

NODA PANTOMIMES PRESENT

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

A CAUTIONARY TALE

BY

Robert Marlowe

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N.B.

This script contains instructions to enhance your production with atmospheric lighting. Whilst this is desirable it can still be performed with limited means. Remember it is the plot and acting skill that is foremost required. Sets, costumes and lights are purely there to enhance, so do not be put off by the details contained herein. They are mainly as a guideline towards the best presentation possible.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This adaptation of Charles Dickens Christmas Carol can be as lavish or as simple as the Director wishes. It can be performed in a single standing set which you will find designs for within, or it can be adapted to be performed in the Round. If performing in the Round then endeavour to get authentic looking props. All very necessary to paint the picture for the audience but also to help the actors. The hiring of a smoke machine would greatly enhance the eerie effects especially for the entrances of the Spirits. These can be hired from any Theatrical Electrical Suppliers. Lists of suppliers can be found in the theatrical newspaper "The Stage and Television Today", available weekly. Sound effect records necessary for bells, chimes, wind effects etc., can be obtained from any good record shop, the B.B.c. Information Dept or Samuel French Ltd. Good lighting will greatly enhance your production. Do not flood your set, keep it fairly low keyed throughout but bring it up when certain areas need to be spotted brightly, for instance within the interior areas. The street area will almost always be bathed in blue only, as most of the exteriors take place at night! When day lighting is needed try to cross light with spots in rose or straw gels.

Casting

If you have a large society or group then you will welcome the fact that there are many small character parts. If however you have a fairly small group, many of the parts can be doubled or even trebled. The only part for solo performing being Scrooge. It is necessary to have at least

half a dozen children to fill the younger roles. See separate list on characters analysis.

Music

I have endeavoured to bring Christmas Carols into this production quite prominently to make for variety and atmosphere. You are at liberty to dispense with them of course, if you wish only for a dramatic performance, though I think your production would be enhanced by the Carols inclusion. If you can get the services of a fiddler for Fezziwigs party this also will give an atmosphere of immediacy. If a fiddler is unavailable then a recording of a "Roger de Coverly" would suffice as long as it is not too instrumented. In fact, any country styled dancing would be appropriate. Do get an actor to mime the fiddle playing in this event. Always remember it's the attention to detail that sets your production above the rest. Carols suggested:- "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen".

"Away in the Manger" - Cratchit Family only.

"Here We Come a Wassailing" - full company.

It could work well to incorporate this adaptation of "Christmas Carol" into a Carol Concert if you wished to lengthen your evenings entertainment, starting your performance with carols which could then lead into the beginning sequence. Then at the very end having the whole cast conclude with further carols. If using a church choir it may well help to incorporate the youngest boys into playing roles within the story.

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Adapted from the Novel of Charles Dickens

by

Robert Marlowe

CHARACTERS

EBENEZER SCROOGE - Moneylender and Miser

FRED - His Nephew

BOB CRATCHIT - Clerk to Scrooge.

MRS. CRATCHIT - His wife.

MARTHA - Their eldest daughter, a milliners
apprentice.

PETER - Their eldest son.

BELINDA - Their second daughter.

DICKON)
CHARLOTTE) - Two youngest Cratchits. Actually
unnamed in the original book.

TINY TIM - Baby of the family. An unfortunate
cripple.

GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY - Scrooges former partner.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

SMALL ROLES - In some cases only a couple of lines.

1ST GENTLEMAN)
2ND GENTLEMAN) Charity collectors

MRS. FEZZIWIG

MR. FEZZIWIG - Scrooges former employer.

SCROOGE - As a ten or twelve year old.

SCROOGE - As a young man of twenty or so.
This actor also plays the part of Scrooge at
the age of around twenty five or six.

FRAN - Scrooges sister, aged about
nine years.

DICK WILKIN - Apprentice to Fezziwig and
friend of Scrooge.

GIRL - Fiancee to young Scrooge.

MRS. DILBER)
CHARWOMAN) All seedy
UNDERTAKERS ASSISTANT) characters.
PAWNBROKER)

FOUR BUSINESS MEN - Cronies of Scrooge.

A YOUNG MAN AND HIS WIFE- Debtors to Scrooge.

YOUNG RAGGEDY BOY

CHORUS OF CAROL SINGERS, PASSERSBY, GUESTS AT FEZZIWIGS
PARTY ETC. ETC.

N.B. SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME AND MRS. FEZZIWIG ARE
NON SPEAKING ROLES.

SUGGESTED DOUBLING

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST AND DEBTORS WIFE.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME and YOUNG SCROOGES FIANCEE.

GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY and PAWNBROKER

SCROOGE AS A YOUNG MAN and MALE DEBTOR

SCROOGE AS A BOY and RAGGEDY BOY.

SCROOGES YOUNG SISTER and CHARLOTTE CRATCHIT

FRED and CRONY

MRS. FEZZIWIG and MRS. DILBER THE LAUNDRESS

SUGGESTED TREBLING

MR. FEZZIWIG and CHARITY COLLECTOR and CRONY

DICK WILKINS and UNDERTAKERS ASSISTANT and POULTERER.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT and CHARITY COLLECTOR and CRONY.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS AND COSTUME DETAILS

- SCROOGE - Spare framed, balding, sour expressed until last scene. Age range - 50 - 70 years. Sombre clothing, frock coat in early and final scenes, in scenes with Spirits, a long night-shirt over which is a dressing gown and a nightcap.
- BOB CRATCHIT - Starving appearance. Threadbare but neatly (Age 40 - 50 yrs) patched clothing. Long scarf and cap his only protection against weather. Mittens worn indoors and out.
- MRS. CRATCHIT - Poorly but neatly dressed. Always with a clean (Age 35 - 45 yrs) apron.
- MARLEYS GHOST - Outdoor clothes but of pale grey colour, (Age 60 - 70 yrs) bound around with large linked chains, padlocks, small cash boxes etc. Clanking key ring with enormous keys, all these props painted grey to mingle in with his suit. A grey scarf tied round head under chin with knot on top of head. This is the undertakers ploy to keep the jaw closed. Keep shoes also grey. Ghostly appearance very necessary. Sprinkling of silver glitter over shoulders of suit will add to illusion. Ghostly makeup. Very pale with sunken eyes.

- SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST
(Age 25 - 30 yrs) - (Female) This Spirit should be in shimmering white entwined with garlands of Christmas roses and mistletoe with silver leaves. On her head a crown of candles which should appear lighted. Achieve this with small electric bulbs and a concealed battery. Her make-up should appear pale and irridescent. A white and silver presence is what to aim for.
- SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT
(Age 35 - 55 yrs) - A jovial character. Long flowing sleeved cloak ideally of dark green velvet with white fur edging to sleeves and edge of front and collar. Bare chested. A long flowing dark curly wig, headdress of holly with glittering red berries. Breeches of green velvet into black boots. Ideally this actor should have a rotund figure. Healthy, twinkling make-up.
- SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME.
(Age immaterial but if doubling part with Fiancee then about 25 yrs.) - This Spirit completely covered from head to foot, long sleeves, black or dark grey. Head is covered with cowl, no part of face showing until end when cowl is thrown back to reveal a mask of a skull. Hands should have gloves with long extended finger nails fixed to them. Nails could be glittered to emphasize hand movements.
- THE LAUNDRESS)
THE CHARWOMAN)
UNDERTAKERS ASSIST.)
PAWNBROKER) All of these characters are seedy and very grubby. Women with bonnets and cloaks or shawls. Undertakers Assistant in black frock coat, top hat with black crepe ribbon in bow with tails falling down back.

CRATCHIT FAMILY

MARTHA	♀	Aged about 15 yrs.) All are poorly) but neatly clothed.) Girls with aprons.) Tiny Tim should have) leg iron on one leg) and walks with a crutch.
PETER	-	Aged about 13 yrs.	
BELINDA	-	Aged about 12 yrs.	
CHARLOTTE	-	Aged about 10 or 11 yrs.	
DICKON	-	Aged about 9 yrs.	
TINY TIM	-	Aged about 7 yrs.	

GUESTS AT FEZZIWIGS PARTY

Brightly dressed in gay colours as antidote to other dull and poorly clad characters. Semi-crinoline if at all possible for ladies. There are many books available at Libraries etc. with clear details of Victorian costumes which you can adapt to your needs or budget.

Street characters should all be costumed remembering that it is Winter. Bonnets, gloves, mittens, scarves, top hats etc. Make every effort to be authentic in your details of costume and stage dressings.

N.B. If one actor is playing two or even three parts make sure his disguise is total. The audience must never be aware that its the same person except by the programme credit. Make full use of wigs, beards, glasses etc.

ACT ONESCROOGES COUNTINGHOUSE

For set details see separate chapters.

As curtain rises it is evening on Christmas Eve. Snow is falling and a few late shoppers are trudging homewards bundled up against the weather. They carry packages, one even has a small Christmas tree. They greet each other in passing with "Merry Christmas". We hear off stage Carol singers piping "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen". They come slowly into view with a lantern on a pole and group themselves centre stage. Scrooges nephew, FRED ENTERS. He gives singers a coin and as they depart offstage he stamps his feet and blows on his hands then moves over to O.P. where door is in centre flat at back. He goes behind it and enters through it as the lights come up on that section of the stage and we are now inside Scrooges office. Try to have areas of light which illuminate each playing area as action moves around the standing set. Although Scrooges office has been visible since curtain up, it has not been highlighted until this moment. During the opening scene with carollers and passersby, Scrooge has been sitting at his desk and Bob Cratchit bent over his final winding up of the days accounts at his little table. Though there, the audience should not be made too aware of their presence until the lights go up on their acting area. The office is very sparse with a low bed to one side where Scrooge sleeps. There is a small fireplace at the back with a meagre fire in the grate.

(FRED ENTERS through doorway)

FRED (Cheerfully) A Merry Christmas Uncle.

SCROOGE (Testily) Bah - Humbug!

FRED Christmas a humbug Uncle, I'm sure you don't mean that!

SCROOGE I do. What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

FRED (laughs) Come then, what right have you to be dismal, you're rich enough!

SCROOGE Bah - Humbug!

FRED Don't be cross Uncle!

SCROOGE What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools. If I had my way every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly in his heart.

FRED Oh Uncle, I've always thought of Christmas as a good, a kind forgiving time. The only time when men and women seem to open their shut-up hearts freely and I say, God Bless It!

SCROOGE Bah - Rubbish. Good Evening!

FRED Uncle, don't be so miserable. Why not come and dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE I'll see you in Hell first. Good Evening.

FRED Why can't we be friends. I want nothing from you, I ask nothing of you.

SCROOGE Good Evening!

FRED I'm truly sorry with all my heart. I made this journey in homage to Christmas and I'll keep my humour to the last. So - A Merry Christmas Uncle.

SCROOGE (Peremptorily) Good Evening.

FRED (About to Exit through door) And a Happy New Year.

SCROOGE HUMBUG!

(Fred goes to exit. Bob Cratchit has been listening to the foregoing and holds the door open for Fred).

FRED (To Bob) Thank you Mr. Cratchit. A Merry Christmas to you and yours.

BOB A Merry Christmas Sir!

(FRED EXITS)

SCROOGE Humph. (To Bob) Fifteen shillings a week, with a wife and children and you talk of a Merry Christmas. Humm - I'll retire to Bedlam!

(Bob drops his head abjectly and returns to his desk. He is cold and wraps his scarf more closely round his neck. He is also wearing woollen mittens though trying also to warm himself at the mean fireside. In the street we see Fred pass two gentlemen who now are outside the door. They knock. Bob goes to open it).

BOB Two Gentlemen Sir, come I believe on business.

(These two are well dressed portly gentlemen.

They carry books and papers in their hands).

1ST MAN Scrooge and Marley I believe. Do I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley.

SCROOGE Mr. Marley has been dead seven years, seven years this very night.

2ND MAN We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

(He shows his credentials, which Scrooge returns.)

1ST MAN At this festive season Mr. Scrooge, it is desirable that we make some provision for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time. Hundreds are in want of common comforts Sir.

SCROOGE Humm - are there no prisons?

1ST MAN Plenty of pris ons!

SCROOGE And the Union Workhouses? Are they still in operation.

2ND MAN They are indeed. I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE The Treadmill and the Poor law are in full vigour then?

2ND MAN Both very busy Sir.

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

1ST MAN But they hardly furnish Christian cheer to the needy and a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the poor meat, drink and warmth! What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE Nothing!

2ND MAN You wish to be anonymous!

SCROOGE I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish Gentlemen, that is the answer. I don't make merry myself and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I've mentioned, they cost enough. Those badly off must go there!

1ST MAN Many can't go there, and many would rather die.

SCROOGE If they would rather die then they'd best do it and decrease the surpluspopulation. Good Evening Gentlemen.

(They gaze forlornly at him whilst he indicates the EXIT which they take. Scrooge returns to his desk and we hear a church clock chiming the hour of eight)

SCROOGE (Closing his account book) Ammm. I suppose you'll want all day tomorrow off!

BOB CRATCHIT (Wrapping his scarf closer) If convenient Sir!

SCROOGE Well, it's not convenient and it's not fair. If I stopped you half a crown you'd think yourself ill-used I'll be bound. (Cratchit shifts uncomfortably) And yet you dont think me ill-used when I pay a days wages for no work!

BOB But it is only once a year Sir!

SCROOGE A poor excuse for picking a mans pocket every 25th of December, but I suppose you must have the whole day off. Be here all the earlier the next morning.

BOB Oh thank you Sir. A Merry (He thinks better of it) Good Night Sir!

(CRATCHIT EXITS through the door and we see him in the street. He greets a couple of passersby and EXITS offstage. Meanwhile in the office Scrooge puts his books away and he puts on an old and ragged dressing gown and night cap. He shuffles to the corner of his room and brings out a glass of milk and some frugal fare which he places on a tray by his bedside. He sits on the bed. There is a bell suspended near the door of the old fashioned type on a coiled spring. As he sips his milk this bell suddenly clangs. Startled he shuffles to the door, opens it and peers out. No one is there. Puzzled he

closes door and returns to the bed)

SCROOGE Strange! Who could possibly be ringing my bell at this hour. More charity collectors I'll warrent. Well, they'll get nothing from me!

(Again we hear the church clock strike the quarters. Suddenly the sound of wind blowing and the door flies open with a crash. Scrooge starts with a cry and runs over to door which he shoots the bolts on. Whilst we see him do this they must obviously not in fact lock, to enable the door to burst open again on Marleys ghost's entrance).

SCROOGE How strange that such a sudden wind prevails.

(Suddenly over the howling wind we hear a clanking of chains softly at first then getting louder. Scrooge starts to shake with fear).

SCROOGE What is that? Its getting louder and closer!

(Shouts) Stay away from me. Go on - go away.

(He is now huddled terrified on the bed. The door bell clangs again continuously and suddenly the door flies open despite the locks and there revealed stands the Ghost of Jacob Marley. He is dressed all in pale grey with a skull-like makeup and has a linen bandage tied under his chin with the knot on top of his head. This is the laying out bandage that keeps the jaw closed in death. He is bound round again and again with large linked chains and enormous padlocks, keys and cashboxes.

These are all painted grey to blend in with the clothes. He moves slowly weighed down with the obvious weight of his burden.)

SCROOGE Ugh - What do you want with me?

GHOST Much!

SCROOGE Who are you?

GHOST Ask me who I was!

SCROOGE (Nervously) Who were you then?

GHOST In life I was your partner Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE Bah - Humbug. You're nothing but a figment of my imagination. The result of an undigested meal. Humbug I say!

(At this the Ghost is enraged. He shakes his chains and shrieks. Scrooge now terrified, drops to his knees).

SCROOGE Mercy, Mercy dreadful apparition. Why do you trouble me?

GHOST I come to warn you. I am doomed to wander through the world and witness what I cannot share but might have shared on earth and turned to happiness.

SCROOGE You are fettered. Tell me why!

GHOST I wear the chains I forged in life. I made it link by link and yard by yard. Your own chain was full, heavy and long as this seven years ago. You have laboured on it since. It is a ponderous chain.

SCROOGE Jacob, tell me more. Speak comfort to me!

GHOST I have none to give. Very little time is left for me. I cannot stay, cannot rest. In life my spirit never roved beyond our money changing hole. Kind words and deeds were strangers to my nature. Now I'm condemned to journey incessantly,

SCROOGE But you were always a good man of business.

GHOST (Wails) Business! Mankind should have been my business. Charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence should have been my business.
(He lifts a fettered arm and drops it)
At this time of year I suffer most. Hear me, my time is nearly gone.

SCROOGE Help me Jacob. You were always a good friend, tell me what I must do.

GHOST I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. You will be haunted by three Spirits.

SCROOGE (Dismayed) Is that the chance and hope you mentioned. I - I - I - think I'd rather not!

GHOST Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow when the clock strikes one.

SCROOGE Couldn't I have 'em all at once and get it over?

GHOST Expect the next the following night at the same hour, then the third upon the next night at the last stroke of twelve. You will see me no more, but remember what has passed between us.

(MARLEY slowly backs away. The wind which has abated during the previous dialogue now commences again. As the Ghost steps backwards through the door it closes without his aid. This must be wired to achieve this. The bell has also been ringing furiously as he departed. Both wind and bell cease as the door closes. An eerie silence ensues).

SCROOGE (Fearfully) It must have been a bad dream.
 (He examines bolts) The door remains shuttered.
Undoubtedly my imagination is playing tricks.
 (He shuffles over to his bed, climbs in
 and snuffs out the candle)

SCROOGE (Defiantly) Christmas - Bah! Humbug!

(ALL STAGE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK OUT)

ACT ONETHE FIRST VISITOR

The lights come slowly up though the stage is dimly lit.
 For the exterior, achieve illumination with only blue gellatines.
 Have a softly focused spot beamed onto Scrooges bed. He is asleep.
 We hear again the Church bell chiming. Scrooge awakens and
 sits up. He is uneasy.

SCROOGE What has awakened me at such an hour? What o'clock
 can it be? (He awaits the chime) One - one o'clock.
 Oh no, that was the hour destined by Marley for the
 first visitation!

(If your production has been able to follow
 exactly the set design, then the Spirit
 appears on top of the rostrum. If unable to
 do this then it must appear in the doorway as
 did Marleys ghost. Obviously its far more
 effective if one can achieve the height and
 helps each Spirit to appear more awesome.)

(We hear a silvery tinkle-like wind chimes
 and a brilliant light illuminates the Spirit
 of Christmas Past. See separate notes on
 costume.)

SCROOGE Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

SPIRIT I am!

SCROOGE Who and what are you?

SPIRIT The Ghost of Christmas Past!

SCROOGE Long past?

SPIRIT No - your past! Come rise and walk with me.

(During the blackout preceeding this scene a small groundrow has been set at back of stage between the two set, rostrums which indicate a country lane with a distant village set amid trees. The whole is snow covered and glittering. Never fully light the stage, keep it low key only highlighting acting areas.)

(Scrooge rises from his bed still attired in his dressing gown and nightcap. He EXITS through door and ENTERS into centre stage back. The Spirit comes down from rostrum top and follows Scrooge downstage. They move to side of stage and now watch the action from this vantage point. Once again the stage becomes peopled with various characters. They are muffled against the cold but all are passing each other cheerily wishing a "Merry Christmas". They pass and exit each going about their business. All this is happening as in a dream. Again keep lighting of this street scene in blue with cross lighting to illuminate the figures in straw or pale rose gels.)

SCROOGE (Amazed) Good Heaven, I was bred in this place. I was a boy here. Look there's old Mrs. Cranton and Doctor Littlewhite. And see there, the Martin sisters Lucy and Carrie. Hallo there, its me Ebenezer

(None of these characters see or hear Scrooge but pass and go about their business as though he is an unseen spirit. They now all EXIT and a boy of about twelve or thirteen enters.

He carries a school trunk which he struggles with, places it, and sits on it dejectedly.)

SCROOGE Tell me Spirit, who is that boy?

SPIRIT Do you not recognise yourself when young!

SCROOGE (Amazed) But of course. Why is he so miserable?

SPIRIT Remember. A deserted school, a solitary child neglected by his friends, is left there still.

SCROOGE (Takes out handkerchief) Yes! Yes! I do remember. I do! I do! Oh that poor boy (he sobs)

(A girl of about ten or eleven runs on to the boy. She throws her arms about him)

GIRL Oh dear brother, see I have come to bring you home.

SCROOGE (To Spirit) Its my sister Fran.

BOY Oh Fran, its so good to see you. Is it true that I'm to return home with you.

GIRL Indeed yes. Father is so much kinder now. He spoke so kindly to me one night that I dared ask whether you could return. He said yes and sent a coach to bring you. Ebenezer, you are never to return there but stay with us, and first we are to have the merriest Christmas ever.

(A coachman enters, takes up the trunk and exits with the two children laughing and talking gaily with their arms around each other. As they exit, Scrooge stumbles towards them visibly upset. He stands gazing after them. The Spirit comes gently up behind him.)

SPIRIT Your sister Fran, always a delicate creature whom a breath might have withered, but she had a large heart.

SCROOGE (Wiping his eyes) So she had - I'll not gainsay it - so she had!

SPIRIT She died a woman, and had I think, children.

SCROOGE One child!

SPIRIT Your nephew?

SCROOGE (Discomforted) Yes!

SPIRIT Come, I'll show you yet another Christmas.

(The lights have dimmed down and when they come up again we see Scrooges office. The bed has slid unobtrusively away and two young men about twenty years of age are seated at the desk. There is a different atmosphere now, a brighter fire sparkles in the grate. The area is spotlighted far brighter than previously.)

(Scrooge and the Spirit are now on the further side of the stage from where they watch the proceedings. Again all the participants are unaware of their presence.)

SPIRIT You recognise your office?

SCROOGE Of course, was I not also apprenticed here. But who is that young man?

SPIRIT Again it is yourself when young!

SCROOGE And the other lad? (Young man turns) Why its Dick Wilkins so it is. Bless me, young Dick Wilkins. Very attached to me he was. Dear Dick. Hallo there Dick

(They obviously do not hear him. The door opens and Fezziwig ENTERS, a fat jovial man.)

SCROOGE (Excitedly) Why look its old Fezziwig, bless his heart, alive and well again.

FEZZIWIG

Yo Ho! My Boys. No more work tonight.

Christmas Eve Dick, Christmas Ebenezer! Lets have the shutters up before you can say Jack Robinson.

(The boys move swiftly moving back the desk. They bring out garlands of evergreen hung with bells and coloured balls which they festoon across the back. One sweeps with a broom. There is much activity preparing for a party. The street outside is now thronging again with passersby all heading for the festivities. They must all pass behind the set and enter through the doorway though once in can spill back across the whole stage again. As they enter they remove their cloaks, scarves bonnets etc. Some carry gifts, and glasses of punch are dispensed.)

FEZZIWIG

Hilli-ho boys, clear away and lets have lots of room here. Why Mrs. Fezziwig my dear, come take off your bonnet and cloak. Welcome!

(Mrs. Fezziwig and her three daughters have progressed through the street and entered through the door. They are followed by everyone else, greeting and being greeted. Much merriment and good spirits. Scrooge is watching all with great excitement. A fiddler has come in amongst the first guests and commences playing. The guests take positions and dance a Roger de Coverley or similar set dance, Mrs. & Mr. Fezziwig being one of the leading couples.

The Director must achieve this atmosphere with as greater speed as possible, bearing in mind of course that it is all a vision of the past).

SCROOGE See theres Mrs. Fezziwig and her three charming daughters. Oh happy, happy days!

(At the end of dance, everyone laughs and claps. Slowly the lights fade down. When they come back up again this has signified the passage of time. There are a few folk left who are shaking hands with the Fezziwigs. All are wishing each other "Happy Christmas". Finally only the two apprentices are left alone. All others have exited).

DICK WILKINS What a wonderful party indeed. The kindness of Mr. & Mrs. Fezziwig defies description.

YOUNG SCROOGE It most certainly does. How fortunate we are to have such a good hearted employer.

(They are removing the garlands and replacing the furniture as they talk).

DICK WILKINS I do declare that Mr. Fezziwig danced every single set.

YOUNG A very remarkable man indeed, and such a privilege
SCROOGE to be in his service of apprenticeship. Heigh Ho, I'm tired with the quantity of punch and porter consumed. I'll away to my bed.

DICK WILKINS Me too, the better to continue with tomorrows festivities.

(They EXIT, watched still by Scrooge and the Spirit).

SCROOGE (Happily) Oh what a happy occasion. How well I recall it now.

SPIRIT (Deliberately leading Scrooge on) Such a small matter to make these silly folk so full of gratitude!

SCROOGE Small?

SPIRIT Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money - three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise.

SCROOGE (Changed by his experience) It isn't that Spirit. He has the power to make us happy or unhappy, to make our service a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune. (A thought strikes him) Oh dear!

SPIRIT What is the matter?

SCROOGE Oh - nothing particular.

SPIRIT Something I think!

SCROOGE No (pause) No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk, Bob Cratchit just now. That's all! (He sighs).

SPIRIT Come, my time grows short. I wish to reveal yet another occasion.

(ENTER the young Scrooge, this time accompanied by a young woman in cloak and bonnet. Young Scrooge is now older, dressed in topcoat and top hat).

SCROOGE But that is my younger self again.

SPIRIT It is, but a few years have moved on. Take heed and listen carefully.

(Girl is obviously upset twisting a crumpled handkerchief in her hand.)

GIRL It matters little to you, very little! Another idol has replaced me in your affections.

YOUNG SCROOGE What idol has displaced you? Tell me!

GIRL A golden one!

YOUNG
SCROOGE This is the way of the world. There is nothing on
which it is so hard as poverty, yet there is nothing
it professes to condemn with such severity as the
pursuit of wealth.

GIRL (gently) You fear the world too much. I have seen
your nobler aspirations fall one by one until your
master passion, gain, engrosses you!

YOUNG
SCROOGE But I am not changed towards you!

GIRL (Wistfully) Our contract is an old one, made when
we were both poor and content to be so. You are
changed. When it was made you were another man..

YOUNG
SCROOGE (Impatiently) I was a boy! Have I ever sought
release?

GIRL In words - no - never!

YOUNG
SCROOGE In what then?

GIRL In a changed nature, in everything that made my
love of any worth or value in your sight. How
can I believe that were you free you would choose a
dowerless girl. You, who now weigh everything by gain.

YOUNG
SCROOGE But I have shown no cause.

GIRL (Wistful still) I would gladly think otherwise if
I could, but were I to hold you to your contract I
know that your repentance and regret would surely
follow. Therefore I release you with a full heart
for the love of him you once were. May you be happy
in the life you have chosen.

(She quickly departs weeping quietly.
Young Scrooge watches her then departs
opposite to her).

SCROOGE Spirit, I beg you show me no more. I don't wish
to see it. Conduct me home.

(The lights fade to BLACK OUT)

ACT ONETHE SECOND VISITOR

Lights come slowly up on Scrooge sitting in his bed. He waits expectantly. The church clock is again striking the hour of one o'clock. Lighting should be a copy of the first visitors entrance.

SCROOGE (Nervously) Is anyone without? Hear me - is anyone there? (Paus) Marley promised the second Spirit would reveal itself the following a.m.

(He gets off the bed and waits fearfully. Suddenly a brilliant light floods the top of the rostrum. Hearty laughter is heard and into view strides the second Spirit. Again if rostrums are unavailable he must appear in the doorway. See costume plot).

SPIRIT I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. (Laughs) Look upon me and know me better man! You have never seen the like of me before?

SCROOGE Never! Spirit conduct me where you will. I went forth last night under compulsion and learnt a lesson which is working now. If you have aught to teach me tonight, let me profit by it.

SPIRIT Come - touch my robe!

(Scrooge moves to door and passes through into the street. Suddenly as before the street is thronged with people greeting each other and passing off. The carol singers are heard coming closer singing another carol. They pass through with some of the crowd giving them money.