

TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT

The full script runs to 51 pages of dialogue--71 pages with the listings of music cues, a “cookbook” for live sound effects, casting monologues and notes on direction.

If you wish to secure performance royalties to the play and the pre-recorded orchestral music cues, contact Info@RuyaSonic.com Please indicate you are interested in the STAGE PLAY (and not the radio drama version) describe the venue, include the number of performances and audience sizes.

Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol”

Adapted for the stage by

Anthony E. Palermo

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TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT
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BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Producers of *A Christmas Carol* must give credit to Anthony E. Palermo in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play, and all instances in which the title of the play appears in advertising or publicizing the production, including programs and playbills. The name of the Author must also appear on a separate line, immediately following the title of the play, and must be in type size not less than 30% of the size of type used in the title of the play.

Billing shall be in the following form:

(name of producer)
presents

CHARLES DICKENS' "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

Adapted for the stage by
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Musical score composed and arranged by
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Long bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is a dramatist, radio performer, and educator based in Los Angeles. His work is heard on NPR and Satellite Radio as well as in audiobooks and on-stage with L.A. Theatre Works, California Artists Radio Theater, numerous theatre troupes, and on national tours. His holiday-themed plays, *A Christmas Carol*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, and *Auntie-Scrooge, a Backwards Christmas Carol* have seen hundreds of productions around the world since 1998. Tony's sound effects work on Yuri Rasovsky's *Sherlock Holmes Theatre* contributed to its winning the 2006 *Audie Award*--the Oscar of audiobooks. Tony directed the 60th anniversary production of Norman Corwin's *On a Note of Triumph*--for which he also re-created Bernard Herrmann's orchestral score. Recently, Tony provided live SFX for shows such as Eric Idle's *What About Dick?*, CART's *Leviathan '99*, LATW's *California Suite* and *Side Man*, as well as performing 65 solo shows at the California State Fair. Tony's *Sonic Storytelling Studio* at San Francisco's Exploratorium is a permanent exhibit that has seen thousands of visitors since 2006. His *Sparx Audio Adventures* assembly programs and workshops are popular with schools and colleges across California, the U.S. and the world. Tony also hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

Short bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is an Audie Award-winning radio performer, dramatist, and educator who has produced dramas and workshops for broadcast, stage, and schools. Tony hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

NOTE: Up-to-date text of the bios is available at www.RuyaSonic.com/tp2bio.htm You can cut & paste the text into your playbill or program and thus not have to worry about typos.

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens'
"A Christmas Carol"

CAST OF CHARACTERS

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| EBENEZER SCROOGE | Miserly old man (male) |
| THE NARRATOR | Charles Dickens (male) |
| MARLEY'S GHOST | Spirit of Scrooge's partner (male) |
| SECOND SPIRIT | Ghost Of Christmas Present- Jovial spirit (male or female) |
| FIRST SPIRIT | Ghost Of Christmas Past - Old/Young Spirit (male or female) |
| NEPHEW FRED | Scrooge's kind nephew (male) |
| BELLE | Scrooge's young fiancée (female) |
| BOB CRATCHIT | Scrooge's meek clerk (male) |
| MRS. CRATCHIT | Bob's kind/feisty wife (female) |
| POOLE | Charity Seeker (male) |
| LAMB | Charity Seeker (male or female) |
| FAN | Scrooge's young sister (girl) |
| KATE | Nephew Fred's wife (female) |
| TINY TIM CRATCHIT | Bob's crippled young son (boy) |
| PETER CRATCHIT | Bob's 12 year-old son (boy) |
| MARTHA CRATCHIT | Bob's 15 year-old daughter (girl) |
| BELINDA CRATCHIT | Bob's 9 year-old daughter (girl) |
| GUESTS #1, #2, #3 | (3) of Fred party guests (male or females) |
| OLD JOE | Rag and bottle shop owner (male or female) |
| CHARWOMAN | Coarse cleaning lady (female) |
| MRS. DILBER | Lower class laundress (female) |
| BUCK | Street urchin (boy) |
| BUSINESSMAN #1, #2, #3 | (3) Greedy businessmen (male) |
| BOY CAROLER | Poor street caroler (boy) |
| FREDERICK CRATCHIT | Bob's 8 year-old son (boy)--one line of dialogue |
| HARRIET CRATCHIT | Bob's 7 year-old daughter (girl)--one line of dialogue |
| CAROLERS | (2) other carolers (boys or girls) |
| DOORSTEP WOMAN | non-speaking part (female) |
| 9-year old SCROOGE | non-speaking part (boy) |
| 16-year old SCROOGE | non-speaking part (male) |
| YOUNG SCROOGE (Age 22) | non-speaking part (male) |
| FIDDLER | non-speaking part (male or female) |
| CONCERTINA PLAYER | non-speaking part (male or female) |
| IGNORANCE | non-speaking part (boy) |
| WANT | non-speaking part (girl) |
| UNDERTAKER'S MAN | non-speaking part (male) |

Also: Crowds of passersby, moaning phantoms, party goers, dancers

CAST SIZE: Rarely are more than 7 people on stage at any moment, so doubling is suggested.
Without any doubling, the cast requires: 12 males, 6 females, 9 males or females, 7 boys,
4 girls and 2 boys or girls.

This script comes with pre-recorded, orchestral music cues that serve for scene changes and to dramatically underscore the dialogue at various points.

Visit Tony Palermo's RuyaSonic web site: www.RuyaSonic.com

SCENE 1

EXT. LONDON STREETS, 1843 - AFTERNOON INTO EVENING*SETTING:*

The stage is split between a wintry street scene (STAGE RIGHT) and the interior of Scrooge's dismal office (STAGE LEFT). A functional door--with a shop bell on a coiled spring--links the two sets. A weathered sign hangs in the street above the door reading "Scrooge & Marley." The street scene contains dingy storefronts, a chophouse, tobacco shop, butcher shop, tenements, a functional door of a home--etc. One functional door (STAGE RIGHT) serves as Nephew Fred's doorstep. A distant clock tower can be seen amid the grey skies. Scrooge's office features his large ledger book atop a tall table with a stool. A dim coal fire burns within a pot-bellied stove near the door. Far in the corner sits Bob Cratchit's desk and slim candle. Dusty ledger books line the walls, surrounding a grey portrait of Jacob Marley, looking sullen and smug.

AT RISE:

A crowd of 1840s Londoners mill about the street--shivering in cold fog. A trio of young CAROLERS prepares to sing at Scrooge's door. In the office, SCROOGE and his nephew, FRED are chatting silently. The clerk, BOB CRATCHIT toils at his account book, shivering at his desk.

1. LIGHTS: AT 1/2 FOR BOTH THE STREET AND OFFICE. SPOT -
DOWN STAGE, CENTER.

THE NARRATOR--resembling Charles Dickens--enters through the milling crowd to introduce the play. He carries with him a large book entitled: A Christmas Carol. THE NARRATOR takes CENTER STAGE and addresses the audience directly.

2. MUSIC: [MUS-1] CAROL INTRO THEME-UNDER. PLAY THRU.
3. THE NARRATOR: Good morrow to you. I am Mr. Charles Dickens. And this is "A Christmas Carol"... the tale of a miserly man who comes to realize the true spirit of Christmas...
When my novel first appeared--over one-hundred-and-sixty years ago--few observed Christmas, other than at Church...

A Christmas Carol

1. THE NARRATOR: Few employers gave workers off for the holiday... And the jolly country celebrations of the past were largely forgotten in the cities. But this little story helped transform Christmas from a staid religious holiday into the joyous season of faith, feasting, and goodwill it is to this very day.

(opening the book) My little “Ghost Story of Christmas” opens in London, on a cold, snowy December twenty-fourth, in the year... eighteen-forty-three...
2. MUSIC: INTRO THEME ENDS HERE--LET ITS CHURCH BELL TOLL UNDER THE NARRATION.
3. SOUND: WIND--FADE UNDER. JINGLING BELLS--HALT AS SCROOGE YELLS.
4. LIGHTS: SLOWLY FADE UP TO FULL ON THE OFFICE DURING THE NARRATION. THE STREET REMAINS AT 1/2
5. THE NARRATOR: *(reading from the book)* Once upon a time--of all the good days in the year--on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. Ebenezer Scrooge was a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner--a hard-hearted miser. Secret and self-contained... and solitary as an oyster. A morose and lonely man who consorted with nobody but himself...
6. LIGHTS: FADE TO 3/4 ON THE STREET SCENE UNDER THE FOLLOWING NARRATION.
7. MUSIC: [MUS-2] CAROLERS-UP. ON “SATAN’S POWER” SCROOGE WILL YELL, THE CAROLERS STOP AND GASP. PLAY THIS TRACK (OR SING LIVE) UNDER NARRATION.

A Christmas Carol

1. THE NARRATOR: On this evening, the office of Scrooge and Marley was shrouded in cold, bleak, biting weather. But external heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather could chill him. No wind that blew... was bitterer than he...

As the CAROLERS begin singing, the NARRATOR joins the milling crowd to watch.

During the song, SCROOGE grows angry and steps to the door, poised to open it.

2. CAROLERS: *(singing--either live or miming to pre-recorded track)*
God rest ye, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay!
Remember Christ, our savior,
was born on Christmas day,
to save us all from Satan's power when we had...

SCROOGE opens the door angrily and cuts them off at this line. The CAROLERS gasp and recoil in fright.

3. SCROOGE: Bah! *(nastily)* "Merry Christmas!" Humbug! Be gone, you miserable little beggars! Take your infernal Christmas carols and get away from my door!

4. BOY CAROLER: *(backing off)* Sorry, sir. Merry Christmas though, sir.

SCROOGE slams the door on the CAROLERS, who dissolve into the milling crowd.

SCENE 2

INT. SCROOGE'S OFFICE--IMMEDIATELY LATER.

5. SCROOGE: Bah! *(turning to Fred)* And you, nephew! What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough. Christmas? Bah! Humbug!

6. FRED: Christmas a humbug, Uncle? A fraud? You don't mean that, I am sure. What right have you to be dismal about Christmas? You're rich enough. Don't be cross, Uncle!

A Christmas Carol

1. SCROOGE: What else can I be, Fred, when I live in such a world of fools as this? (*snotty*) "Merry Christmas!" If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with (*snotty*) "Merry Christmas" on his lips, would... (*chuckling*) would be boiled with his own pudding! (*chortles*) Ha! And buried with a stake of holly through his heart! (*laughs*) Ha! Keep Christmas in your own way, nephew (*snorts*) and let me keep it in mine.
 2. FRED: Keep it? (amused) But you don't keep it, Uncle.
 3. SCROOGE: Well, let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it ever has done you!
 4. FRED: But Christmas-time is a good time, Uncle. A kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time--when men and women open their shut-up hearts freely! It's a time to think of others as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys.
 5. FRED: And there-fore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good... and I say, God bless it!
- BOB CRATCHIT timidly applauds the sentiment with 5 claps.*
6. BOB CRATCHIT: (*meekly*) God bless Christmas!
 7. SCROOGE: (*roars*) You there, Bob Cratchit! Let me hear another sound from you, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! Now, return to your accounting. Humph!
 8. BOB CRATCHIT: (*meekly*) Yes, sir.
 9. FRED: Don't be angry, Uncle. Come! Dine with us for Christmas dinner tomorrow. Kate would love to meet you.
 10. SCROOGE: Kate? Oh... yes... your... "wife." Humph! Why did you get married?

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

During this time, BOB CRATCHIT has let in LAMB and POOLE--with the door and bell sounding. SCROOGE is deep in his ledger book. BOB CRATCHIT meekly steps up to Scrooge's desk to introduce them.

1. BOB CRATCHIT: Umm... Two to see you, Mr...
POOLE steps right up, offering a hand to SCROOGE, who hesitates in extending his own hand in return.
2. POOLE: *(jolly)* Good day sir! My name is Poole and this is my associate, Lamb. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?
3. SCROOGE: Mr. Marley--my partner--has been dead these seven years. In fact, he died seven years ago this very night. I am Ebenezer Scrooge.
4. LAMB: Oh. Well, at this festive season, Mr. Scrooge, we seek charity for the Poor and Destitute.
5. POOLE: You see, many thousands are in want of common necessities. Hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.
6. SCROOGE: *(setting them up)* Are there no prisons?
7. LAMB: *(puzzled)* Umm... plenty of prisons...
8. SCROOGE: And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?
9. POOLE: They are. I wish I could say they were not.
10. SCROOGE: The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?
11. LAMB: *(dismayed)* Both very busy, sir.
12. SCROOGE: *(mock relief)* Oh! I was afraid that something had stopped them in their useful course. *(chuckles)* I'm very glad to hear it.

SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT
(several scenes later...)

EXT. SNOWY STREETS - NIGHT - LATER

SETTING:

The streets outside Scrooge's office remain as they'd been previously. The door to Scrooge's home is UPSTAGE. This is where the doorknocker will magically change into Jacob Marley's face.

AT RISE:

In the background--under the following narration--SCROOGE trudges through the fog-shrouded street. The street is nearly deserted, but a few townsfolk stand around fire cans chatting. They depart during the narration below.

1. LIGHTS: AT 1/2 ON THE STREET. THEY DIM SLIGHTLY AS THE NARRATION LEADS US TO THE DOORKNOCKER FRIGHT. THE BEDCHAMBER SET IS DARK.
2. MUSIC: [MUS-3] FOGGY NIGHT-UNDER. PLAY THRU.
3. SOUND: WINTRY WIND--FADE QUIETLY BY MARLEY'S LINE: "EBENEZER SCROOGE!"
4. THE NARRATOR: Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern, and walked home through the rolling fog and bitter cold. He silently passed the urchins crowded 'round fires in the street, trying to keep warm. The icy Scrooge trudged along through the dark streets, but... just as he reached the door of his dismal house... he thought he heard... something... calling...
5. MARLEY'S GHOST: [REVERB] Ebenezer Scrooge! Ebenezer Scrooge!
6. THE NARRATOR: It was the voice of his long-dead partner, Jacob Marley! ...Whose ghostly face appeared on the door knocker!

MARLEY's ghostly face pokes through a fake door façade. SCROOGE recoils in shock and rubs his eyes. The apparition is now gone. SCROOGE unlocks the door and EXITS through it.

1. SOUND: DOOR CLOSES QUICKLY. LOCKS (2X).
2. THE NARRATOR: ... Scrooge hurried inside, closed the door, and locked himself in! He double-locked himself in!
3. LIGHTS: THE STREET DIMS TO 1/4.

SCENE 4

INT. SCROOGE'S SITTING ROOM - IMMEDIATELY

SETTING:

The office space has been reset as Scrooge's spartan and gloomy bed chamber. A four poster bed with drapes; A hallway door is UPSTAGE CENTER. A functional double sash window opens out to the street set. A tattered easy chair sits beside a small fireplace--with a variable light-flame illusion lamp. Atop the mantle sits a clock large enough to contain a chime;

AT RISE:

The NARRATOR remains DOWNSTAGE addressing the audience directly. The bedchamber is empty. Scrooge is elsewhere in the house, checking things, changing into his nightshirt and cap.

4. LIGHTS: FADE UP TO 1/3--WITH A DISMAL FIREPLACE BARELY GLOWING .
5. SOUND: DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING QUICKLY-- FOLLOWING THE NARRATION BELOW.
6. THE NARRATOR: He checked the sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room--all as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa. Nobody under the bed, nobody in the closet....

SCROOGE--in dressing gown and nightcap--ENTERS the bedchamber from the hallway door and sits down in the easy chair in front of the fireplace.

A Christmas Carol

1. THE NARRATOR: ... Secured against surprise, Scrooge put on his dressing-gown and nightcap, and sat down before the fire to take his gruel. When... suddenly...

NARRATOR steps back to let the scene unfold. He EXITS STAGE RIGHT into the wings on the street set.

2. MUSIC: FOGGY NIGHT-LET TIMPANI ROLL END.

3. SOUND: (SILENT PAUSE) THEN BELL #1. THEN BELL #2. THEN MANY BELLS. (NOT TOO LOUD.) CONTINUE UNDER, THRU SCROOGE'S LINE "WHAT IN THE..."

4. SCROOGE: *(startled)* Ahh! What? What is it! Every bell in the house must be ringing! What in the...

5. SOUND: BELLS ALL STOP.

6. SCROOGE: ...world? N-Nonsense. Humbug! It's all humbug! I had... Wait! What-what's that?

7. SOUND: SILENCE -- THEN BASH... BASH/BASH! CRASH! CHAINS DRAGGED IN A WALKING RHYTHM. SLOW FOOTSTEPS--UNDER.

NOTE: If possible, have Marley, the Three Spirits--and Scrooge when he is accompanying the Spirits use wireless microphones run through a reverb effects device--not too wet though. This will give a ghostly quality to their speech Reverbs for the off-stage voices of the Phantoms would also aid in the atmospherics.

8. MUSIC: [MUS-4] MARLEY'S WOE-UNDER. PLAY THRU.

9. SCROOGE: Someone's in the cellar! But the doors are locked! Double-locked! Something... is coming. Up the stairs! Closer! It's outside my door! It's humbug! I won't believe it! Humbug, I say...

10. MARLEY'S GHOST: *(moaning)* Scrooge! Ebenezer Scrooge!

11. SOUND: THUNDER-CRACK. RUMBLE.

The hallway door flies open and MARLEY ENTERS, dragging chains, ledgers, cashboxes, keys, behind him. His head is bandaged--as if for a tooth-ache.

1. SOUND: (REVERB) CASHBOXES. CHAINS RATTLING. MARLEYS DRAGGING STEPS. STOP SOON.
2. SCROOGE: (*scared*) Ah! How now! What-what do you want with me? Who-who are you?
3. MARLEY'S GHOST: In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley. You don't believe in me, Scrooge? Why do you doubt your senses?
4. SCROOGE: (*fighting fear*) A-A disorder of the stomach makes them cheats! Y-You're not a g-ghost! You're just a bit of bad beef, a blot of mustard, a fragment of an underdone potato. Ha! There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are! Humph! Humbug, I tell you! Hum...

MARLEY rattles his chains to punctuate his speech. These can be supplemented with off-stage sound timed to his movements.

5. SOUND: CHAINS RATTLING. THUNDER-CRACK. RUMBLE.
6. MARLEY'S GHOST: (*long, terrible wail*) Aieeeeeeeee!
7. SCROOGE: (*screams*) Ahhhh! (*frightened*) Mercy! I believe you! I believe you--I must! Oh, dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me? Why do spirits walk the Earth? Why come to me?
8. MARLEY'S GHOST: It is required of every man, that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men. And if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death--Doomed to wander the world and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared... and turned to happiness! (*wails*) Aieeeee!
9. SOUND: CHAINS RATTLING. CASHBOXES.

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

SCENE 9

INT. FEZZIWIG'S WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

SETTING:

The classroom is replaced by a warehouse. Boxes and shelves line the walls. A crate allows space for two musicians to stand and perform. Tables are filled with food and drink.

AT RISE:

MR. FEZZIWIG stands, giving orders. YOUNG SCROOGE is putting up his ledger books. DANCERS rush in and begin laughing and milling about. A FIDDLER and CONCERTINA PLAYER prepare to play.

1. LIGHTS: FADE UP TO FULL.

2. SOUND: WALLA--FESTIVE--CONTINUE THROUGH SCENE.

SCROOGE and the FIRST SPIRIT stand on the periphery--unseen by the revelers.

3. SCROOGE: Fezziwig's warehouse! I apprenticed here! Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart! It's Fezziwig--alive again! ...at one of his Christmas parties!

4. FEZZIWIG: Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! No more work to-night. Christmas Eve! (*laughs*) Ha Ha! Join in the festivities! Merry Christmas, all! Come and dance! Hilli-Ho!

FEZZIWIG stands in the middle of the crowd to call the dance. The DANCERS join in--including YOUNG SCROOGE.

5. SOUND: WALLA--LAUGHTER AND CHEERS. DANCING AND CLAPPING IN TIME TO MUSIC--CONTINUE UNDER.

6. FEZZIWIG: [*under the dialogue between First Spirit & Scrooge*] Hands half round and back again... Down the middle and up again. Round and round. Advance and retire! Old top couple bow and back, new top couple start off again...

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

SCENE 10

INT. BELLE'S PARLOR - DAY

SETTING:

The stage--in blackout--is being redressed for the next scene as Scrooge's bed chamber. Belle's Parlor scene is played out DOWNSTAGE facing the audience.

AT RISE:

BELLE--a beautiful woman of 27--stands STAGE RIGHT with her back to SCROOGE and the FIRST SPIRIT--who remain unseen. BELLE holds a music box in her hands, listening to it play "The Coventry Carol."

9. **LIGHTS:** A SPOT ON SCROOGE AND THE FIRST SPIRIT AND A SECOND SPOT ON BELLE.

SCROOGE and the FIRST SPIRIT regard BELLE, who plays the scene to a bare stage--as if she were speaking with Scrooge at age 30. (OLD) SCROOGE will speak to her, but she does not see, nor hear him. BELLE faces away from him and the First Spirit.

1. SCROOGE: (in awe) Ah, Belle! As beautiful as ever...
2. FIRST SPIRIT: A penniless girl... who loved you, Scrooge.
3. SCROOGE: And I, her. It didn't matter that she had no dowry. We were so happy together...
4. FIRST SPIRIT: Until your career with Jacob Marley came between you. As you gained, so you lost. Do you see yourself? You're older now--a man in the prime of life. Your face has begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. Your eyes are greedy--the eager, restless eyes of a miser!
5. SCROOGE: (shaken) No! No! No! Spare me this! Not this, Spirit.
(pleads) No!
6. BELLE: (tearful) This music box is a beautiful gift, Ebenezer, but I realize I matter little to you, very little. To protect yourself from a hard and cruel world, you have become hard and

cruel in response. I have tried to cheer and comfort you, but another idol has displaced me.

7. (OLD) SCROOGE: What idol could ever displace you, Belle?
8. BELLE: You now worship a golden idol. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off, one by one. *(sighs)* Oh, Ebenezer, you've become another man.
9. (OLD) SCROOGE: I wanted security, success--for you. Belle!
10. BELLE: I seek tenderness, not riches--therefore, even though it is Christmas, I release you from our engagement, with a full heart, for the love of him you once were...
11. (OLD) SCROOGE: *(pleading)* No. No! Belle! Don't. Don't!
1. BELLE: *(weeps)* Dear Ebenezer, may you be happy in the life you have chosen... *(sobs)*
2. MUSIC: BELLE'S MUSIC BOX THEME RUNS DOWN--AND STOPS JUST SHORT OF FINISHING THE MELODY--FADE IF NOT FINISHED.
3. LIGHTS: SPOT ON BELL FADES TO BLACK.
4. SCROOGE: *(pleads)* Belle. Belle! No! Spirit! Show me no more! Why do you torture me? *(sobs)* Remove me! I cannot bear it! Haunt me no longer! No longer!

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

SCENE 13

INT. BOB CRATCHIT'S HOME - SECONDS LATER

SETTING:

A humble home, with a functional door from the street. It is poorly furnished, with many homemade and tattered covers. In the center sits a table with mis-matched chairs for 8, all set for Christmas dinner. There is a humble fireplace with Tiny Tim's small stool sitting nearby. A small counter holds a roasting pan--with a small cooked goose in it--bowls of cooked potatoes, stuffing and a full punch bowl and ladle.

AT RISE:

MRS. CRATCHIT, BELINDA, PETER, HARRIET, and FREDERICK busy themselves with preparations at the table.

1. LIGHTS: FADE UP ON CRATCHIT HOME.

2. SOUND: PLATES RATTLING. WALLA--KID LAUGHTER.
CONTINUE UNDER.

3. MRS. CRATCHIT: What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim.

MARTHA CRATCHIT ENTERS in the functional door.

4. PETER CRATCHIT: Oh, but here's Martha, Mother. Hurrah!

5. MARTHA CRATCHIT: Sorry, I'm late, Mother. We'd had a deal of work to finish up last night--and to clear away--this morning.

6. MRS. CRATCHIT: Well, never mind--so long as you are come. Sit ye down by the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!

7. BELINDA CRATCHIT: No! Father's coming! Hide, Martha, hide! Father! Father!

MARTHA hides as BOB CRATCHIT and TINY TIM, hobbling with his single crutch, ENTER in the functional door.

8. BOB CRATCHIT: Ah! Peter, Belinda, Frederick, Harriet! Why, where's our Martha?

9. MRS. CRATCHIT: Not coming.

A Christmas Carol

1. BOB CRATCHIT: *(shocked)* Not coming? Not coming upon Christmas Day?
2. MARTHA CRATCHIT: *(coming out of hiding)* Here I am, Father! *(laughs)* Merry Christmas!
3. MRS. CRATCHIT: How did little Tim behave at church, Bob?
4. BOB CRATCHIT: As good as gold, Mother, and better, eh, Tim?
5. TINY TIM CRATCHIT: *(coughs)* They sang ever so nice, Mother. I hoped the people saw me in the church, *(coughs)* because I'm a cripple And it might be pleasant for them to remember--on Christmas--who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.
6. BOB CRATCHIT: Bless you, my son. See Mother, his heart is strong and he will get better. I know it.
7. BELINDA CRATCHIT: Oh, Let's play a game! Father! Play "the memory game" with us! Please! Please!
8. PETER CRATCHIT: Yes! And then we'll sing some songs and...
MRS. CRATCHIT carries a small cooked goose to the table.
9. PETER CRATCHIT: *(gasps)* Oh! Look!
10. TINY TIM CRATCHIT: Oh, smell that Gooooooooooooose! Hurrah! Look! Look! There was never such a goose! Never!
11. SOUND: WALLA-"OOOOH". PLATES. FORKS. SPOON SERVINGS--
UNDER.
12. MRS. CRATCHIT: All right! Be seated. Here you go. Take your turn, now. There's plenty of stuffing, potatoes, and plum pudding for all of you.
13. MRS. CRATCHIT: *(whispers to Martha)* Martha, dear. Sit next to Tiny Tim and make sure he eats plenty. He must get strong and well. If anything should happen to him...
14. MARTHA: *(whispers)* Oh, Mother! Don't even think that. I'll see that he eats well. Here, Tim...

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

SCENE 14

INT. FRED'S PARLOR - AFTERNOON

SETTING:

The scene takes place DOWNSTAGE RIGHT. Some chairs are arranged in front of the darkened street scene. There is a standing lamp and a table full of refreshments.

AT RISE:

NEPHEW FRED and his wife, KATE host a joyous party with GUEST #1, GUEST #2 and GUEST #3. All have wine glasses in their hands. Offstage we occasionally hear other guests--who are not seen. The GUESTS chat and laugh as SCROOGE and the SECOND SPIRIT approach from STAGE LEFT and stand on the periphery. NEPHEW FRED is in the midst of telling a story...

1. LIGHTS: FADE UP TO A COZY WARMTH.
2. SCROOGE: Ahh, My nephew, Fred--and his wife, Kate. And their many, hungry "friends."
3. FRED: *(laughs)* ...and then he said Christmas was a hum-bug! As I live! And he believed it too! *(laughs)* Ha-ha-ha-ha!
4. KATE: *(laughs)* More shame for him, Fred.
5. FRED: He's a comical old fellow--that's the truth. And not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.
6. KATE: I'm sure he is very "rich." At least you always tell me so.
7. FRED: *(laughs)* What of that, my dear wife? His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it.
8. KATE: I have no patience with him.

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

SCENE 20

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

SETTING:

Neglected tombstones are arrayed DOWNSTAGE across the length of the stage. A large one sits DOWNSTAGE LEFT--in front of the room set (which is being reset as Scrooge's bedchamber for the next scene. Fog drifts along the ground.

AT RISE:

SCROOGE wanders amidst the graves--in horror. The THIRD SPIRIT stands CENTER STAGE.

1. LIGHTS: A HAUNTING QUALITY WITH VERY LITTLE ILLUMINATION. LIGHTNING FLASHES WILL OCCUR AS INDICATED BELOW.

2. MUSIC: [MUS-16] GRAVEYARD-UP 5 SECONDS, UNDER, PLAY THRU. (TRANSITION/DEATHBELL/SPIRIT/PHANTOMS/BELL)

3. SCROOGE: *(whispers) Spirit, where are we now? (gasps) Merciful heaven! A dismal, ruinous church-yard! ...Desolate, lonely, crumbling graves.*

The THIRD SPIRIT points towards the large tombstone DOWNSTAGE LEFT.

4. SCROOGE: Here? Here, then, is the wretched man? He lay underneath the ground? This grave? Before I draw nearer to that stone, tell me, Spirit, are these the shadows of things that Will be? Or are they the shadows of things that May be, only?

5. LIGHTS: LIGHTNING FLASHES.

6. SOUND: SCREECH (AS IF "LOOK")

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--
(several scenes later...)

SCENE 23

INT. FRED'S PARLOR - AFTERNOON

SETTING:

A door--STAGE RIGHT--in the street scene--opens into Fred's offstage home.

AT RISE:

The crowds have thinned. Everyone is off the downstage area and SCROOGE makes his way to the door, with a gift box under his arm.

2. LIGHTS: AT FULL ON THE STREET. THE OFFICE SET IS DARK.

SCROOGE steps up and knocks on a door. NEPHEW FRED opens the door.

3. MUSIC: [MUS-19] FRED'S PARTY--UP, UNDER.

4. SOUND: WALLA--DINNER GUESTS IN B.G.

5. NEPHEW FRED: *(laughs)* Uncle Ebenezer? Why, I can't believe you are really here--at my home?--on Christmas?

6. SCROOGE: I come to beg your pardon, Fred, for the things I said about Christmas. That... was a hum-bug.

7. NEPHEW FRED Was it? Well, I-I don't know what to say... Do come in.

As SCROOGE attempts to enter, KATE comes out to greet him. SCROOGE is taken aback by her beauty and grace.

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--

Full script runs to 51 pages of dialogue--71 pages with the listings of music cues, a "cookbook" for live sound effects, casting monologues and notes on direction.

If you wish to secure performance royalties to the play and the pre-recorded orchestral music cues, contact Info@RuyaSonic.com Please indicate you are interested in the STAGE PLAY (and not the radio drama version) describe the venue, include the number of performances and audience sizes.

Website: www.RuyaSonic.com

Writer/Director's notes for "A Christmas Carol" by Tony Palermo

My adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* restores this oft-told tale to its source in Charles Dickens' 1843 novel. In the 160-odd years since this story appeared, it has been bowdlerized and cut to fit the conventions of the day--resulting in widespread mis-perceptions and simplifications of its true meaning. Most people are only familiar with second-hand retellings and any accusations of triteness and cliché against this story are most likely attributable to poor adaptations.

With this in mind, I've endeavored to create a version that is both faithful *and* fresh. The dialogue is nearly verbatim from Dickens' text, however the emphasis and psychological shadings are my own as I sought to reinforce Dickens' original message. I originally adapted this "Ghost Story of Christmas" for the medium of radio drama--where the audience's imagination provides an unlimited special effects budget. The script proved so popular that I have created a stage-play version, complete with lighting cues, set descriptions and stage direction. The stage version retains the orchestral musical score I created for the radio adaptation and features an optional CD of pre-recorded sound effects. The following notes pertain to the story and how to approach presenting the drama.

Dickens' Themes

Charles Dickens's major literary themes were memory and forgiveness. He believed that through experiencing the joy and sorrow of memory, one could learn to live properly in this world. Accordingly, the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge's redemption is carried out by memory, example, and fear.

Scrooge has often been mistakenly presented as an evil man with no redeeming characteristics who suddenly gets converted--overnight! That perception has been fostered in many of the film and animated versions produced over the years and often results in a rather boring fable for children. However, this instant redemption--what critics call "the Scrooge problem," can be overcome. There must be motivation for Scrooge's miserly behavior and he must be permitted to change little by little, so the final conversion isn't totally unbelievable. The elements of a convincing transformation are in Dickens' book, but hardly anywhere else. It boils down to understanding the character of Scrooge.

First, Ebenezer Scrooge isn't just evil--that's one-dimensional. He's got a tough shell on the outside to protect his squishy soft interior. He holds terrible, anti-social attitudes, but has them for a reason. His character is based upon Charles Dickens' regrets for his own personal behavior--in not being kind enough to his fellow man, in not being charitable enough to unfortunates. In fact, Scrooge's history is modeled upon Dickens' early life. And there's a little Scrooge in all our natures.

Memory: Scrooge's Tortured Past

Through the Ghost of Christmas Past, we learn that Scrooge was raised in the country, where they observed an old-fashioned Christmas. He was sent away to a dismal boarding school and (like Dickens) was left there over several Christmases by a remote and cruel father. The schoolboy Scrooge sought escape in books---fantasies that protected him from the cruel world--and took him out of it. He loved his sister, the angelic Fan, who later died giving birth to Fred--which explains Scrooge's resentment for his good-natured nephew.

The young Scrooge was taken out of school and put to work in a warehouse run by the jolly Mr. Fezziwig--who serves as one of several models for Scrooge's re-education. In the world of business, Scrooge/Dickens sought financial success as a way to fortify himself from the harsh realities of loneliness

and a rapidly industrializing Britain. Unfortunately, Scrooge's wish to make himself invulnerable also shut him off from humanity--which is why his fiancée, Belle, breaks their engagement. This further isolates him until he is entirely alone, "as secret and solitary as an oyster." His partnership with the similarly cold-blooded Jacob Marley reinforces Scrooge's miserly ways.

However, despite the warped personality, Scrooge retains a keen intelligence--he is a successful businessman--and has a biting sense of humor. He doesn't see himself as evil--he's just being "practical." Here he personifies modernism and Puritanism--ideas firmly in place when Dickens wrote the story. (British Puritans discouraged "pagan" Christmas celebrations and had largely succeeded in eliminating the holiday as a feast of any kind by 1800. Their social engineering of the workhouses separated families and produced thousands of "orphans" when the parents were still alive. Dickens sought to change society.)

Scrooge's Saving Grace

Humor is the key to my interpretation of Scrooge--not jolly, but snide humor. I've left Dickens' dialogue alone, but I freshen it up by having Scrooge deliver it as biting sarcastic jokes to show his sense of superiority and utter disdain for the fools of the world. Think of him as a nasty, wise-cracking cable TV news commentator--smart, but twisted. He's a self-made man who can't see making "idle people merry."

There's a hidden laugh behind his most famous lines. He's thinks he's being *clever* when he asks the charity seekers, "Are there no prisons?" He thinks he's being *funny* describing how idiots should be "boiled with their Christmas pudding and buried with a stake of holly through their heart!" In my view, Scrooge doesn't believe this in a literal sense. He's making mean-spirited jokes--chortling to himself. I even have him laugh as he delivers these outrageous pronouncements. Here, Scrooge is being provocative and very entertaining--to himself. He's in his own world. It's the self-satisfied smugness of somebody who has it made. He's laughing all the way to the bank.

Scrooge's ill-humor is a way to leaven his misanthropy--otherwise he comes off as a monster--someone beyond hope. However, that's just the way many adaptations portray Scrooge--as evil incarnate. The trouble is, the harder you make Scrooge appear, the more unconvincing his eventual conversion becomes—and thus the "Scrooge Problem" of sudden, unearned salvation.

The wicked Scrooge approach completely ignores Dickens' themes of memory and forgiveness. Scrooge knows the difference between right and wrong, but feels contempt for those that don't share his values of thrift and practicality--so he lampoons the "losers" with self congratulating put-downs. Think of Scrooge as a smarty-pants who finds himself endlessly clever. In my view, if Scrooge has a sense of humor, then he is human--and therefore, has a possibility of redemption. The various ghosts wipe the smirk off his face and through hocus-pocus psychoanalysis and example, pave the way for his eventual salvation.

Example: How to Keep Christmas

On the example side, I make sure to show how Scrooge should "keep Christmas" by vividly depicting the celebrations at Fezziwig's, the Cratchit home and Fred's party. When Dickens wrote the story, the Christmas holiday was celebrated the way Easter is today--you go to church and there are a few gifts for children. Dickens converted the 12 day Yuletide feasts (largely of pagan origin) which had been held in large country manors, into smaller scale celebrations that could be held at work, home and among friends. The feasts, children's games and punch were popularized by the story and revolutionized the holiday. If you view Dickens' Ghost of Christmas Present as a variant/prototype of a pagan Father Christmas/Santa Claus, nearly everything about our modern Christmas comes from Dickens's tale--a fact I highlight in the announcer's introduction.

Fear: The Ghost Story of Christmas

Fear is the final motivator for Scrooge's conversion. Once softened up emotionally by the first two ghosts, he now reviles the callousness and materialism of the businessmen and the rag and bone shop grotesques. The dead body and Tiny Tim's passing move him to compassion, leading him and the Spirit to the graveyard scene, which is the most difficult in the story.

Most adaptations of the "Carol" fail right here. They show Scrooge quaking in fear and then, somehow, he is saved. Several versions even have him fall into the grave, but at his own tombstone, Scrooge wouldn't just be afraid of dying. After all, *everybody* dies. The crypt alone isn't enough motivation for the miser to change his ways. He is saddened by the death of Tiny Tim, but must also undergo his own demise to be re-born.

To finish him off, Scrooge must be reminded that he's headed for *Marley's fate*--eternal damnation! So, I bring back the rattling chains and hundreds of phantoms from Marley's visit. Now, *that* could scare him into being a nice guy--and gets us over the final hurdle of the implausible "Scrooge problem."

Scrooge repents, of course, but is only saved when he says, "I'll change! I'll change... *I pray!* I beg you." It's the word "pray" that turns things around and this submission to God is a fitting Victorian Christian touch. With it, the phantoms vanish and Scrooge is saved.

Why a "Ghost Story of Christmas" anyway? It was an English custom to tell ghost stories on Christmas Eve--stemming from the old Yule celebrations of Saturnalia and the Winter Solstice, and Dickens wrote several other supernatural Christmas tales. My adaptation seeks to play up the ghostly aspects of the story--but in the context of 19th century Christian beliefs. Marley's Ghost is truly scary, as are the hundreds of phantoms.

Likewise, to increase Scrooge's fear, I use thunder and wind sounds to add real menace to the graveyard scene. To get a ghostly flavor where necessary, I use a slight reverb for the spirits--and also for Scrooge, when he accompanies them. I employ the reverb to depict the spiritual realm as distant, yet nearby. And Scrooge segues from the graveyard to his bedroom by the reverb becoming drier and drier--a nice radio touch that can also be used in stage productions--via a wireless mic on the actor and an electronic reverb effects device. Afterward, the cacophony of church bells announce both Christ's birth and Scrooge's re-birth.

Social Protest

The last area I stress in my adaptation, is Dickens' beloved soap box preaching about the children, "Ignorance and Want"--a scene missing from many versions. Charles Dickens was a liberal social reformer--he'd been poor himself and knew firsthand the horrors of life in the workhouses, the factories, and the streets.

In most adaptations, this social message gets deleted in favor of more sentimental scenes--some actually turning Tiny Tim into the star, but it is *charity* that is central to Dickens' Christmas--Goodwill towards men; Charity despite the harsh weather and economic pressures. Dickens takes the metaphor of Christ's offer of heavenly redemption and literally brings it down to Earth. His Christmas is a utopia and Scrooge's journey there is Dickens' model for us all. Without this plea for charity to the less fortunate, the story becomes too materialistic as a paean to feasts and games--hardly what Dickens, the moralist, intended.

What Christmas Is All About

Some object to Dickens' *Carol* for its lack of references to religion, but they fail to see Tiny Tim as a metaphor for Christ--Tim's crutch is his cross; his death redeems Scrooge; his creed is "God bless us,

every one"; Marley's ghost and the chained phantoms are damned souls to whom Christ is unknown; Scrooge is a "wise man" who travels far before bestowing his gifts; Scrooge's death and resurrection, etc. Charles Dickens was too much an artist of symbol and myth to tell his story any more directly than he did. Those who can't see Christ in this Christmas story, have perhaps a bit too much fundamentalism clouding their eyes. This subtext informs us as we produce the play. Paradoxically, with the religious themes being *only* in the subtext, the play can be presented in government-subsidized theaters and schools without being seen as overtly advocating an exclusively Christian message. Charity and goodwill are after all, prized by the secular and non-secular alike. The "Carol's" message is truly universal.

Music

In scoring *A Christmas Carol*, other than my own ghost and suspense music, I adapted real Victorian carols throughout. I tried to use less well-known carols, to avoid cliché or sentimentality, without sacrificing the authentic characteristics that period music could lend to the drama. I employed the carols to reinforce emotional and structural connections in the story.

For example; Belle's theme ("The Coventry Carol") is played by a music box--a gift from Scrooge--that *winds down* as their relationship crumbles. "In The Bleak Mid-Winter" plays under Scrooge's visit to his boyhood and his good-hearted sister, Fan. This theme returns after Scrooge's redemption, played by a heavenly harp at the party where he is welcomed back into the family by Fred, Fan's son.

In drama, action and sound effects are motion and music is emotion, and Christmas music has a powerful effect on audiences, evoking both fond memories and reverence. I can't understand why other composers have not used this approach in scoring this story--it being so naturally obvious and highly effective.

The instrumentation is strictly Victorian: brass choir, pipe and reed organs, hand bells, church bells, chimes, cymbals, timpani, fiddle, concertina, music-box, wine glasses (glass harmonica), choirs and strings. I think this musical underscore adds greatly to the production.

While there is the singing of the boy carolers, the music here is mostly used for dramatic underscoring and scenic transitions. This is not a Broadway musical with a singing Scrooge. Troupes looking for such a version will not find one here. For them, I suggest seeking out the DVD of the fine 1962 animated *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol*—with music by Broadway great, Jules Stein—and performing those songs where they fit into my adaptation. See www.amazon.com/Mr-Magoos-Christmas-Carol-Backus/dp/B000R7G6K4

Sound Effects

Bells are central to this story and I use plenty of them in the score and as sound effects. The bells serve as punctuation and as a metaphorical "wake up call" to Scrooge--who lost a fiancée named "Belle." The program's sound effects begin with jingling bells and the tiny bell on Scrooge's office door, and work their way through clocks, wind chimes, death-bells, and finally, to a cacophony of church bells when Scrooge is saved.

Sounds such as doors and dinner dishes, toasts and Marley's chains will be produced by the actors on stage. Other sounds such as wind, thunder, clock chimes, Marley's off-stage bashing, cymbal flourishes for scene transitions and the otherworldly screech of the third Spirit can be rendered by a live off-stage sound effects team or triggered from a CD of pre-recorded SFX. I offer a professional sound design CD for \$25—which can be downloaded as MP3 files. See page ENG-6 below for more information.

Directorial Approach

There are a number metaphors I use in my interpretation of this material. First, I seek to convey an edge-of-the-seat quality by urging a vigorous delivery and slightly fast tempo. Christmas celebrates the pending

birth of a child and always carries anticipation and mystery, as does the unwrapping of a Christmas gift, and so too, the best ghost stories. With that in mind, there is surprise everywhere and I endeavor to keep the audience always guessing “what’s next,” even though this material is familiar. I stress mystery being revealed repeatedly--in Scrooge’s comic toying with the charity seekers, Marley’s arrival, the hiding of Martha Cratchit, Fred’s “twenty questions” game, the contents of the charwoman’s bundle, the shrouded body on the bed, and the otherworldly “voice” of the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come.

The second metaphor I pursue is the contrast of delight amidst awfulness--the laughing crowds despite the privations of winter’s cold wind and crunchy snow; the boy carolers being interrupted mid-song by the angry Scrooge; the abrupt change from Fezziwig’s gay fiddle-driven party to Belle’s sadly winding down music box, etc. There’s a defiant mysticism about celebrating life on one of the shortest days of the year. The idea that hope can spring from such bleak surroundings is at the heart of Christmas--and Dickens’ fable.

Lastly, I seek a gusto from the many grotesques in the story, starting with the unreformed Scrooge. He relishes his misanthropy. He’s not suffering in the counting house. He loves it there. He enjoys punning with Fred and the charity seekers. He even jokes with Marley’s ghost--for a while. The chained Phantoms inspire compassion in Scrooge, while the Spirits teach him the sad fate of all those other exuberant ogres. Scrooge’s loony joy at the end seems that much higher for all the fright and suffering that preceded it.

I hope to encourage cast and crew to dive headlong into their roles and leave behind all the gloomy and moralistic “Carols” they seen before. This is a miraculous birth, not a fatalistic funeral. Let’s laugh good and hearty! Just like Scrooge!

Breaking the Play into Two Parts

If you wish to insert an intermission, the ideal break point is at Scrooge’s return from the Ghost of Christmas Past--the scene just after Scrooge can’t bear seeing the breakup with Belle. He says, “Haunt me no longer! No longer!” and there’s a music cue of a cymbal roll to return him to bed. That is where you stop for the end of part 1. Page 23, cue #7.

Part 2 would begin at Page 23, cue #8. Just replay music cue #10 and have the Narrator begin at cue #8 saying, “Scrooge found himself, once more, ... alone ...back upon his bed..”

Preparation

The only other advice I could give regarding producing the program would be to read Charles Dickens’ original story to refresh your memory as to what is really going on. It would also be very helpful to view the video of the excellent 1951 film version starring Alastair Sim. It goes under the title of either *A Christmas Carol* or *Scrooge* and is available in original black & white or in a colorized version.

On radio, the 1939 Campbell Playhouse version, titled *A Christmas Carol*, produced by Orson Welles and starring Lionel Barrymore as an exceptional Scrooge. Barrymore’s vocal mannerisms and delivery are perfect--unfortunately the script, in my opinion, deletes many important scenes and doesn't exploit others enough. However, for my version, I've modeled my ending introduction of the cast and crew after theirs, as an especially fitting and fun closer .

Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol is a great story for all ages and should be an enjoyable production. It will teach people things they didn't know about Christmas and Scrooge and themselves. And its fantasy elements are perfectly suited to the magic of radio and the contemporary stage. To those who seek to produce this wonderful story, I can only echo Tiny Tim's credo, "God Bless you, every one!"

CASTING EVALUATION: “A Christmas Carol”

Date: _____

| | | |
|-------|------------------------|---|
| _____ | EBENEZER SCROOGE | Miserly old man (male) |
| _____ | THE NARRATOR | Charles Dickens (male) |
| _____ | MARLEY’S GHOST | Spirit of Scrooge’s partner (male) |
| _____ | SECOND SPIRIT | Christmas Present- Jovial (male or female) |
| _____ | FIRST SPIRIT | Christmas Past - Old/Young (male or female) |
| _____ | NEPHEW FRED | Scrooge’s kind nephew (male) |
| _____ | BELLE | Scrooge’s young fiancée (female) |
| _____ | BOB CRATCHIT | Scrooge’s meek clerk (male) |
| _____ | MRS. CRATCHIT | Bob’s kind/feisty wife (female) |
| _____ | POOLE | Charity Seeker (male) |
| _____ | LAMB | Charity Seeker (male or female) |
| _____ | FAN | Scrooge’s young sister (girl) |
| _____ | KATE | Nephew Fred’s wife (female) |
| _____ | TINY TIM CRATCHIT | Bob’s crippled young son (boy) |
| _____ | PETER CRATCHIT | Bob’s 12 year-old son (boy) |
| _____ | MARTHA CRATCHIT | Bob’s 15 year-old daughter (|
| _____ | BELINDA CRATCHIT | Bob’s 9 year-old daughter (girl) |
| _____ | GUEST #1 | Fred’s party guest (male or females) |
| _____ | GUEST #2 | Fred’s party guest (male or females) |
| _____ | GUEST #3 | Fred’s party guest (male or females) |
| _____ | OLD JOE | Rag and bottle shop owner (male or female) |
| _____ | CHARWOMAN | Coarse cleaning lady (female) |
| _____ | MRS. DILBER | Lower class laundress (female) |
| _____ | BUCK | Street urchin (boy) |
| _____ | BUSINESSMAN #1 | Greedy businessman (male) |
| _____ | BUSINESSMAN #2 | Greedy businessman (male) |
| _____ | BUSINESSMAN #3 | Greedy businessman (male) |
| _____ | BOY CAROLER | Poor street caroler (boy) |
| _____ | FREDERICK CRATCHIT | Bob’s 8 year-old son (boy)--one line |
| _____ | HARRIET CRATCHIT | Bob’s 7 year-old daughter (girl)--one line |
| _____ | CAROLERS | (2) other carolers (boys or girls) |
| _____ | DOORSTEP WOMAN | non-speaking part (female) |
| _____ | 9-year old SCROOGE | non-speaking part (boy) |
| _____ | 16-year old SCROOGE | non-speaking part (male) |
| _____ | YOUNG SCROOGE (Age 22) | non-speaking part (male) |
| _____ | FIDDLER | non-speaking part (male or female) |
| _____ | CONCERTINA PLAYER | non-speaking part (male or female) |
| _____ | IGNORANCE | non-speaking part (boy) |
| _____ | WANT | non-speaking part (girl) |
| _____ | UNDERTAKER’S MAN | non-speaking part (male) |

=====

CASTING MONOLOGUES: “A Christmas Carol”

Everyone participating in our production is asked to read some lines aloud for the director to cast the roles in the play. Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues provide a bit of a “back story” giving an idea of who the characters are. Since actors may double up on several roles, we encourage the use of different voices or accents when auditioning.

NARRATOR: I’m the narrator. I describe the details of each scene and lead the audience through the story. This is “Ghost Story of Christmas” requires a good story teller to make the scary parts scary and the happy parts happy--and that’s my job.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: I’m Ebenezer Scrooge, now leave me alone! I don’t celebrate Christmas and I don’t suffer fools at all! I’ve got a wicked sense of humor, but I’m not all bad, just very practical. As for Christmas, Bah! Humbug! Humbug, I say!

BELLE: I’m Belle. I was Ebenezer’s fiancée when he was young, but became alarmed as my darling became hard and cruel. He chose money over love and I could no longer stay engaged to him. It hurt me to leave him, but I had no other choice. Farewell, Ebenezer. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--

LIVE SOUND EFFECT ROLES: "A Christmas Carol"

NOTE: SFX with # are available as a pre-recorded track on the SFX CD – see page ENG-2

SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #1:

WIND *
CLOCK BELL (strikes 7X)*
CASHBOXES
DOOR CREAKS OPEN
FORKS
GLASSES CLINK (for a toast)

SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #2:

WIND CHIMES *
FOOTSTEPS & SNEAKY FOOTSTEPS
HORSE DRAWN COACH*
SCROOGE'S CLOCK CHIMES (strikes 1X, 7X, 9X)*
PUNCH BEING LADLED OUT
OTHERWORLDLY SCREECH OF SPIRIT #3*

SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #3:

DOOR & TINKLING BELL
FOOTSTEPS IN SNOW
HAND BELL 1, BELL 2, BELLS 3*
THUNDER*
QUIET CYMBAL CRASH*
SPOON SERVINGS & SPOON RAPS ON TABLE
KNOCK ON DOOR

SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #4:

SCROOGE DOUBLE LOCKING HIS DOORS*
CRASH*
PLATES RATTLING

SOUND EFFECTS ARTIST #5:

JINGLING BELLS
ONE MAN'S MEEK HAND CLAPS
CHAINS RATTLING
DANCING

SOUND EFFECT HOW TO: "A Christmas Carol"

NOTE: SFX with # are available as a pre-recorded track on the SFX CD – see page ENG-2

WIND*

Wind machine SFX device or mouth sounds.

CLOCK BELL (strikes 7X)*

Strike a small bell with a mallet

CASHBOXES

Rattle some coins in a tin cookie box.

DOOR CREAKS OPEN

Twist as 3/8" dowel (coated with violin rosin) within drilled out 1-1/2" dowel. Or use mouth sounds.

FORKS

Set silverware on a wooden surface.

GLASSES CLINK (for a toast)

Toast a couple of glasses together (don't clink too hard)

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--

ENGINEER'S NOTES: "A Christmas Carol"**EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENT:**

If possible use wireless microphones for Marley's Ghost, the First and Second Spirits and Scrooge when he accompanies the Spirits. Run these mics through a reverb effects unit--often found on modern mixer boards

During Marley's Ghost's scene, the live sound effects will also run through a microphone and into a reverb. Later the same technique will be used in the Graveyard. The ghostly walla parts will be done near the reverbed SFX microphone.

MUSIC CUES:

A complete engineer's script should be marked up with highlights to show how long music cues run (through scenes and dialogue) as well as which characters are using reverb and when. Generally, there is no need to fade out any music cues--they all have proper endings. The only fading necessary is to "duck" to bring the volume down under a voice.

- 1) Holiday Playhouse theme (1:09) [MUS-1]
- "See Amid the Winter's Snow" (John Goss)
- 2) Boy Carolers (0:21) [MUS-2]
- "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" (English Traditional)
- 3) Foggy Night (1:10) [MUS-3]
- ends with timpani roll
- 4) Marley's Woe (3:05) [MUS-4]
- ends with church bell tolling
- 5) The Phantoms (0:54) [MUS-5]
- 6) Spirit #1 Arrives (0:15) [MUS-6]
- 7) Christmas Past (2:35) [MUS-7]
- Transition plus "In the Bleak Mid-Winter" (Gustav Holst)

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--

Except where noted, all music composed by Anthony E. Palermo.
All music arranged and performed by Anthony E. Palermo.

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Using the optional Pre-Recorded Sound Effects CD

NOTE: A specially prepared CD of sound effects is available for \$25 (USD) from Sales@RuyaSonic.com. It can be postal-mailed or the tracks can be downloaded as MP3 files from a special web page and burned to CD.

It is possible to produce all the sounds for “A Christmas Carol” using live SFX devices—as detailed on pages SFX-1 through SFX-4. However, some troupes will prefer using pre-recorded tracks for the more unusual sounds. If you use the pre-recorded CD, you will be dividing the sounds between live SFX on-stage and pre-recorded SFX, off-stage.

The live sound effects are to be rendered by actors—jingling bells, doors, Marley’s footsteps dragging chains and cashboxes (when on-stage), Fezziwig’s dancers, the Cratchits at the dinner table, ladling punch, toasts, the little bell attached to Scrooge’s office door, etc. Some of these sounds may barely be heard, but all are actions taken on-stage by the actors.

The pre-recorded sound effects are to be triggered from an off-stage playback device—CD player, computer, MP3 player, sampler keyboard, etc. These sounds include wind, small clock chimes, spooky bells, Marley Ghost’s off-stage approach, thunder, ghosts moaning, a traveling coach, the off-stage crashes from blind man’s buff, the otherworldly “voice” of the Spirit #3 and the entire graveyard scene—which is a single continuous track containing each cue called for in the script. (This sequence has been timed to fit Scrooge’s lines—as has the music that plays under that graveyard scene.)

To trigger the pre-recorded SFX, look over the Pre-Recorded SFX Cue List (page ENG-7). You will find each pre-recorded sound effect listed by the page and cue number in the script (EXAMPLE: “14-02” indicates “Page 14, Cue 02”). Mark your script with the Track number from the CD (1 to 33) to be played at that point. Leave space to also mark a volume level for each track. Use pencil to mark the volume level—as the director may change levels over the course of rehearsal. Go through the script and listen to each SFX track—some are strings of SFX with pauses between them—for example Marley’s Ghost in the cellar bashes about, pauses a moment and then begins ascending the stairs. Now the SFX cues well, so you don’t cut them too early.

Please note that some SFX tracks will be played in addition to the music cues—and will require balancing the volume levels, as well as considering the level of the actors’ voices.

In some cases, the director may wish to have actors “double” some sounds live—for example, actors playing the Phantoms may do live chains and ghost moaning in addition to the pre-recorded chains and moaning.

All tracks on the SFX CD have 8 seconds of silence tacked on at the end. This allows time for the SFX triggerer to pause the track after a cue has played, advance to the next track and be ready to trigger the next SFX. Note that some cues come very quickly on top of one another. It will take some practice to be able to trigger the cues in rapid succession. You may wish to duplicate the SFX CD and use a second CD player to allow for quick triggering.

Pre-Recorded Sound Effects Cue List

| Track | | Page-Cue | Description |
|-------|--|-------------|---|
| 01 | | 02-03 | Wind--under intro--FADE AS NEEDED |
| 02 | | 07-11 | Office clock strikes 7x--under dialogue |
| 03 | | 09-03 | Wind--under "Scrooge took his usual..." FADE QUICK |
| 04 | | 10-01 | Scrooge double locks |
| 05 | | 10-05 | Various doors and locks (Scrooge is off-stage) |
| 06 | | 11-03 | Bells 1, 2, 3 – then they stop. |
| 07 | | 11-07 | Marley (off-stage) Bash, Bash, Crash, chains, walking |
| 08 | | 11-11 | Thunder |
| 09 | | 12-05 | Thunder (2x) |
| 10 | | 14-04 | Wind, ghosts—moan, chains--Thunder |
| 11 | | 15-02 | Scrooge's bedroom clock (1x) |
| 12 | | 17-03 | Coach, horses, boys walla-walla |
| 13 | | 17-06 | Cymbal/Wind chimes transition #1 – to school |
| 14 | | 18-04 | Cymbal/Wind chimes trans #2 – years later at school |
| 15 | | 24-02 | Scrooge's bedroom clock (1x) |
| 16 | | 29-08 | Cymbal/Wind chimes transition #3 – to Fred's |
| 17 | | 30-10 | Small blind man's buff crash (off-stage) |
| 18 | | 30-12 | Medium blind man's buff crash (off-stage) |
| 19 | | 30-14 | Big blind man's buff crash (off-stage) |
| 20 | | 33-02 | Wind--under "Much they saw..." --FADE AS NEEDED |
| 21 | | 35-06 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("Yes!") |
| 22 | | 35-08 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("No!") |
| 23 | | 35-10 | Cymbal/Wind chimes transition #4 – to the Exchange |
| 24 | | 37-02 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("Wait!") |
| 25 | | 37-04 | Cymbal/Wind chimes transition #5 – to Rag & Bone |
| 26 | | 39-02 | Cymbal/Wind chimes transition #6 – to dead body |
| 27 | | 39-05 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("Look!") |
| 28 | | 39-07 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("Look!") |
| 29 | | 39-09 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("You must!") |
| 30 | | 41-11 | Thunder transition to graveyard – with wind—It fades |
| 31 | | 42-06/43-14 | SEQUENCE: Graveyard SFX – a series of linked Qs |
| | | 42-06 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("Look!") |
| | | 42-08 | Thunder and Wind |
| | | 43-01 | Chains and Wind |
| | | 43-03 | Thunder and Wind |
| | | 43-06 | Thunder and Wind, Ghosts moaning |
| | | 43-08 | Otherworldly screech from Spirit 3 ("Yes!") |
| | | 43-10 | Thunder and Wind |
| | | 43-14 | Thunder and Ghosts and Wind—fade out |
| 32 | | 47-09 | Office clock strikes 9x—under narration |
| 33 | | 51-04 | SFX department making a racket |

Costume Resources for “A Christmas Carol”

Costumers looking to outfit the various Victorian characters in the “Carol” should note that the play is set in 1843. I’d suggest you start with Charles Dickens’ own descriptions from the novel—especially for the Spirits. Here are some links:

www.gutenberg.org/files/19337/19337-8.txt (text version—good for searching)

www.gutenberg.org/files/46/46-h/46-h.htm (htm version with illustrations)

You can just view John Leech’s illustrations from the original 1843 edition at this link:

www.charlesdickenspage.com/illustrations-carol.html

Also, watch the filmed versions of the story, particularly the 1951 “A Christmas Carol” starring Alastair Sim. In this version, Scrooge is a cheap-skate, too miserly to spend much on fancy clothing. Versions with Scrooge dressed as a Victorian dandy betray his thrifty, Puritan nature. See my director’s notes for an analysis of Scrooge’s character in this adaptation. Everyone else in the play will be a contrast to Scrooge—except Marley’s Ghost, who is his cursed twin.

Here are some links for Dickensian costumes:

--SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT--

STAGE SET LISTING

It is possible to divide the stage in half, with Stage-Right being the London Street (Location “A”) and Stage-Left being the various interior settings (Location “B”). The Downstage area, beyond the curtain, (Location “C”) can with a few props, serve for several scenes . Using the arrangement listed below there are only 6 sets necessary to build/dress.

| Scene | Description | Set # | Location |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | EXT. LONDON STREETS, 1843 | 1 | A (stage-right half of stage) |
| 2 | INT. SCROOGE’S OFFICE | 2 | B (stage-left half of stage) |
| 3 | EXT. SNOWY STREETS | 1 | A (use London Street set.) |
| 4 | INT. SCROOGE’S SITTING ROOM | 3 | B (was Scrooge’s office) |
| 5 | INT. SCROOGE’S BEDCHAMBER | 3 | B (part of Scrooge’s sitting room) |
| 6 | EXT. COUNTRY-SIDE | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 7 | INT. SCHOOLHOUSE | 4 | B (was Scrooge’s office) |
| 8 | INT SCHOOLHOUSE | 4 | B (same set, but actors exit to C) |
| 9 | INT. FEZZIWIG’S WAREHOUSE | 5 | B (was Schoolhouse) |
| 10 | INT. BELLE’S PARLOR | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 11 | INT. SCROOGE’S BEDCHAMBER | 3 | B (was Fezziwig’s warehouse) |
| 12 | EXT. LONDON STREETS | 1 | A (use London Street set.) |
| 13 | INT. BOB CRATCHIT’S HOME | 6 | B (was Scrooge’s bedchamber) |
| 14 | INT. FRED’S PARLOR | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 15 | MONTAGE | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 16 | EXT. LONDON STREET | 1 | A (use London Street set.) |
| 17 | EXT. - ROYAL EXCHANGE | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 18 | INT. RAG AND BOTTLE SHOP | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 19 | INT. BEDCHAMBER | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 20 | INT. BOB CRATCHIT’S HOUSE | 6 | B (was Scrooge’s bedchamber) |
| 21 | EXT. GRAVEYARD | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 22 | INT. SCROOGE’S BEDCHAMBER | 3 | B (was Cratchit home) |
| 23 | EXT. LONDON STREETS | 1 | A (use London Street set.) |
| 24 | INT. FRED’S PARLOR | none | C (lip of stage—beyond curtain) |
| 25 | INT. SCROOGE’S OFFICE | 2 | B (was Scrooge’s bedchamber) |

HERO PROPS:

Marley's chains, keys, ledgers, cashboxes
Belle's music box
Cratchit goose, plum pudding, punch, plates, utensils
Tiny Tim's crutch
Fred's guest's blindfold
Fred's guests' glasses (for toasts)
Mrs. Dilbert (the laundress)' bundle of drapes and drapery hooks
Charwoman's bundle of dead man's clothes

OPTIONAL PROPS (MOSTLY FOR SETTINGS)

Bob Cratchit's quill
Bob Cratchit's ledger book
Bob Cratchit's candle
Scrooge's cane
First Spirit's candle snuffer (as large as a dunce cap)
Young Scrooge's books
Fezziwig's musicians – Fiddle and Concertina
Fezziwig's party food
Second Spirit's cornucopia
Second Spirit's feast (in Scrooge's sitting room)
London street shoppers' bags and gifts