



Mr Scrooge

A Traditional Family Pantomime by Brian Luff

Based on *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

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Mr Scrooge - The Pantomime

A Traditional Family Panto by Brian Luff

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	Cratchit's frail son
Belinda	Cratchit's daughter
Rebecca	Cratchit's daughter
Peter	Cratchit's son
John	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, carolers, businessmen and spirits.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 1

Scene 1.....	A snowy London street
Scene 2.....	Mr Scrooge's counting house
Scene 3.....	Mr Scrooge's bed chamber
Scene 4	Mr Fezziwig's house
Scene 5.....	A park.

ACT 2

Scene 1	Mr Scrooge's living room / Cratchit's house
Scene 2	The house of Mr Scrooge's nephew Fred
Scene 3	A dark street
Scene 4	A creepy graveyard
Scene 5	Beelzebub's Office
Scene 6	A snowy London street

ACT I

Scene 1

Enter The Ghost of Christmas Past on tabs.

Ghost of Christmas Past

I am the Ghost of Christmas Past,
With a famous fable to unfold.
It concerns a man called Mr Scrooge
And it's a tale that's oft been told.
The tale of Ebenezer Scrooge
Is a wonder to behold.
Now join us for the greatest
Christmas story ever told!

Tabs open to reveal a snowy London Street. The chorus enter carrying Christmas packages, trees, turkeys and other festive goodies.

Song 1

The townspeople perform a rousing routine to welcome us to the show. At the end of the song, curtain. Enter our panto 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. 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.

ACT 1

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 This is Mr Scrooge's counting house, where the old miser calculates how much money he's got. And that poor soul over here is Bob Cratchit - Scrooge's overworked, underpaid and greatly under-appreciated clerk. Don't worry, he can't see us. To Scrooge I'm just a shadow from the past and you lot are shadows from the future. 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.

Mrs Fezziwig 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.

Mr Scrooge 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 that 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 for finding yourself a year older, but not a penny richer? And to make it worse, you have to sit through the final of 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 enter. A very theatrical pair. One carries a clipboard and pen. The other carries a box. The scene freezes for a moment while Mrs Fezziwig appears and fills in some detail.

Mrs Fezziwig Poor Bob Cratchet. 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 prisons?

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

Maconie (*Whispering to McKinley*) Terrible breath too.

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?

Mr Scrooge No!

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

Maconie It's a joyless time. Joyless!

McKinley Come on, Mr Scrooge, 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 Oh, 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 charitable 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 I 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? 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. 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 to 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?

Caroling Child Penny for a song, sir?

Mr Scrooge A penny?

Caroling Child It's not much, sir.

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

Caroling Child It's frozen over, sir.

Mr Scrooge Then break the ice!

Caroling 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.

Mr Scrooge 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, sir.

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 Ok.

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!

Curtain.

ACT 1

Scene 3

Enter Mrs Fezziwig on tabs.

Mrs Fezziwig Oooh, that wretched old skinflint sends a shiver up my corset, I must say. Do you like Mr Scrooge, boys and girls?

Audience No!

Mrs Fezziwig Well, I'm not surprised. What a horrible old man. And he used to be such a lovely lad when he was younger. Such good manners. He was like a son to Mr Fezziwig and I. Anyway, back to the story. That evening, Ebenezer had his usual depressing dinner in his usual depressing pub, and then he went home to his depressing bed. He lived in some drab and creepy rooms that had once belonged to his partner Jacob Marley.

Tabs open on Scrooge's bed chamber. As Mrs Fezziwig speaks, Scrooge gets into bed.

Mrs Fezziwig Scrooge pulled back his depressing blankets, laid down on his depressing mattress, and rested his head on his depressing pillow. He lit no lamps, save for a single candle. Darkness was cheap, and Mr Scrooge liked it that way.

A clock chimes 12 times. Scrooge starts to snore. After a few moments, the ghost of Jacob Marley enters upstage behind Scrooge's bed. He wears chains around his body which clank heavily. Scrooge sits up in bed with a start.

Mr Scrooge What was that noise? *(To audience)* Did you lot see anything? Where did the noise come from?

Audience Behind you!

Scrooge turns around. Marley's ghost has gone.

Mr Scrooge Bah! There's nothing there. *(To audience)* You're playing games with me you cruel, wicked children. There's nothing behind me.

The ghost appears again and rattles its chains.

Audience Behind you!

Mr Scrooge Now what?

The ghost disappears just before Scrooge turns around. Ad lib with the audience a couple more times.

Mr Scrooge There's still nothing there.

Scrooge gets out of bed and walks upstage to investigate. As he does so, the ghost enters downstage.

Marley Ebenezer Scrooge!

Scrooge spins around and sees the ghost.

Mr Scrooge Ahhhhhh!

Marley Aha ha ha ha ha! *(To the audience)* That's my very best scary laugh, by the way. What do you think?

Mr Scrooge What do you want of me?

Marley Much!

Mr Scrooge Am I dreaming?

Marley Perhaps.

Mr Scrooge Who are you?

Marley Ask me who I *was*.

Mr Scrooge Who *were* you then?

Marley In life I was your business partner, Jacob Marley.

Mr Scrooge Rubbish. Marley was much taller.

Marley Oh?

Mr Scrooge And not so good looking.

Marley You don't believe I'm Marley?

Mr Scrooge Do you have ID?

Marley I have a blood donor card.

Mr Scrooge Let me see.

Marley My wallet is in my other coat.

Mr Scrooge Excuses.

Marley Oh, for heavens sake, next time I'll bring a current passport, a recent bank statement, and two utility bills!

Mr Scrooge There is no need for that. You're not here. The most likely explanation is that something I ate is giving me bad dreams.

Marley Bad dreams?

Mr Scrooge You may be some undigested beef, or a crumb of cheese. Maybe a digestive biscuit or a pickled egg. There's more of gravy than grave about you.

Marley That is a terrible joke, Ebenezer. But then, you always told awful jokes.

Mr Scrooge What are you, a spirit or a critic? I'm not looking for a five star review, I'm just trying to get some sleep.

Marley (*Loudly*) I have come to warn you, Scrooge. Your life is in danger. Terrible danger!

Song 3

Marley sings a song about danger. At the end of the song...

Mr Scrooge Marley, why are you wearing those chains?

Marley These are the chains I forged in life.

Mr Scrooge How?

Marley By my actions, Ebenezer. I forged them link by link, yard by yard. I made them with my greed and apathy.

Mr Scrooge But surely, greed is good.

Marley This isn't Wall Street, Ebenezer. When I died, I was condemned to put on these chains. Now I must wear them for all eternity!

Mr Scrooge How long is that?

Marley *Forever*, Ebenezer Scrooge!

Mr Scrooge Well, the chains don't suit you, Jacob. If you are Jacob. Frankly, you look ridiculous.

Marley (*Loud*) You too, my friend, are making a chain of your own with your despicable actions in this life.

Marley Bah!

Marley And I can assure you that your chain is much longer and heavier than this one.

Mr Scrooge How long?

Marley About a mile.

Mr Scrooge Nonsense.

Marley You will see it soon enough.

Mr Scrooge Do you have no comfort to give me at all?

Marley No.

Mr Scrooge Then leave me. Begone!

Marley Alas, I cannot.

Mr Scrooge I don't understand. How did *you* forge those chains, Jacob? You were always a such good businessman.

Marley (*Shouting*) Business? *People* should have been my business. Listen closely Ebenezer, for I speak the truth. The place where I now must dwell is ruled by the forces of darkness.

Mr Scrooge 10 Downing Street?

Marley No more jokes, Scrooge! This is serious! I am here tonight to tell you that you have a chance of avoiding my fate; an opportunity to escape my torment.

Mr Scrooge You were always a good friend to me, Jacob.

Marley Ebenezer Scrooge, tonight you will be visited by three spirits.

Mr Scrooge I think I'd rather not.

Marley Expect the first when the clock strikes one.

Mr Scrooge Can't I take them all at once and get it over with?

Marley You cannot fast-forward through this one, Scrooge. When the bell tolls one, the first ghost will appear. Listen to what it has to say. Your future depends on it. Farewell, Ebenezer.

Marley starts to leave.

Marley (*Fiddling in his pocket*) Oh, there's my wallet.

The ghost exits. Mr Scrooge gets back into bed.

Mr Scrooge Humbug!

Curtain. Enter Mrs Fezziwig on tabs. As she talks, she places a school desk on the stage and a small chair.

Mrs Fezziwig Do you like ghost stories, boys and girls? Are you scared?

Audience Yes!!! / No!!!

Mrs Fezziwig Mr Scrooge might be the most mean, greedy, selfish, penny pinching, stingy, miserly man in all the world, but everyone deserves a second chance, don't you think? This enchanted night will pass much more quickly than usual in Ebenezer's bed chamber, and before you can say "Ghostbusters", the time will be precisely one o'clock.

Mrs Fezziwig steps back into the shadows. A clock strikes one. Still on tabs, lights up on the school desk. Enter Mr Scrooge with The Spirit of Christmas Past.

Mr Scrooge Are you the Spirit whose coming I was told of?

Ghost of Christmas Past I am.

Mr Scrooge Who are you?

Ghost of Christmas Past I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Mr Scrooge Long past?

Ghost of Christmas Past No. *Your* past.

Mr Scrooge What business brings you here?

Ghost of Christmas Past Your welfare.

Mr Scrooge A good night's sleep would be more beneficial to my health. Can't we do this in the morning, I have to get up for work at five.

Ghost of Christmas Past Observe.

Scrooge as a child enters and sits working at the school desk.

Mrs Fezziwig The Ghost of Christmas Past whisked Scrooge back to his childhood. It was Christmas Eve afternoon. The sights and smells of the miser's old classroom brought back a thousand long forgotten memories.

Mr Scrooge Look, it's me when I was a boy. What a smart boy I was. Such clean fingernails. I even used to wash my neck in those days and I cleaned my teeth once a week whether they needed it or not. This is the place where I went to school. It seems deserted.

Two more schoolboys enter. They prod and shove the young Scrooge.

Schoolboy 1 Why are you still working, Scrooge? It's Christmas break now! The bell rang ages ago!

Schoolboy 2 He *never* goes home for Christmas.

Schoolboy 1 Who doesn't want to go home for Christmas?

Schoolboy 2 Come on, let's go. We're going to put a rat in the headmaster's trousers.

The schoolboys exit.

Mr Scrooge as a Child Who cares about stupid old Christmas. I'd much rather work. Then I'll grow up to be rich.

Scrooge as a child exits.

Mr Scrooge I was certainly very focused, wasn't I.

Song 4

The ghost sings a song that reminisces about childhood. At the end of the song...

Ghost of Christmas Past Now, Scrooge, let us visit another Christmas.

Scrooge as a young man enters and sits working at the desk.

Mr Scrooge It's me again. Only this time I'm twenty, maybe twenty one. My, what a handsome lad I was. Quite a catch.

After a few moments his sister Fan enters.

Fan Ebenezer!

Mr Scrooge That's my sister, Fan! Hello Fan!

Scrooge as a young man and Fan embrace.

Ghost of Christmas Past These are the shadows of things that have been. She cannot see you.

Fan I've come to bring you home, for Christmas!

Scrooge as a Young Man Home?

Fan Yes, home for good. Home forever and ever! Father is so much kinder than he used to be, and home is like heaven! You never have to come back here, and we'll be together all Christmas long, and have the best time in the world! Come on!

They exit.

Ghost of Christmas Past She had such a giving spirit. She had children too, I think.

Mr Scrooge One child.

Ghost of Christmas Past Your nephew?

Mr Scrooge Yes. My nephew Fred.

Ghost of Christmas Past We must move on. Let us see a third Christmas.

ACT 1

Scene 4

Tab's open on the Fezziwig's house. It is dressed for a Christmas party. In the centre of the stage is a table with a big empty punch bowl on it, and various bottles, boxes and cartons. Note: The floor is protected by a plastic sheet.

Ghost of Christmas Past Do you know this place?

Mr Scrooge Yes, it's Mr and Mrs Fezziwig's house. I was apprenticed to old Fezziwig. He was a lovely man.

Mr & Mrs Fezziwig enter wearing aprons over their party clothes.

Mr Scrooge Look, there he is now! Old Mr. Fezziwig...alive again! And there's his delightful and slightly masculine wife.

Mrs Fezziwig (*Gruffly*) I heard that.

Mr Scrooge What are they doing?

Ghost of Christmas Past They are about to mix up a fresh batch of Mrs Fezziwig's famous Christmas punch.

Mr Scrooge Why is there plastic sheeting on the floor?

Ghost of Christmas Past Why do you think, Scrooge? This is a pantomime!

Mrs Fezziwig Did you get all the ingredients for the punch, Mr Fezziwig?

Mr Fezziwig I did indeed, my love.

Mr Scrooge They sound a bit tipsy already.

Ghost of Christmas Past The spirit of Christmas, Ebenezer.

Mrs Fezziwig First, some sloe gin.

Mr Fezziwig Sloe gin?

Mrs Fezziwig Yes.

Mr Fezziwig Can't we get it to hurry up?

Mrs Fezziwig Hurry up? No, that's the *name* of the gin, you silly man. Sloe Gin.

Mr Fezziwig How much should we put in?

Mrs Fezziwig Oh, just pour in the whole bottle. Next, we put in some oranges.

Mrs Fezziwig throws a few whole oranges into the punch bowl. The gin splashes everywhere.

Mr Fezziwig Shouldn't we squeeze them first?

Mrs Fezziwig We haven't got time. The guests will be here in a moment.

Mr Fezziwig Little taste?

Mrs Fezziwig Little taste.

They ladle from the bowl and have a sip each.

Mrs Fezziwig Delicious!

Mr Fezziwig What next, dear?

Mrs Fezziwig goes and gets a big plastic bowl and puts it on the floor.

Mrs Fezziwig You need to tread some fruit.

Mr Fezziwig Fruit?

Mrs Fezziwig Punch tastes so much better when you tread the fruit by hand.

Mr Fezziwig By hand?

Mrs Fezziwig I mean feet. Tread the fruit with your feet. In you get, Mr Fezziwig. Start treading.

Mr Fezziwig gets into the bowl and starts treading fruit. Juice splashes everywhere.

Mrs Fezziwig Now, we put in some apples.

From about four feet away, Mrs Fezziwig throws some apples into the punch bowl, causing a lot more splashing.

Mr Fezziwig Little taste?

Mrs Fezziwig Little taste.

They ladle from the bowl and have another sip each.

Both Delicious!

Mrs Fezziwig (*Pouring two bottles from a great height*) Now, a bottle of brandy and a bottle of rum. Lemonade?

Mr Fezziwig Oh dear, I forgot to get the lemonade.

Mrs Fezziwig Never mind, we'll use sherry instead.

She pours in a bottle of sherry.

Mrs Fezziwig Is the fruit ready, Mr Fezziwig?

Mr Fezziwig Ready as it'll ever be.

Mr Fezziwig jumps out of the bowl and Mrs Fezziwig pours the contents of the bowl into the punch bowl. Juice everywhere.

Mrs Fezziwig There we go!

Mr Fezziwig Little taste?

Mrs Fezziwig Little taste.

She ladles from the bowl and they have a sip each. Pause.

Both More brandy I think!

They both fall about laughing.

Mr Scrooge I want to tread some fruit!

Mrs Fezziwig Now, we just have to add the secret ingredient.

Mr Fezziwig What's the secret ingredient, dear?

Mrs Fezziwig I can't tell you, Mr Fezziwig.

Mr Fezziwig Why not?

Mrs Fezziwig It's a secret.

They both laugh until they cry.

Mr Scrooge What's the secret ingredient, spirit?

Ghost of Christmas Past I should have thought that was obvious.

Mr Scrooge Tell me.

Ghost of Christmas Past The secret ingredient is fun. They're having fun together. Do you remember what it felt like to have fun, Ebenezer Scrooge?

Mr Scrooge Oh dear. Such a *very* long time ago.

Mrs Fezziwig Right, the punch is ready. Our party guests are arriving.

Guests enter from all directions. The Fezziwigs greet them. Scrooge as a young man enters and meets with the Fezziwigs.

Mr Scrooge Look, that's me again!

Mr Fezziwig No more work tonight everyone, it's Christmas Eve!

Mrs Fezziwig Come on, it's time for a party. *(To audience)* Would you like to go to a Christmas party boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Mrs Fezziwig With as many sweets as you can eat?

Audience Yes!

Mrs Fezziwig Mr Fezziwig, hand out some sweets for the boys and girls.

Mr Fezziwig I surely will.

Mrs Fezziwig And for our guests, as much of my famous punch as they can drink!

Guests Hooray!

Mrs Fezziwig Merry Christmas everyone!

Song 5

Mrs Fezziwig leads the dancers and guests in a song about having fun with your friends at Christmas. Eventually Mr Scrooge joins in. At the end of the song...

Ghost of Christmas Past A simple party and a few little treats was enough to make all of these folks happy. The Fezziwigs spent very little money on their Christmas parties, you know. Yet they are remembered with such fondness.

Mrs Fezziwig Ebenezer, come and meet a friend of ours.

Mr Scrooge as a Young Man joins Mrs Fezziwig and Belle.

Mrs Fezziwig Belle this is Ebenezer. Ebenezer this is Belle.

Mr Scrooge as a Young Man Very pleased to meet you, Belle.

Belle Pleased to meet you too.

Mrs Fezziwig I'll leave you to it, then. *(To audience)* It was love at first sight, you know. How romantic.

Mrs Fezziwig leaves them alone. Lighting change.

Belle Would you like a glass of punch?

Mr Scrooge as a Young Man No thank you. I've seen the recipe.

Awkward pause.

Mr Scrooge as a Young Man It's... very warm in here.

Belle Yes.

Another awkward pause.

Mr Scrooge as a Young Man Would you like to go outside? Just for a moment to get some air. I know it's snowing, but ...

Belle I'd like that very much

He offers her his arm. Belle takes it. Meanwhile the guests exit, saying goodbye to the Fezziwigs.

Ghost of Christmas Past Do you remember this party? Meeting this girl?

Mr Scrooge Remember? Yes, I remember. She was beautiful and I adored her.

Ghost of Christmas Past Yes. But there came a time when you adored something else more than you adored her, and you could not hide it. She saw your love for her replaced by your need for furthering yourself in the world.

Mr Scrooge I don't want to see anymore.

Ghost of Christmas Past You must Ebenezer, you must.

Curtain

ACT 1

Scene 5

On tabs. A park. Birdsong. Belle enters and sits on a bench. She waits. Mr Scrooge as a young man enters.

Scrooge as a Young Man Belle, darling. I hope you haven't been waiting long.

Belle I feel like I've been waiting forever.

Scrooge as a Young Man I'm sorry. I got lost on the way here.

Belle Unlikely.

Scrooge as a Young Man I locked myself in the office.

Belle Nonsense.

Scrooge as a Young Man I was run over.

Belle Run over? By what?

Scrooge as a Young Man A horse?

Belle What?

Scrooge as a Young Man A reindeer and sleigh?

Belle No more implausible excuses, Ebenezer. Come and sit down.

Scrooge as a Young Man I'm sure I was only five minutes late.

Belle It's not about that. You said we could not get married until we had a house, and I agreed.

Scrooge as a Young Man Yes.

Belle But you've had your house for three years now.

Scrooge as a Young Man Yes, but we also need something to live on.

Belle I realize that, and you said that when you got promoted at work we'd have enough.

Scrooge as a Young Man But, it wasn't as much of a pay raise as I'd hoped. I thought we agreed.

Belle We did agree, but now you've saved enough to buy another house. Ten houses if you wanted to. How much money is enough, Ebenezer?

Scrooge as a Young Man But Belle...

Belle I don't care about money, Ebenezer. All I ever really needed was you. We could have been happy.

Scrooge as a Young Man Could have been?

Belle I'm sorry Ebenezer. It's over.

Scrooge as a Young Man What?

Belle It's not me, it's you.

Scrooge as a Young Man You're dumping me?

Belle It's for your own good, Scrooge.

Scrooge as a Young Man But I love you.

Belle You only love two things, Ebenezer Scrooge. Money, and your own refection.

Belle kisses his cheek and exits. Blackout. Then the lights quickly come up to reveal the present day Mr Scrooge sitting sadly on the park bench with the Ghost of Christmas Past sitting next to him.

Mr Scrooge She was too good for me. You are unkind to show me these things, spirit.

Ghost of Christmas Past I did not create these shadows, Ebenezer Scrooge. You did. I am simply a guide - an illuminator of your past in an attempt to model your future.

Mr Scrooge Spirit, show me no more! Take me home.

Ghost of Christmas Past The other ghosts will come soon to show you further things. Listen to them, Ebenezer. Listen, listen, listen...

The ghost gets up and exits. Its voice echoes into the distance.

Song 6

Scrooge sits and sings a sad song about losing his love. At the end of the song, he exits. Lighting change. Still on tabs, enter Mr Maconie and Mr McKinley.

McKinley Serves him right. Miserable old skinflint.

Maconie He's never given us a penny for our good causes, has he Mr McKinley.

McKinley Not a penny, Mr Maconie.

McKinley Of course, collecting money for charity is not our full time job, boys and girls.

Maconie Oh, no! We're really actors.

McKinley Treaders of the boards.

Maconie Thespians, performers... headliners.

McKinley Well, I wouldn't say headliners. Featured *artistes*, perhaps.

Maconie But we love the smell of the greasepaint, don't we Mr McKinley.

McKinley Oh yes, Mr Maconie. The smell of the greasepaint, the roar of the crowd.

Maconie Or is it the roar of the greasepaint, the smell of the crowd?

McKinley There is no biz, like the biz that we call show.

Song 7

Mr Maconie and Mr McKinley perform a song and dance number about being in showbiz. They are joined by Mr & Mrs Fezziwig and their party guests. At the end of the routine, curtain.

ACT II

Scene 1

On tabs. Enter McKinley and Maconie.

McKinley Hello!

Maconie Hello! It's us again. Did you enjoy the interval, boys and girls?

McKinley Did you have lots of lovely sweets and ice cream?

Audience Yes!!!

Maconie I wish we had.

McKinley We have to watch our figures, you see. Being performers.

Maconie The stage adds twenty pounds, you know.

McKinley Never mind that now, Mr Maconie, it's time to go through the list of charity donations, and see how much we collected this Christmas.

Maconie I'm all over it, Mr McKinley. Here's the list. *(Reads)* Your Auntie Minnie gave a Guinea.

McKinley A Guinea from Auntie Minnie?

Maconie Yes.

McKinley Dear old Auntie Minnie.

Maconie Alderman Harding gave a farthing.

McKinley Harding only gave us a farthing?

Maconie Yep.

McKinley Old misery.

Maconie Mistress Jenny gave a penny.

McKinley That's more like it. Jenny gave us a penny.

Maconie William Pitt gave a threepenny bit.

McKinley Nice.

Maconie Lord Callicote gave a five pound note.

McKinley I thought Councilor Stroat gave a five pound note.

Maconie No, Councilor Stroat gave half a groat.

McKinley Half a groat?

Maconie Yes.

McKinley What's a groat?

Maconie Four pennies?

McKinley Councilor Stoa only gave four pennies?

Maconie Captain Brown gave half a crown.

McKinley Oh dear. I had Captain Brown down for more than half a crown.

Maconie Duchess Willings gave ten shillings.

McKinley I thought she gave three and six.

Maconie No, Stevie Nicks gave three and six.

McKinley What, Stevie Nicks out of Fleetwood Mac?

Maconie No, a different Stevie Nicks. Stevie Nicks who lives out in the sticks.

McKinley Stevie Nicks who lives out in the sticks gave three and six.

Maconie Yes. And someone anonymously gave a gold sovereign?

McKinley A gold sovereign? Well, just write down any old name next to it.

Maconie I can't think of a name that rhymes with sovereign.

McKinley OK, forget it. It's not worth bothering.

Maconie "Bothering" rhymes with "sovereign".

McKinley Not quite.

Maconie It's close enough. I'll say Lady Bothering gave a gold sovereign.

McKinley Add it up then.

Maconie Oh, dear.

McKinley Do you want a calculator?

Maconie No, I'll do it in my head. *(Reads)* A guinea from Minnie, a farthing from Harding, penny from Jenny, threepenny bit from Pitt, five pound note from Callicote, half a groat from Stoa, half a crown from Brown, ten shillings from Willings, three and six from Stevie Nicks and a gold sovereign from Lady Bothering. That's seven pounds, sixteen shillings, carry the one, take away the number you first thought of, and the answer is... seven pounds, seventeen shillings and sixpence, farthing.

McKinley Bravo, Mr Maconie.

Maconie *(To audience)* Anyone want to check it?

McKinley We haven't got time. How long before we get decimal currency?

Maconie A hundred and twenty eight years.

McKinley Can't come soon enough for me.

Maconie Well, I think that's a very generous amount of donations for charity this year, Mr McKinley.

McKinley I think we both deserve a very big round of applause for that.

Audience applause.

Maconie And now, boys and girls, it's time to catch up with Mr Scrooge again.

McKinley He's already been visited by two very scary spirits and the night is yet young.

Maconie It's approaching two o'clock and Ebenezer is about to embark on another hair-raising journey.

A clock strikes two, and a bright, warm, cheerful light shines from behind the curtains.

McKinley Behold, the Ghost of Christmas Present!

Exit Mr Maconie and Mr McKinley. The curtains open. It is Scrooge's living room. The Ghost of Christmas Present sits on a chair behind a table groaning with food. He holds the biggest goblet of drink you have ever seen.

Music strikes up. The spirit sings a cheery song about Christmas, accompanied by a colourful troupe of singing and dancing sprites and spirits.

Song 8

At the end of the song the spirits scatter and The Ghost of Christmas Present beckons to the wings.

Spirit of Christmas Present Ebenezer Scrooge. Come forth!

Mr Scrooge enters timidly.

Spirit of Christmas Present Come on in and know me better, man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. You have never seen the like of me before?

Mr Scrooge Definitely not.

Spirit of Christmas Present Eighteen hundred and forty three of my brothers have come and gone before me, one for every year since the first Christmas.

Mr Scrooge That's a great many ghosts. And by the look of that table it must have been a very expensive exercise.

Spirit of Christmas Present Oh, for heavens sake, stop thinking about *money*, Scrooge. (*Handing him a large goblet*) Here, drink this.

Mr Scrooge What is it?

Spirit of Christmas Present It is the milk of human kindness.

Scrooge takes a large swig out of the goblet.

Spirit of Christmas Present What do you think?

Mr Scrooge Mmmm. It's wonderful. Can I have some more?

Spirit of Christmas Present Later. We have much to see.

Mr Scrooge I don't want to go.

Spirit of Christmas Present Oh, yes you do!

Mr Scrooge Oh, no I don't!

The spirit encourages the audience to join in.

Spirit of Christmas Present Oh, yes you do!

Mr Scrooge Oh, no I don't!

Spirit of Christmas Present Oh, yes you do!

Mr Scrooge Oh, no I don't!

Spirit of Christmas Present Oh, yes you do!

Mr Scrooge Oh, no I don't!

Mr Scrooge Oh, very well. If you have more to teach me, spirit, let me learn it now.

Spirit of Christmas Present Follow me then, Scrooge.

Curtain.

On tabs, the whole Cratchit family quickly enter and set a table and chairs on stage. This is Bob Cratchit's little house. Gathered are Mrs Cratchit, Belinda, Rebecca, Peter, and John. Mrs Fezziwig enters.

Mrs Fezziwig The ghost led Ebenezer out into the snow and soon they were at the home of Scrooge's clerk, Bob Cratchit. The ghost paused outside the front door, and the pair peered inside through frosty windows. At the table was Mrs. Cratchit, dressed in simple clothes that she'd made herself. With her were her daughters Belinda and Rebecca, and her sons Peter and John.

The Cratchits sing a gentle Christmas Carol.

Song 9

At the end of the song, enter Martha Cratchit.

Rebecca Martha!

Martha I'm sorry I'm late, mother. We had a lot of work on today!

Mrs. Cratchit Well, I'm just glad you got here before dinner.

Belinda Come and sit down, Martha.

Mrs. Cratchit I wonder what's keeping your father and Tiny Tim this evening. Are the streets very busy?

Martha It's always busy at Christmas!

Mrs. Cratchit Let's finish getting dinner ready together.

Everyone moves to help.

Peter (*Pointing*) Look, father and Tiny Tim are coming.

Bob Cratchit enters with Tiny Tim perched on his shoulders.

Bob Cratchit Hello everyone! I must say everything looks very festive! Well done!

Martha Tim! It's so lovely to see you.

Tim Hello, big sister. I'm so glad you're here! (*He coughs*)

Martha So am I, Tim.

Bob Cratchit And so am I! It wouldn't have been Christmas without a visit from Martha.

Bob Cratchit and Martha hug. Tim removes his coat and uses his crutch to help him get seated at the table. Mrs Fezziwig appears.

Bob Cratchit A Merry Christmas to us all!

Tim God bless us every one!

Mr Scrooge (*Whispering to the ghost*) Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

Spirit of Christmas Present I see a vacant seat and a crutch without an owner.

Mr Scrooge No!

Spirit of Christmas Present If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, this child will not see another Christmas.

Mr Scrooge Kind spirit, say he will not die!

Spirit of Christmas Present Now, where have I heard that before, Ebenezer Scrooge? "If he will die, he had better hurry up and do it, and decrease the surplus population."

Mr Scrooge I didn't mean it! I didn't mean Tiny Tim!

Mr Scrooge hangs his head in shame. Bob Cratchit lifts his glass.

Bob Cratchit Raise your glasses to Mr Scrooge! The Founder of the Feast!

Mrs. Cratchit The Founder of the Feast? I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon!

Bob Cratchit Language, Mrs Cratchit! It is Christmas, after all!

Mrs. Cratchit Only at Christmas would we drink the health of such a detestable, stingy, unfeeling man. You know he is, Bob! Nobody knows it better than you do!

Bob Cratchit But we should treat our neighbours as we would want them to treat us. Nothing is more important than that at this time of year.

Mrs. Cratchit Oh, very well. A Happy Christmas to Mr Scrooge! I'm sure he'll be a very merry soul, and no mistake.

The Cratchits toast and drink.

Spirit of Christmas Present Come. We have more to see.

Mr Scrooge I could do with a quick toilet break. It's been a long night.

Spirit of Christmas Present There is no time, Scrooge. We have to move on.

Scene 2

Tabl open to reveal the home of Scrooge's nephew Fred. A much more impressive table of food is set in this grand house. Fred, Emma and several other party guests are gathered. They are all laughing and having a good time.

Song 10

Fred and his guests sing a spirited song about being at a party. At the end of the routine, enter Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present.

Mr Scrooge What place is this?

Spirit of Christmas Present Look and listen.

Fred And then my uncle said that Christmas was a humbug! He really did, and he believed it too.

Emma But that's an awful thing to say, Fred.

Fred Oh, he's a comical fellow really. I know he's not as pleasant as he could be, but I'm sure his sins will carry their own punishment. Even his wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't even make himself comfortable.

Emma It's very hard to have any patience with him.

Fred Oh, I couldn't be angry with uncle if I tried. Who suffers because of Scrooge? Only he does. He's decided to dislike us, and he won't come to dinner. What's the consequence? No dinner for Mr Scrooge!

Emma And it's a very good dinner, even if I do say so myself!

Fred I shall continue to visit him every year. In the spirit of goodwill.

Emma Oh, I don't want to talk about Mr Scrooge any more. Let's play a game.

All Yes, a game!

Spirit of Christmas Present Time to move on, Scrooge

Mr Scrooge No! Please, Spirit. Let's stay for just one game. They're all having such fun.

Spirit of Christmas Present Very well.

Fred We'll play "Yes and No". I've got a good one, too.

Guest 1 Is it an animal?

Fred Yes

Guest 2 Can you eat it?

Fred No.

Guest 3 Does it talk?

Fred Sometimes.

All Yes or no!

Fred Oh, alright... yes!

Emma Can you put it in a cage?

Fred No.

Guest 4 Is it disagreeable?

Fred Oh, yes.

Guest 5 Does it live in London?

Fred Yes.

Guest 1 I've got it!

Fred What?

Guest 1 It's Mr Scrooge!

All Hooray!

They all laugh and clap, including Mr Scrooge himself.

Mr Scrooge It was me! It was me!

Fred, Emma and guests exit. The lights dim.

Spirit of Christmas Present We must go. My time on Earth is ended.

An ominous bell tolls. Curtain.

Scene 3

On tabs. Scrooge stands alone. A dark street. An eerie mist fills the downstage area. Enter The Ghost of Christmas Future wearing a black robe and a hood that covers his face.

Mr Scrooge Am I in the presence of the Spirit of Christmas Yet To Come?

The spirit menacingly lifts his hand and points onward.

Mr Scrooge You are going to show me things that have not happened yet, but will happen in the future?
Is that right?

The ghost raises his hand and points again.

Mr Scrooge Are you just going to point? Say something.

Ghost of Christmas Future I do not speak.

Mr Scrooge Why not?

Ghost of Christmas Future It's much more mysterious and scary that way.

Mr Scrooge Can I at least see your face?

Ghost of Christmas Future You wouldn't like it.

Mr Scrooge Show me.

With his back to the audience, the spirit shows Scrooge his face inside his hood.

Mr Scrooge Uggghhhhhh!!! That's horrible!

Ghost of Christmas Future I said you wouldn't like it.

Mr Scrooge Why are there wiggly worms crawling out of your eye sockets?

Ghost of Christmas Future We are not here to discuss my appearance, Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge Oh, Spirit of the Future, I fear you more than any ghost I have seen yet.

Ghost of Christmas Future You should.

Mr Scrooge Especially with those eyes...

Ghost of Christmas Future Enough about my eyes!

Mr Scrooge Spirit, I want to be a new man, so I will bear your company with a thankful heart.

Ghost of Christmas Future Excellent.

Mr Scrooge But keep the hood on.

Ghost of Christmas Future Very well.

Mr Scrooge Lead me, oh Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come! The night is ending fast, and it is precious time to me.

Still on tabs, lights crossfade to Bob Cratchit's home. The family - minus Bob - are gathered around a table.

Peter I think father has walked home a little slower these past two evenings.

Mrs. Cratchit Yes. I've seen him walk much faster with Tiny Tim on his shoulders.

Belinda So have I.

Mrs. Cratchit But he was very light to carry, and his father loved him so much.

Bob Cratchit enters.

Mrs. Cratchit Did you go today, Bob?

Bob Cratchit Yes. The graveyard was very peaceful. I'm glad I picked a spot for Tim where you can see the ducks on the river.

Mrs. Cratchit Tim loved the ducks.

Bob Cratchit I promised him that we would all go and visit him on Sunday.

Bob Cratchit breaks down. He gathers himself and continues.

Bob Cratchit I saw Mr Scrooge's nephew Fred today. He asked after the family, and I told him about Tiny Tim. He said he was very sorry for our loss.

Mrs Cratchit That's kind.

Bob Cratchit From now on, when we see anyone in need, we should always think of Tiny Tim and stop to ask what we can do to make their lives a little easier.

Peter I'll remember, father.

Belinda Me, too.

Lights fade down on the Cratchits. Mr McKinley & Mr Maconie enter.

McKinley I'm sorry, Mr Maconie, I don't know all details. I only know he's dead.

Maconie When did he die?

McKinley Last night, I believe. What was the matter with him?

Maconie I don't know. But I thought he'd never die. I wonder what he's done with all his money?

McKinley Well, he hasn't left it to me, I can assure you of that.

They laugh.

Maconie I hear it's going to be a very cheap funeral. I don't know of *anybody* who will go to it.

McKinley Mm, I'll go if lunch is provided.

Maconie Ooh, so will I.

They laugh again and exit.

Mr Scrooge I recognise those people, spirit. Who are they talking about?

Ghost of Christmas Future Who do you *think* they are talking about?

Scene 4

Tabs open to reveal a dark, mist-filled graveyard. Eerie music. Scrooge and the ghost walk into the scene.

Mr Scrooge The wretched man whose name I do not know? He lies here beneath the ground?

The spirit points towards one grave. Mr Scrooge advances towards it trembling.

Mr Scrooge Before I look at that stone, please tell me. Are these the shadows of the things that will be, or are they shadows of things that may be?

The ghost again points at a single grave. Mr Scrooge moves towards it and reads his own name.

Mr Scrooge Ebenezer Scrooge? Oh no! That's my name on the grave!

Ghost of Christmas Future Scrooge, I think I speak for everyone here when I say that we had all worked out quite some time ago that the name on that gravestone was going to be yours.

Mr Scrooge There's no need to be rude about it.

Song 11

A host of creepy ghouls and ghosts appear in the graveyard and sing a macabre song with the Ghost of Christmas Future. At the end of the song ...

Ghost of Christmas Future You have one last place to visit Ebenezer Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge I don't like the sound of that. Is it very far away.

Ghost of Christmas Future Who knows?

Mr Scrooge Is it northward?

Ghost of Christmas Future No.

Mr Scrooge South.

Ghost of Christmas Future No.

Mr Scrooge A sea crossing, perhaps?

Ghost of Christmas Future No Scrooge. It is a journey straight... *down!*

The spirit points at the ground. Blackout. We hear a roaring, swirling sound, followed by a whoosh and then a dreadful, echoing scream. We are listening to our hero plunging down into hell.

There's a thud. Scrooge has landed. After a few moments silence we are aware of the chattering of demons and the clanking of chains in the darkness.

Scene 5

On tabs. There is a deafening crash of thunder as the lights quickly fade up, bright red. The flickering light of flames is projected onto the curtain. Scrooge looks terrified.

Mr Scrooge What is this place? It's *very* warm.

Enter Marley.

Marley Ah, there you are, Scrooge! I heard you were coming down here for an impromptu visit.

Mr Scrooge Jacob Marley?

Marley Would you like to see my ID?

Mr Scrooge No! Where am I?

Marley I should have thought that was obvious.

Mr Scrooge Am I dead?

Marley As dead as a doornail, Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge Oh dear.

Marley Dead as mutton. Dead as last year's fashion.

Mr Scrooge Is it a permanent condition?

Marley Dead as wood. Dead as a brick. Dead as a herring...

Mr Scrooge Stop saying the names of dead as things.

Marley Sorry.

Mr Scrooge I'd rather hoped I'd end up in heaven.

Marley Then you are a fool, Ebenezer!

Mr Scrooge So everyone keeps telling me.

Marley Your activities in life were so pleasing to Beelzebub that he has appointed you to be his personal assistant.

Mr Scrooge What do I have to do?

Marley Oh, I don't know, managing his diary, dealing with correspondence and messages...

Mr Scrooge Oh?

Marley Organising meetings, booking and arranging travel and accommodation. Maybe the occasional conference.

Mr Scrooge Conference?

Marley It's a singular honour, Scrooge. You will be to Beelzebub, what Bob Cratchit was to you.

Mr Scrooge That isn't fair.

Marley It is a shade ironic I'll admit, but also quite amusing.

Mr Scrooge It's not amusing to me, I can assure you.

Marley I'm afraid your chain isn't ready for you yet. They're still making it at the Harland and Wolff shipyard. It's so huge it will have to be lowered onto your body using heavy industrial lifting equipment.

Mr Scrooge Marley, I beg you! Help me!

With a demonic musical flourish, the tabs open to reveal Beelzebub's office. It is a colossal cave full of glowing red rocks. Beelzebub sits at a desk in the centre.

Marley Behold, Beelzebub's office!

Beelzebub Ah! Scrooge, come in, come in. You are very welcome!

Mr Scrooge Any chance we can turn down the heating?

Beelzebub I'm afraid not. It's on a timer and I don't like to fiddle around with it.

Mr Scrooge Am I in the presence of the Lord of Darkness?

Beelzebub Lord of Darkness, Prince of Darkness, Satan, Lucifer, Mephistopheles, they'll all me.

Mr Scrooge Why do you have so many names?

Beelzebub Tax avoidance.

Mr Scrooge Very wise.

Beelzebub Which is something I'm sure you know an awful lot about, Ebenezer. In fact, you'll be able to help me with it. I will add it to your list of duties.

Mr Scrooge What are the office hours?

Beelzebub You will work a twenty eight hour day, Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge But there are only twenty four hours in a day.

Beelzebub Not down here. There are also no coffee breaks.

Mr Scrooge No?

Beelzebub No toilet breaks, no fag breaks, and you'll have to skip lunch.

Mr Scrooge Oh.

Beelzebub No afternoon tea break.

Mr Scrooge No?

Beelzebub And you'll do three hours overtime at the end of the day.

Mr Scrooge What?

Beelzebub *Every day.*

Song 12

Beelzebub sings Scrooge a song about working hard and living an honest life. He is joined by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future and Marley. At the end of the song...

Beelzebub Oh, and one last thing, Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge What?

Beelzebub In my office, we do not take Christmas Day off! Aha ha ha ha ha!

Mr Scrooge (*Echoing*) No! Help! Help! Help! Help me!

Scrooge runs downstage. The sound of laughing demons. The curtain closes behind him. Blackout.

Scene 6

On tabs. White light fades up. Scrooge is on his knees looking upwards. The sound of demons suddenly stops. Silence.

Mr Scrooge I'm not in hell after all. I'm back on Earth. It's over. The spirits have gone. But I'm still here! I'm still alive. Alive! I think maybe for the first time in my life.

Gentle music fades up.

The things that would have been are changed! They must be. I know they are! From now on, I will live in the past, the present, and the future! I am not the man I was. I will never be that man again. Why show me all this, if I am past all hope? From now on I will cherish Christmas and keep it in my heart all year round. I will not shut out the lessons that the spirits have taught me this night.

The music becomes more festive. Scrooge gets to his feet and walks downstage.

Mr Scrooge I don't know what to do next! I'm as light as a feather. I'm as giddy as a school-boy. I feel like a drunken man. I feel like I want to sing! Will you sing a song with me, boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Mr Scrooge I can't hear you! Will you sing a song with me, boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Mr Scrooge I'll teach you a song I used to sing when I was a boy. I'll see if I can remember the words.

Mr Scrooge sings a well known audience participation song. Two townspeople bring on a big board with the words written on it. At the end of the song...

Mr Scrooge Well done everyone, that was fantastic! A Merry Christmas to all of you and a Happy New Year to the whole world! But wait! I don't know what day of the month it is! I have no idea how long I was away with the spirits.

A young boy walks past.

Mr Scrooge Excuse me, my young fellow!

Boy Hello.

Mr Scrooge What day is it to-day?

Boy What?

Mr Scrooge What's to-day?

Boy Today, sir? Why, it's Christmas Day of course.

Mr Scrooge Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The spirits did it all in one night. They can do anything! *(To the boy)* Do you know the butchers, on the corner, lad?

Boy Yes, sir.

Mr Scrooge What an intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! Do you know if they've sold the turkey that was hanging up there? Not the small turkey, the great big one.

Boy The one that's as big as me?

Mr Scrooge What a delightful child! Yes, the one that's as big as you.

Boy It's hanging there now.

Mr Scrooge (*Giving him money*) Go and buy it. When you come back I'll give you a shilling... no, half a crown. Come back in less than five minutes, and I'll double it!

The boy runs off.

Scene 7

Tablats open to reveal a snowy London street.

Song 13

The townsfolk and business people sing a celebratory song. Half way through the routine, Scrooge enters dressed as Santa Claus and joins in. At the end of the song, enter the two charity workers Mr McKinley and Mr Maconie.

Mr Scrooge How do you do, gentlemen, and a Merry Christmas to you!

McKinley Mr Scrooge?

Maconie (*Whisper*) Well he's had a change of heart, I must say, Mr McKinley.

McKinley Dressed as Santa Claus?

Maconie Mmm, that shade of red quite suits him.

Mr Scrooge I really must ask your forgiveness, gentlemen. And will you please accept this gift.

Mr Scrooge whispers in Mr Maconie's ear.

Maconie Well I never!

Mr Maconie whispers in Mr McKinley's ear.

McKinley Well, saints be praised, Mr Scrooge. Are you serious?

Mr Scrooge Oh, yes.

Maconie But that's a *huge* amount of money!

Mr McKinley Enough to buy a school.

Maconie Enough to buy a hospital.

Mr McKinley Enough to buy a lovely new theatre for next year's panto.

McKinley breaks into a reprise of the song the pair sang at the end of Act I.

Maconie Not now, Mr McKinley. Not now.

Mr McKinley Aw!

Mr Scrooge Many back-payments are included in that donation, I promise you. And will you do me a favour?

Maconie Yes, of course, Mr Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge Please come and see me again, whenever you are collecting!

McKinley Can we tell all the other chuggers on the High Street to come and see you too?

Mr Scrooge Oh, good lord no! *(To audience)* I haven't gone completely mad.

McKinley & Maconie Merry Christmas Mr Scrooge!

They exit. Fred enters.

Fred Uncle Ebenezer?

Mr Scrooge Nephew!

Mr Scrooge shakes Fred's hand and slaps him on the back during the entire conversation. Fred is utterly bewildered.

Mr Scrooge Merry Christmas to you! I do hope that I am still welcome at dinner today. I really haven't spent enough time with you or your lovely wife, and I hope to change all of that now and forever, if that's alright. It is alright, isn't it?

Fred Y-yes...of course. We'd be delighted!

Mr Scrooge Can we play the "Yes and No" game?

Fred Yes.

Mr Scrooge Do you promise?

Fred Yes.

Mr Scrooge Cross your heart?

Fred Yes.

Mr Scrooge Are we playing it now?

Fred No.

Mr Scrooge See you at dinnertime, Fred!

Fred exits in wonder. Enter Bob Cratchit and family.

Mr Scrooge Bob Cratchit! The very man I wanted to see.

Cratchit Mr Scrooge?

Mr Scrooge Bob, I have decided that I am going to raise your salary!

Cratchit A raise?

Mr Scrooge I'll raise your salary, and I'll pay off the mortgage on your house.

Mrs. Cratchit faints.

Mr Scrooge And tomorrow you will make up the fires at the counting house, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another "i".

Cratchit Thank you, Mr Scrooge.

Mr Scrooge Where's Tiny Tim?

Tim Here sir.

Mr Scrooge Tim, you will see the finest doctors we can get for you. You will never want for anything, and you *will* get better. I promise.

Enter Mrs Fezziwig.

Mrs Fezziwig Mr Scrooge was even *better* than his word. He did it all and more, and to Tiny Tim, who did get better, he was like a second father. He became as good a friend, and as good a man, as the old city of London ever knew. Some laughed to see the change in him, but he let them laugh, and heeded them little, deciding that laughter was good for the heart. Ebenezer's own heart laughed, too. He had no more strange interventions in his dreams, and ever after he cherished Christmas Day.

Mr Scrooge (*Picking Tim up*) Merry Christmas Tim. Merry Christmas everyone!

Tim God bless us, every one.

Song 14

The entire cast enter and sing a feelgood finale song. At the end of the song, walk down and curtain.