmmedddddddd!

MARLEY: ...to wander the world and see what I cannot share but might have shared on earth... I am bound in my chains... Chains of my own making.

(*Chains sound effect continues.*)

SCROOGE: Your own making?

MARLEY: Do you not see? My chains are made of cash-boxes, keys, ledgers, padlocks. The things I worshipped in life!

SCROOGE: But you were always a good businessman.

MARLEY: Mankind was my business! Charity, mercy, kindness were all my business. At Christmas I suffer most. Oh, why did I not see the poor, the hungry, the needy...?

SCROOGE: (*Helpful.*) You were awfully busy...

MARLEY: LISSSSSSSSSSSTENNNNN!

(**SOUND CUE #6: Chains, bell, scary sounds.** *The chains flare in rattles. The bells shriek again. Scrooge screams and cowers. They suddenly stop.* **SOUND CUE ENDS.**)

My time is nearly gone. You have a chance to escape my fate, Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Oh, yes, yes, yes... Thank you, thank you... I'm very glad to hear it...

MARLEY: You will be haunted by Three Spirits. Expect the first when the bell tolls one. Look to see me no more. Remember what has passed between us!

SOUND EFFECT - CHAINS. *All sounds cease. MARLEY stands once again as nothing more frightening than a painting. SCROOGE trembles on the floor until the sounds are gone and he feels safe. He timidly gets up to examine the painting.*) **BLACKOUT FOR MARLEY EXIT**

SCROOGE: (*Whispers.*) Humbug. (*Throws a hand to his mouth, sorry he said it.*) Doh!

DICKENS: As all these terrible and troubling images fell away, Scrooge crawled into bed and fell into a deep, deep sleep.

(SOUND CUE #7: Intro to next song.)

PEPPERMINT: Little did he know, little did he dream...

CHESTNUT: Of the Christmas that was soon to come...

SONG: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

SCENE 5

Clock strikes SOUND EFFECT

SCROOGE: Twelve!

SCROOGE: *(Terrified.)* One!

(SOUND CUE: Wind, cold, eerie sounds.

Spirit of Christmas PAST enters.)

SCROOGE: Aaa! Who, who, who... are you?

PAST: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE: La, la, la.... long past?

PAST: No. *Your* past.

SCROOGE: But why have you come?

PAST: Your welfare.

(SOUND CUE ENDS.)

SCROOGE: Oh! Well! How nice of you. But actually I think I'd rather stay here in bed...

PAST: RISE!

PAST: Walk with me.

SCROOGE: Oh but you seem to fly, don't you? I'm a mere mortal, I'll fall...

PAST: Take my hand...

(Terrified, SCROOGE crawls from his cover and places his shaking hand in PAST's hand.)

(SOUND CUE: Flying, wind.)

SCROOGE and PAST act as if lofted by the wind around the playing area.

They may also "fly" down aisles and behind audience, up another aisle, ending up back on stage.)

FIGGY: When at last they touched down...

(SOUND CUE ENDS.)

HOLLY: Scrooge saw that they stood upon an old country road.

PAST: Do you recognize it?

SCROOGE: *(Looking around.)* Recognize it? I was a boy here!

(SCROOGE looks around, overcome with emotion.)

PAST: Show me the way, Scrooge.

(SCROOGE takes PAST's hand and eagerly pulls her/him along.)

SCROOGE: It's just past this gate, and then this post and then this tree...

MISTLETOE: Soon they came to the school yard. It was filled with children.

(TED and HARRY enter the playing area and throw a ball to each other.)

HARRY: Hey, Ted! Catch!

(SCROOGE walks right up the boys who do not see him.)

SCROOGE: Why it's Ted Sperling! Ted! And Harry Boniface!

TED: Got it!

(TED tosses ball back to HARRY. Scrooge tries to join the game.)

SCROOGE: Over here, boys!

PAST: They cannot see us, Scrooge. These are the things that have been.

TED: Race you to the school house!

HARRY: You're on!

(TED and HARRY run out of the area, down an aisle. PAST and SCROOGE turn away as YOUNG EBENEZER takes his place at a desk in playing area.)

PAST: The school house is deserted. Yet there is one boy there. All alone.

(They turn and see YOUNG EBENEZER.)

Do you recognize him?

SCROOGE: *(Sadly.)* It is me, poor boy. All alone on Christmas. Year after year as the boys ran off to their families I sat here in this school house. *(Near tears.)*

PAST: But there was one time...

SCROOGE: Yes, yes! There was *one* time!

(FRAN enters and runs to SCROOGE.)

FRAN: Ebenezer! Ebenezer!

YOUNG EBENEZER: Fran! Franny, is it really you?

FRAN: Yes, it's me you silly! Father is so much nicer these days and he sent me to get you and take you home for Christmas!

YOUNG EBENEZER: I can hardly believe it! And look at you Fran. Look how much you've grown!

(FRAN twirls to show how much she's grown. She and YOUNG EBENEZER embrace and laugh and play...)

SCROOGE: She had such a good heart.

PAST: She died young, didn't she, Scrooge?

SCROOGE: *(Smiles turning to sadness.)* Yes.

PAST: But she had one child. A son.

SCROOGE: My nephew!

(FRAN and YOUNG EBENEZER exit, running gleefully down the aisle.

SCROOGE turns away, trying to hide tears.)

PAST: What is it Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Oh nothing. I was just thinking how I talked to my nephew this morning. My sweet Franny's son.

(SCROOGE and PAST walk around perimeter of playing area.)

BLACKOUT

PEPPERMINT: Soon they came to the city...

CHESTNUT: ...And the Spirit of Christmas Past stopped at a warehouse door...

PAST: Do you know this place?

SCROOGE: Know it? I was an apprentice here!

(FEZZIWIG enters, boisterous and jolly.)

FEZZIWIG: Yo ho, there! It's Christmas come at last!

SCROOGE: Old Fezziwig! I worked for him but he felt like a father to me.

FEZZIWIG: Ebenezer! Out from behind that desk!

(YOUNG EBENEZER enters carrying Christmas garlands and decorations.)

FEZZIWIG: It's time for the Christmas dance!

(SOUND CUE: Intro to next song.)

FIGGY: And so it was!

HOLLY: Everyone forgot their work and had the jolliest time you ever saw!

MISTLETOE: And their favorite Christmas Carol of all?

PEPPERMINT: Why, Deck the Halls of course!

CHESTNUT: Everyone! Deck the Halls!

SONG: Deck the Halls.

SCROOGE enjoys it and dances by himself at the edge of the activity.

FEZZIWIG: Yo-ho! Nothing like Christmas is there? Nothing like it at all!

(FEZZIWIG and YOUNG EBENEZER exit joyfully, still singing Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la...)

(SOUND CUE ENDS.)

PAST: All that food and merriment. It must have cost Master Fezziwig a pretty penny.

SCROOGE: So what? The happiness he gave people was priceless!

PAST: And the people who work for him...

SCROOGE: It never seemed like I worked for him.

PAST: What did it seem like?

SCROOGE: Well, like we were friends!

(SCROOGE turns away with a suddenly troubled look.)

PAST: What is it, Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Nothing. I was just thinking how I talked to my clerk this morning.

PAST: Walk with me Scrooge. There is still another Christmas to visit.

BLACKOUT

FIGGY: They walked until they came to a small house with a modest parlor...

(BELLE enters and sits with her eyes down, sadly. YOUNG EBENEZER enters behind her...)

YOUNG EBENEZER: But Belle, I don't understand what you are trying to tell me.

BELLE: We met when we both young and poor, Ebenezer. We were alike then. But you have changed.

YOUNG EBENEZER: How have I changed?

BELLE: You don't love me anymore.

YOUNG EBENEZER: But I do! Very much!

BELLE: No, Ebenezer. I can see it plainly. You love your money most of all.

YOUNG EBENEZER: Is it so bad to make a profit? To improve one's standing?

BELLE: But it's all you really care about. I must return this to you.

(She takes the ring from her finger and holds it out to him.)

YOUNG EBENEZER: No, Belle, no.

BELLE: Goodbye, Ebenezer.

(BELLE exits. YOUNG EBENEZER looks at the ring, sadly puts it in his pocket and exits in another direction.)

SCROOGE: No more. I don't want to see anymore!

PAST: I told you these are the things that have been. They are what they are...

SCROOGE: I can't bear it! Take me back!

PAST: Very well, Scrooge. Take my hand.

SOUND EFFECT - WIND

(SCROOGE ends up on his bed. PAST places the cover over him.)

PAST: Good bye, Master Scrooge. I shall not come again. Sleep well.

HOLLY: And again Scrooge began to slumber.

(SOUND CUE: Intro to next song. PAST "flies", exiting.)

SONG: Oh Little Town

SCENE 6

SOUND CLOCK EFFECT:

SCROOGE: Twelve!

(Dooooooooonnnngg!)

SCROOGE: One!

(SCROOGE looks all around him. He jumps up and looks under the bed, quick turns to see if anyone is at his back.)

Nothing! Ha! (Thinks again.) Nothing? (Begins to tremble.) What does that mean?

(SCROOGE is shaking and chattering when Ghost of Christmas PRESENT, still off stage, cries out in laughter.)

PRESENT: Ho, ho, ho, ho!

SCROOGE runs around trying to find the source of the laughter. At last, PRESENT calls out again.)

PRESENT: Scrooge!

(Laughter stops.)

SCROOGE: That... that... that's me.

PRESENT: Enter!

(SCROOGE pretends to open a door, using his big key, his hand shaking wildly. PERFORMERS make the sound of a door creaking open.

SCROOGE goes through open door. PRESENT enters from another direction and cries out.)

PRESENT: I am the Spirit of Christmas Present!

(SCROOGE turns to see him, screams and falls to a heap on the floor.)

MISTLETOE: It was Scrooge's own room there was no mistaking that...

PEPPERMINT: But it was hung with beautiful green ivy and leaves...

CHESTNUT: A mighty fire rose in the chimney!

FIGGY: And there was such a feast for the eyes...

HOLLY: And belly!

SOUND CUE: *Happy music & sounds.*

MISTLETOE: There were fat turkeys and juicy geese!

PEPPERMINT: Roasted beef and peppered sausages!

CHESTNUT: Mince pies and apple pies and great iced cakes!

FIGGY: Figgy Puddings!

HOLLY: Cherry-cheeked apples and luscious pears!

SCROOGE: Oh my!

PRESENT: Ho, ho, ho! Come in! Come in and get to know me, Scrooge!

(SCROOGE approaches PRESENT with great wide eyes.)

You've never seen anything like me before, have you?

SCROOGE: Nuh... nuh... nuh... No.

PRESENT: Touch my robe!

(SCROOGE crawls, trembling and gingerly reaches a shaking hand out to touch the foot of PRESENT'S robe.)

(SOUND CUE ENDS.)

MISTLETOE: Suddenly everything vanished.

BLACK OUT

SCROOGE: *(Looking around.)* Where am I?

PRESENT: Why don't you recognize it? We're right outside your door, man.

These are the streets of London!

(SOUND CUE: Streets of London.)

SCROOGE: Why, yes. I see now. *(Reacting to a sudden smell.)* Whew!

PRESENT: Yes, Scrooge. That is the stench of poverty. These people live in a different London than yours.

SCROOGE: But look at them all! Why, they're all so happy. What do they have to be happy about?

PRESENT: Why it's Christmas Eve, man! They are preparing for a feast.

SCROOGE: Well, if they're poor I can't see what kind of meal they could look forward to.

PRESENT: Come with me and I'll show you.

DICKENS: The Spirit of Christmas Present did not hesitate. He took Scrooge straight to the home of Bob Cratchit...

SOUND CUE ENDS. *SCROOGE and PRESENT stand aside as CRATCHITS enter.*

PEPPERMINT: First came Mrs. Cratchit...

CHESTNUT: Though her dress had seen many years, she disguised its age with many brave ribbons!

(MRS. CRATCHIT enters calling over her shoulder.)

MRS. CRATCHIT: What can be keeping your father, children?

(MARTHA and PETER enter, happy and excited. MARTHA goes to "window", pretends to draw back the curtain.)

He went to church with Tiny Tim. They should have been home a half hour ago!

MARTHA: There he is, Mother!

PETER: *(Wildly happy, clapping.)* Just in time! We have a mighty goose to eat!
(BOB CRATCHIT, TINY TIM enter.)

DICKENS: Alas for Tiny Tim, he used a little crutch and his legs were held up by an iron frame!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Bob!

MARTHA & PETER: Father!

(ALL hug and wish each other Merry Christmas.)

MRS. CRATCHIT: Now come here, the both of you. Warm yourself by the fire.

(She places a stool by the "fire". TINY TIM sits upon it.)

And how did our golden boy behave?

CRATCHIT: He told me, coming home, that he hoped everyone saw him in Church. Because it might be pleasant for them to remember who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.

(ALL are solemn but TINY TIM.)

TINY TIM: Why is everyone frowning? It's Christmas! When do we eat, Mother? And can we start with the pudding?

MRS. CRATCHIT: Tiny Tim you know very well the pudding comes after. Martha, Peter! Set the table!

ALL CRATCHITS: Ooh! Ah!

MARTHA: Why its as big as a bread basket!

PETER: It's as big as house!

TINY TIM: It's as big as *me!*

(ALL laugh.)

SCROOGE: Why its quite a small bird. What's everyone going on about?

PRESENT: Shh! It's time for the pudding and Mrs. Cratchit is very nervous...

(MRS. CRATCHIT goes to get the pudding)

ALL CRATCHITS: Ooh! Ah!

SCROOGE: It's a very small pudding for such a large family.

(CRATCHIT stands to give a toast.)

CRATCHIT: Merry Christmas to us all, my dears! God bless us!

TINY TIM: God bless us every one!

(CRATCHITS circle TINY TIM and embrace him, laugh, continue having fun.)

SCROOGE: Spirit. Tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

PRESENT: I see a vacant place at that table.

SCROOGE: No!

PRESENT: Time will tell. If nothing changes in the future...

SCROOGE: So it can be fixed? We can change the future?

PRESENT: Shh! Another toast.

CRATCHIT: A toast to Mister Scrooge, founder of the feast!

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(Suddenly angry.)* Founder of the Feast indeed! How can you toast to such a stingy, odious, hard, unfeeling man!

(SCROOGE gasps.)

CRATCHIT: My dear. It's Christmas Day!

MRS. CRATCHIT: I'll toast to Mr. Scrooge because it's Christmas. I'm sure he and his money are having quite a holiday!

SCROOGE: Take me away, Spirit.

PRESENT: Will you turn your back again, Scrooge? Will you ever look and see what is before you?

SCROOGE: I... I see poor Tiny Tim.

PRESENT: Look around you, man! Tiny Tim is one of many!

SCROOGE: But are there no charities, no foundations...?

PRESENT: No prisons, no workhouses, no orphanages...?

SCROOGE: Please, please....

(SCROOGE falls to crying as CRATCHIT family exits. PRESENT begins to exit, walking backwards...)

BLACK OUT

SCENE 7

DICKENS: Once again and a final time, Scrooge heard the bell strike...

(SOUND CUE: Bell, wind, scary sounds.)

SCROOGE: *(Looking up, terrified.)* One!

DICKENS: The phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached!

(PERFORMERS with black cloth loft it off the stage as FUTURE enters. He is dressed as the traditional image: Black hooded robes, no face or body visible. SOUND FADES. As the sound subsides...)

SCROOGE: Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any I have seen! Have you come to save me? I wish to become a new man. In the future! *(FUTURE holds up one arm, points with one bony finger.)*

Yes, yes, Spirit of the Future! I will follow!

(SOUND CUE ENDS.)

BLACK OUT

FIGGY: Scrooge was led to a street corner he knew very well...

SCROOGE: I know these men, they are business men like me!

(MERRY and GLEE enter, with their thumbs in their suspenders, wearing identical Derby hats.)

MERRY: What-ho, did you hear the news?

GLEE: Indeed, it seems the codger died in his sleep.

MERRY: What's he done with all his money?

GLEE: You know what a miser he was.

MERRY: They say you can't take with you but knowing him...

GLEE: He probably figured out a way!

(They laugh and exit.)

SCROOGE: Spirit? Who do they speak of? Who?

(FUTURE says nothing and points in another direction. SCROOGE and FUTURE walk the perimeter of the playing area as CHAR WOMAN enters dragging a heavy cloth sack. OLD JOE enters from another direction and speaks to her.)

OLD JOE: Well, all right then, what you got there?

CHAR WOMAN: Open up the bundle Joe and let me know the value of it.

(OLD JOE opens it up.)

OLD JOE: Some silver teaspoons, a pair of boots. A couple shilling.

CHAR WOMAN: Dig deeper, Old Joe.

OLD JOE: Bed-curtains? Ain't he still in his bed?

CHAR WOMAN: That might be, but he won't miss 'em. See what else, have a look.

OLD JOE: His blankets?

CHAR WOMAN: *(Grinning.)* Still warm, ain't they?

OLD JOE: You got a heart as cold as his.

CHAR WOMAN: And what of it? If he wanted love and kindness he could 'a give some himself -- in his better days.

(OLD JOE and CHAR WOMAN laugh and drag the bundle off.)

SCROOGE: Who, Spirit? Who died? Who do they speak of?

(FUTURE does not speak. Points again. (MRS. CRATCHIT enters with her darning and sits on a stool. She works at the cloth for a little while and then looks up, takes a handkerchief from her apron and dabs her eyes.

BOB CRATCHIT enters, she runs to him.)

MRS. CRATCHIT: Oh, Bob!

(They embrace, both tearfully.)

CRATCHIT: Now, now my dear. Don't be grieved. I visited him just now and it would cheer your heart to see a place so green.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Oh, my little child. My little child!

SCROOGE: Why that's Bob Cratchit and his wife. What are they going on about?

CRATCHIT: I came upon Scrooge's nephew in the street just now. You know the one? A very decent man. He said he was ever so sorry and if there was anything he could do...

SCROOGE: Oh, no. No!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Sit by the fire, my dear.

CRATCHIT: And together, let's remember him.

SCROOGE: No...

MRS. CRATCHIT: None of us will forget... Tiny Tim.

SCROOGE: No!

(BOB CRATCHIT and MRS. CRATCHIT exit. FUTURE lifts a long arm and points again.)

HOLLY: Scrooge and the Spirit walked until they came upon an iron gate...

(HOLLY opens the 'gate' making the sound of a creaking hinge.)

SOUND EFFECT

SCROOGE: Well, what is this?

(FUTURE points.)

It is a church yard. I see that well enough.

MISTLETOE: It was overgrown with grass and weeds...

PEPPERMINT: The spirit stood among the graves and pointed down to one.

SCROOGE: Before I look at the name on that stone. Tell me. Are these the shadows of things that will be or can they be changed? Can I change ` them?

CHESTNUT: Still the Spirit pointed...

(SCROOGE falls and crawls, trembling, reaches for a stone... brushes it off.)

FUTURE: (Deeply dramatic.) Whose name has been chiseled there?

(SCROOGE falls to weeping, can barely speak.)

SCROOGE: It says... EBENEZER SCROOGE!

(SOUND CUE: Bell tolling twelve.)

FIGGY: *(After 2nd or 3rd bell "dong".)* As the words fell from his lips...

HOLLY: The Ghost of the Future began to fade away...*(Walk backwards)*

SCROOGE: No! Oh, no! Don't go! Hear me! I'm not the man I was!

(As FUTURE exits, bells toll twelve times. FUTURE walks slowly down to aisle to exit behind the audience with SCROOGE calling out to him.)

I will honor Christmas in my heart! I will live in the Past, Present and

Future! Oh, hear me, Spirits! I will change!

SCROOGE falls in sobs.

SOUND CUE ENDS.

BLACK OUT

PAUSE.

CHARLES DICKENS enters with his book.)

DICKENS: *(Reading at first then looking up with book in hand.)* It may be hard to believe but the next day the sun came up and the event was quite unremarkable. Past, Present and Future seemed hardly interested. The world went about its way as ever. The only difference from all other days, was simply that it was... Christmas. From the local chapels one could hear people sing Joy to the World...

SOUND CUE: Intro to next song.

SONG: Joy to the World

SCENE 8

SOUND CUE ENDS. *SCROOGE wakes, sits up, looks around, yelps and ducks under covers. Timidly looks over blanket again. Starts to see everything is all right.*

SCROOGE: My bedpost! My bed curtains! My shirt! Why you're all right here.

No one has taken you. You've stayed with me like little pets, my friends!

MISTLETOE: Scrooge woke up and began to behave... *(To DICKENS.)* What's the word?

DICKENS: Peculiar.

MISTLETOE: Ah! That's it. Peculiar.

SCROOGE: I'm alive! I'm not dead! No! I'm *alive!*

PEPPERMINT: The old man began to dance about the room.

SCROOGE: Oh Spirits! You have saved me! I have time! Time to make amends! Time to be good and kind to my fellow man!

CHESTNUT: He ran to the window, threw it open and began calling to the world...

SOUND CUE: Joyous Christmas music

SCROOGE: It's Christmas! It's Christmas. Merry Christmas one and all!

FIGGY: He laughed, he cried...

SCROOGE: Oh it is so good to be alive. Oh thank you Spirits, thank you Lord, for granting me this gift!

HOLLY: One boy was walking along...

(LUCKY BOY enters, walking before SCROOGE and whistling "Joy to the World.")

SCROOGE: Hello! You there, little boy. Can you tell me what day it is?

LUCKY: What day? Why, it's Christmas Day, of course.

SCROOGE: Of course, I knew that. I just wanted to make sure!

(Dances, forgetting boy.)

It's Christmas, it's Christmas, it's Christmas... Oh! *(Back to the window.)*

Oh, little boy. Good little boy. Remarkable little boy.

LUCKY: *(Looking around.)* Me?

SCROOGE: Do you know if they've sold the prize turkey at the grocer in the next street?

LUCKY: What? The one as big as me?

SCROOGE: Intelligent boy! Yes, Yes!

LUCKY: It's hanging there now.

SCROOGE: Then go and buy it.

LUCKY: You're fooling me.

SCROOGE: No, no! I'm completely serious. Go and buy it and tell them to bring it here. Here, pay them with this. *(Throws money.)* Come back in less than five minutes and I'll give you half a crown!

LUCKY: Oh, boy!

(LUCKY runs off.)

SCROOGE: I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. It will be twice as big as Tiny Tim. Oh it makes me happy. Oh, it makes me chuckle. It makes me chuckle and chuckle.

MISTLETOE: And so he sat down and chuckled and chuckled till he cried.

(SCROOGE sits and cries, gets up, takes off his nightcap and kisses it. Puts on his day hat...)

PEPPERMINT: He walked through the streets and greeted everyone, young and old, rich and poor, the very same way...

(SCROOGE walks into the audience, greeting everyone, shaking hands, slapping people on the back. He may add to the following lines, ad lib, laugh, notice details about the people, etc..)

SCROOGE: Hello! Ha! A Merry Christmas to you, sir! Madam! Merry Christmas. Oh, I hope you're enjoying your holiday. Look at me! I was a bad man and now I'm changed, changed, changed! Oops! Sorry to step on you. Merry Christmas. Here have a farthing, a hey-penny, how much do you think a hey-penny is? Ho-ho! Who cares?

(SCROOGE pulls Monopoly money from his MERRY and throws it around the audience.)

Merry Christmas!!!!

CHESTNUT: He went to the house of his nephew and had a merry time!

(SCROOGE picks out someone from the audience and recognizes him as

his nephew, maybe a teacher or principal)

SCROOGE: Fred! There you are my favorite nephew! What a good hand shake you have there. Here shake the other! Good! Good! Got that Charlie horse, you did! And you my darling niece! My favorite lovely niece! And all these little nieces and nephews. My there's quite a few of you aren't there? Wonderful Party! Wonderful time! Wonderful *everything!*

FIGGY: At last he came to the house of Bob and Mrs. Cratchit.

(SOUND CUE ENDS. SCROOGE pushes doorbell.) SOUND EFFECT

(BOB and MRS. CRATCHIT enter.)

MRS. CRATCHIT: Whoever could it be?

CRATCHIT: I don't know, dear.

(CRATCHIT opens "door".) Mr. Scrooge!

(SCROOGE is excited and happy then suddenly falls back into his bad old self.)

SCROOGE: Bob! Lady Cratchit! How well you both look! I mean... *(Face turns to scowl.)* I see you are all here making merry just because it's Christmas Day. I came to tell you that I will not stand for this any longer therefore I am giving you.... A RAISE!! Yes, yes a raise, a raise! Ha! *(Embraces all around, then he pushes past them.)* And where is he? Where is the Christmas boy?

(MARTHA and PETER enter.)

MARTHA & PETER: Mr. Scrooge?

(TINY TIM pushes past them and runs to SCROOGE.)

TINY TIM: Mr. Scrooge, Mr. Scrooge! What a nice surprise!

SCROOGE: Yes, Yes. It is quite a surprise. But here I am. Flesh and blood, heart and soul. Just like you, Tiny Tim. Just like you.

(SCROOGE and TINY TIM embrace. ALL in playing area embrace.

SCROOGE IS overcome with emotion.)

Oh! Heaven bless me!

(TINY TIM breaks away and calls out...)

TINY TIM: God Bless us every One! God Bless us every One!

(SOUND CUE: Finale, plays long for curtain call.

ALL sing: SONG We Wish You a Merry Christmas!

During the song ALL PERFORMERS sing and go into the audience

ALL come back to the playing area for final bows.)

END