A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Adapted by Craig Sodaro
From the story by Charles Dickens

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CAST

Flexible cast 12 M, 15 W, 3 Flexible, Extras
(Maximum 42 ; doubling and down-sizing possible)

MRS. CANDLEWICK: A storyteller
MRS. PEARTREE: Another
EBENEEZER SCROOGE: Bitter man who is redeemed
BOB CRATCHIT: Scrooge's clerk, a family man
FRED: Scrooge's nephew
MRS. PORTER: Seeks a donation
MRS. WINSLOW: Another
TINY TIM: Bob's crippled son
JACOB MARLEY: Scrooge's dead partner
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Shows Scrooge his youth
SCROOGE AS A BOY: A hard worker
FANNY: Scrooge's sister
MR. FEZZIWIG: Scrooge's first boss; kind, jolly
DICK WILKINS: Young Scrooge's fellow apprentice
MRS. FEZZIWIG: Boss' wife
BELLE: Might have wed young Scrooge
SPIRIT TWO (*GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT*): Shows Fred's party
MRS. CRATCHIT: Bob's devoted wife
BELINDA CRATCHIT: Their daughter
PETER CRATCHIT: Their son
MARTHA CRATCHIT: Their older daughter
RACHEL: Fred's wife
TOPPER: Fred's fun-loving bachelor friend
PHANTOM (*GHOST OF CHRISTMASES YET TO COME*): Dramatic, non-speaking
MRS. DILBER: A thief
MRS. ENDICOTT: Another
NATE: A poor man in debt to Scrooge
CAROLINE: Nate's wife
YOUNG GIRL: Walking past Scrooge's house
POULTERER: Supplies turkey to Fred

ADDITIONAL PARTS:

CAROLER 1-5; GOBLINS 1-3; GUESTS 1-4.
(NOTE: Many parts can be doubled. Also, part gender may be changed to suit available cast. For example, GIRL at the end can certainly be changed to a BOY. GOBLINS and GUESTS and CAROLERS can be added or subtracted, as desired.)

Scenes, Acts, and Intermission: This play is designed to flow seamlessly, therefore there are no specific scene breaks. While there is an intermission between Acts I and II, you can easily eliminate it, if you face any time constraints.

The Setting

In and around London, 1840s. In the playwright's production, various houses and buildings, cut and painted, decorated a black curtain along with a lamppost. Other elements of the set were brought out as needed. A single small truck served as Scrooge's house, another served for Spirit Two. Otherwise the cast brought out the necessary bits of furniture.

SEE ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION NOTES AT END.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

ACT I

(AT RISE OF LIGHTS: MRS. CANDLEWICK enters SL with book. SHE stands CS, opens it, and reads.)

MRS. CANDLEWICK: *A Christmas Carol* by Mr. Charles Dickens, published in the year of our Lord, 1843. For those in the audience who are afraid of ghosts, a warning by Mr. Dickens himself: "I have endeavored in this ghostly little book to raise the Ghost of an Idea which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their house pleasantly."

(MRS. PEARTREE enters SR with book. She stands CS, opens it, and reads.)

MRS. PEARTREE: Stave One, Marley's Ghost. Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt, whatever, about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon change for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was dead as a doornail. This must be distinctly understood or nothing wonderful can come of the story we are about to relate.

MRS. CANDLEWICK: It began on Christmas Eve, seven years later at the offices of Scrooge and Marley in the business district of London.

(The curtain opens to reveal London scene. USR BOB CRATCHIT sits at table working with feather quill pen. A small fire burns behind him. SCROOGE stands USL as if entering. Both characters are frozen.)

MRS. CANDLEWICK: *(Continues.)* It was cold, bleak, biting weather; foggy withal. One could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them.

(MRS. PEARTREE moves to BOB.)

MRS. PEARTREE: Within, we find Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's clerk. A hardworking husband and father who, though he possesses an excellent head for figures, found it difficult to secure a good position during these rough times in London.

(MRS. CANDLEWICK moves to SCROOGE.)

MRS. CANDLEWICK: And then there is Mr. Scrooge. A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire. He carried his own low temperature always about him; he iced his office in the dog-days of summer, and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas!

(BOB and SCROOGE come to life as MRS. PEARTREE and MRS. CANDLEWICK sit DSR and DSL.)

SCROOGE: Mr. Cratchit!
BOB: *(Terrified, tossing his pen.)* Yes, Mr. Scrooge! *(BOB scurries to pick up pen.)*
SCROOGE: You have been in my office!
BOB: Just for a moment, Mr. Scrooge.
SCROOGE: And just what were you doing in my office?
BOB: I ... I ... well, I ...
SCROOGE: It feels wastefully warm in here.
BOB: My fingers were getting too cold to write numbers correctly in the books, Mr. Scrooge.
SCROOGE: So you stole a chunk of coal!
BOB: I'm afraid so, sir.

SCROOGE: And how shall you repent your sin of theft?
BOB: Pay for it?
SCROOGE: Something you can ill-afford to do! *(BOB sits back at his desk.)* Now, return to your work and in the future, wear warmer gloves!
BOB: Yes, Mr. Scrooge!

(FRED enters DSR.)

FRED: A Merry Christmas, Uncle!
SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!
FRED: Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You didn't mean that, I'm sure.
SCROOGE: I do! Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough!
FRED: And what right have you to be grouchy? You're rich enough!
SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug! I live in a world of fools. Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money, a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas upon his lips would be boiled in his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!
FRED: Uncle!
SCROOGE: Nephew, you keep Christmas in your way and let me keep it in mine!
FRED: But you don't keep it!
SCROOGE: Then let me leave it alone. For it's never done me or you any good.
FRED: There are many things that have done me good but haven't made me a cent! And Christmas is one of them. But, it's one time of year when people open their hearts and treat one another kindly. It has done me good and WILL do me good, and I say, God bless it!

(BOB claps enthusiastically.)

End of Freeview

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