

Spotlight Publications

Mr Scrooge The Panto

A traditional family pantomime
by Brian Luff



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Based on *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Mr Scrooge a mean old miser

Bob Cratchit Mr Scrooge's clerk

Mrs Fezziwig our panto dame, wife of Mr Scrooge's former employer

Mr Fezziwig the man to whom Mr Scrooge was apprenticed

McKinley actor/ fundraiser

Maconie actor/ fundraiser

Fred Mr Scrooge's nephew

Jacob Marley the ghost of Mr Scrooge's business partner

The Ghost of Christmas Past a kindly spirit

The Ghost of Christmas Present a generous spirit

The Ghost of Christmas Past a frightening spirit

Beelzebub Lord of Darkness

Mrs Cratchit Bob's wife

Tiny Tim Bob Cratchit's frail son

Belinda Bob Cratchit's daughter

Rebecca Bob Cratchit's daughter

Peter Bob Cratchit's son

John Bob Cratchit's son

Scrooge as a Boy our hero aged 10

Scrooge as a Young Man our hero aged 21

Plus, a lively Chorus of Londoners, party guests, school children, carollers, businessmen and spirits. With the very large cast, doubling and even tripling of parts is recommended.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT 1

1: 'Winter Wonderland' (Barnard/Smith) (Chorus)

2: 'Money Makes the World Go Around' (Kander/Ebb) (Mr Scrooge)

3: Optional: Director's choice

4: '(Remember the Days of the) Old School Yard' (Cat Stephens) (The Ghost of Christmas Past)

5: 'Merry Christmas, Everyone' (Shakin' Stevens) (Fred & Guests). Or, 'Mistletoe & Wine' (Paul, Stewart & Strachan)

6: 'Yesterday' (Lennon/McCartney) (Mr Scrooge)

7: 'There's No Business Like Show Business' (Irving Berlin) (McKinley & Maconie)

ACT 2

8: Director's choice: any suitable Christmas song

9: Christmas carol, e.g. 'Away in a Manger' (The Cratchit family)

10: 'Let It Snow' (Cahn/Styne) (Fred & Guests)

11: 'Thriller' (M Jackson) (Ghost of Christmas Future & Ghosts)

Alternatively, 'Funeral March of a Marionette' (Gounod)

12: 'Working in the Coal Mine' (Dorsey) (Beelzebub)

13: 'Twelve Days of Christmas' (trad.) (Mr Scrooge & Audience)

14: Medley: 'Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly'/'God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen' (Chorus)

15: 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' (trad.) (Cast)

Act 1**Scene 1**

Overture. Tabs open to reveal a snowy London street. The Chorus enter carrying Christmas packages, trees, turkeys and other festive goodies. Costumes are early Victorian, with lots of colourful hats and scarves

Song 1

The Townspeople perform a rousing routine to welcome us to the show. At the end of the song, curtain. Enter our dame, Mrs Fezziwig, on tabs

Mrs Fezziwig Hello, boys and girls! Welcome to Old London Town. It looks very pretty in the snow, doesn't it? But it's absolutely freezing here! I've had an icicle dangling from me nose all day, and I'm wearing *three* pairs of knickers. Don't worry, I'm not going to show you. I tell you what, we could all do with some central heating round here. But it hasn't been invented yet! We all just have to huddle around candles for warmth. If it gets really cold we *light* the candles. Oh, by the way, my name is Mrs Fezziwig, and I've come here to tell you all a very special Christmas story. Would you like to hear a Christmas story, boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Mrs Fezziwig This story is all about a man called Ebenezer Scrooge. Many moons ago Mr Scrooge came to work for my dear old husband Mr Fezziwig as an apprentice. In those days being an apprentice wasn't anything to do with Sir Alan Sugar, it just meant you were going to learn how to do a job properly. Ebenezer was a lovely young man. Very quiet, and polite and well behaved. But he did used to work much too hard. I used to say to him, 'Ebby,' (that's what I called him), 'Ebby,' I'd say, 'let your hair down, lad. Have a few drinks, go and meet girls.' But he wouldn't listen to old Mrs Fezziwig. Oh no! All he did all day was work, work, work, work. Well, I tell you this, boys and girls, all work and no play makes Jack a *very* dull boy. Ebenezer got older and older, and duller and duller, and before he knew it, all he could think about was money. Money, money, money. He became as mean, sour-faced and grumpy as Craig Revel Horwood. In fact, he turned into an evil old miser, and everyone in London *hated* him. He became as hard and sharp as nails, and as solitary as an oyster.

And so our story begins, boys and girls. It's time to meet Mr Scrooge in the flesh for the very first time...

Scene 2

Tabs open to reveal Mr Scrooge's counting house. Bob Cratchit sits at his desk. He occasionally warms his hands on an unlit candle. Enter Mrs Fezziwig again

Mrs Fezziwig So, here we are in Mr Scrooge's counting house, where the old miser counts his money. And that poor soul over here is Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's overworked, underpaid and greatly underappreciated clerk. Don't worry, he can't see us. To Scrooge I'm just a shadow from the past. We join this cheery scene seven years after Mr Scrooge's business partner Jacob Marley passed away. But Mr Scrooge has never bothered to paint out old Marley's name on the brass sign outside his office.

Enter Mr Scrooge

Oooh, heads up, stand by your beds! There's Mr Scrooge now - the cold within him freezing his old bones and nipping at his pointed nose...

Mrs Fezziwig nips Mr Scrooge's nose. He seems to see her for an instant but then he turns away confused and heads for his desk, scratching his nose along the way. Mrs Fezziwig goes and watches from the shadows

Mr Scrooge Humbug.

Scrooge looks at the audience

What are you lot staring at? You sickly bunch of urchins. I suppose you're looking forward to Christmas, aren't you? Well, aren't you?

Audience Yes!

Mr Scrooge What a waste of money! All those toys and cards and crackers. I'm guessing you enjoy all that rubbish, don't you, boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Mr Scrooge You should all be boiled in your own Christmas pudding with a big stake of holly through your hearts!

Audience Boo!

Mr Scrooge It's no use booing me! That just makes me even more nasty and vile. Now, go away! All of you, and let me get on with my work.

Mr Scrooge's nephew Fred enters carrying a Christmas wreath

Fred Merry Christmas, Uncle Ebenezer!

Mr Scrooge Humbug!

Fred Who were you talking to?

Mr Scrooge Mind your own business, Fred.

Fred Did I hear you say that Christmas is a humbug, Uncle? Surely, you don't mean that.

Mr Scrooge I do mean it. What reason do you have to be merry? You're poor enough.

Fred What reason do you have to be miserable? You're rich enough.

Mr Scrooge Riches are relative. I am richer than a church mouse, but poorer than the Queen of England. Richer than a bullfrog in a garden pond, but poorer than Simon Cowell. Poorer than...

Fred Yes, I get the idea, Uncle.

Mr Scrooge What's Christmas except a time for paying bills without money and a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer? And to make it worse, you have to sit through the final of The X Factor.

Fred But that's the best bit.

Mr Scrooge What good has Christmas ever done you?

Fred Well, if you ask me, Uncle, I say Christmas is a miracle and God bless it!

Mr Scrooge throws him a disapproving look. Fred crosses to Cratchit's desk

Fred Bob! Good to see you! How's tricks?

Cratchit (*whispering*) Oh, great. I work for the most miserable man in London, this is the coldest winter in a thousand years and even the John Lewis commercial is rubbish this year.

Fred Agreed.

Two charity volunteers, Messrs McKinley and Maconie, enter. They are a very theatrical pair. One carries a clipboard and pen, and the other carries a box. The scene freezes for a moment while Mrs Fezziwig appears and fills in some detail

Mrs Fezziwig Poor Bob Cratchit. If ever a man needed a change of fortune it's him. When his ship finally comes in, knowing his luck he'll be at the airport. But back to the story. On Christmas Eve it was the tradition for volunteers to go round to local businesses and collect donations for charity. You lot would call them "chuggers", but in Mr Scrooge's day some people actually liked them.

She retreats into the shadows. The scene animates again

McKinley Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?

Mr Scrooge Mr Marley is indisposed.

McKinley Nothing serious, I hope.

Mr Scrooge As a matter of fact, he's dead.

Maconie Oh dear. *Quel dommage.*

Mr Scrooge Yes, it is rather inconvenient. Especially for him.

McKinley I am Mr McKinley, and this is my partner Mr Maconie.

Maconie *(little wave)* Hello!

McKinley We are collecting for the poor who suffer greatly at this time of year.

Mr Scrooge Are there no workhouses? No prisons?

McKinley *(whispering to Maconie)* Good grief, Mr Maconie, this man is a *monster!*

Maconie *(whispering to McKinley)* Terrible breath...

McKinley *(whispering to Maconie)* And appalling dress sense.

Maconie *(to Scrooge)* There are *plenty* of prisons, sir.

Mr Scrooge Good. I was afraid from what you said that something had happened to them.

Maconie But, you can't simply throw poor people into prison.

Mr Scrooge Why not?

Maconie *(whispering)* Is he serious, Mr McKinley?

McKinley *(whispering)* He can't be serious, Mr Maconie. He must be pulling our legs.

Maconie *(to Scrooge)* Are you pulling our legs, Mr Scrooge?

McKinley Christmas is a time when the lack of joy is felt even more than during the rest of the year.

Mr Scrooge It's a joyless time. Joyless!

McKinley Come on, don't be such an old stick-in-the-mud. What can I put you down for?

Mr Scrooge Nothing!

Both What?

Mr Scrooge Not a penny. Nil.

Maconie Nil?

Mr Scrooge Zip. Zippo. Zilch. Now, get out of here before I find my thesaurus and dig out a few more words that mean zero. I cannot afford to make idle people merry.

Fred Uncle!

Mr Scrooge *(to Fred)* Nephew, don't you have somewhere else to be? Shouldn't you be sitting in your tastelessly furnished living room playing tedious parlour games with your friends?

Fred I shall choose to ignore that ugly remark, Uncle. *(To the charity workers)* Here is my donation, gentlemen.

Mr McKinley *(to Fred)* Thank you, sir. Merry Christmas! *(To Maconie)* What a nice man. Isn't he a nice man, Mr Maconie?

Maconie Sweet man.

McKinley Lovely speaking voice.

Fred *(to Mr Scrooge)* So, I imagine you won't be coming to have dinner with Emma and me tomorrow?

Mr Scrooge Frankly, sir, I would rather stick a pen in my eye.

Fred That's very clear.

Mr Scrooge Fred, why did you get married?

Fred Because I fell in love, Uncle.

Mr Scrooge Love? Love? That's the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a Merry Christmas!

Fred It's no use, Uncle. I will continue to wish you a Merry Christmas in spite of your rudeness. *(Fred hangs his wreath)* Merry Christmas, Bob!

Bob Cratchit Merry Christmas, Fred!

Mr Scrooge Humbug!

Fred exits. Mr Scrooge returns to his work, but the charity workers are still lurking

Maconie (*whispering*) Should we try again, Mr McKinley?

McKinley (*whispering*) Is there any point, Mr Maconie?

Maconie (*whispering*) We could try asking him to set up a monthly direct debit.

McKinley (*whispering*) To spread the cost.

Maconie (*whispering*) Worth a try.

Scrooge snaps at them

Mr Scrooge Stop whispering!

Maconie Sorry.

Scrooge (*loud*) Why are you still here?

Both It's snowing outside, Mr Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge Gentlemen, this is not a bank! Do I look like a cash machine to you?

McKinley No, Mr Scrooge.

Maconie (*to audience*) He looks more like a bag of old rags.

Mr Scrooge I already help support both the prisons and the homeless shelters.

McKinley How, may I ask?

Mr Scrooge By paying my income tax, sir!

Maconie But many can't go to the shelters. They would rather die.

Mr Scrooge If they would rather die they had better hurry up and do it, and decrease the surplus population!

McKinley (*gasping*) Wicked!

Maconie He's wicked.

Mr Scrooge Good day to you, gentlemen!

McKinley Come, Mr Maconie, let us ply our trade elsewhere.

Maconie Right behind you, Mr McKinley.

The charity workers flounce out of the door. Mr Scrooge goes back to work. A children's chorus can be heard outside the office singing a Christmas carol. When they are finished, Mr Scrooge goes to the door to address them

Mr Scrooge What do you lot want?

Carolling Child Penny for a song, sir?

Mr Scrooge A penny?

Carolling Child It's not much, sir.

Mr Scrooge If I give you tuppence will you go and jump into the River Thames?

Carolling Child It's frozen over, sir.

Mr Scrooge Then break the ice!

Carolling Child You horrible old miser!

Mr Scrooge grabs Fred's wreath and throws it at the boy as he runs off

Mr Scrooge Go away!

Cratchit begins to gather up papers and blow out his candle. He then goes and stands at Mr Scrooge's desk

You'll want all day off tomorrow, I suppose?

Bob Cratchit If it's convenient, sir.

Mr Scrooge It's *not* convenient. And it's not fair!

Bob Cratchit But it's Christmas!

Mr Scrooge Bah! A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty fifth of December! (*To audience*)

You lot, do you think I should give Bob Cratchit Christmas Day off?

Audience Yes!

Mr Scrooge What's that? I'm getting deaf in my old age.

Audience Yes!

Mr Scrooge Poppycock and nonsense. You wouldn't say that if it was *your* money you were giving away.

Song 2

Mr Scrooge sings a song all about money. At the end of the song...

Bob Cratchit Please, Mr Scrooge. It's only once a year.

Mr Scrooge Oh, very well. You can have Christmas Day off.

Bob Cratchit Thank you, sir!

Mr Scrooge But be here two hours earlier than usual on Boxing Day!

Bob Cratchit Of course.

Mr Scrooge And work twice as hard.

Bob Cratchit Right..

Mr Scrooge And no coffee breaks.

Bob Cratchit No.

Mr Scrooge No toilet breaks.

Bob Cratchit No.

Mr Scrooge Or fag breaks.

Bob Cratchit Perish the thought.

Mr Scrooge And you can skip lunch as well..

Bob Cratchit Okay.

Mr Scrooge No afternoon tea break.

Bob Cratchit Absolutely.

Mr Scrooge And do three hours overtime at the end of the day.

Bob Cratchit No problem at all, Mr Scrooge. Merry Christmas!

Mr Scrooge Humbug!

Blackout and curtain

Mr Scrooge the Panto

By Brian Luff

Based on *A Christmas Carol* - one of the most popular Christmas stories of all time - this is a traditional family pantomime with everyone's favourite festive ingredients.

While staying true to the original story and using some of Charles Dickens' original dialogue, Brian Luff's new script includes loads of snappy banter, knockabout humour and slick comedy routines. It features Mrs Fezziwig as a panto dame and there's an hilarious double act called McKinley & Maconie, a couple of out-of-work actors turned charity fundraisers. The production requires a very large cast (doubling is recommended) and there are plenty of parts for children.

Plot Summary

Mr Scrooge is an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and by three magical Christmas spirits. The Spirits take Scrooge on a remarkable journey, during which he sees visions of his past and eerie predictions for his future. When the Spirits finally leave him, Scrooge is transformed into a much kinder, more lovable man.

Running time: approx. 90 minutes