

Scrooge with a Twist

Martha McMillen





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SCROOGE WITH A TWIST

by Martha McMillen

CAST

NARRATOR: Male or female.

SCROOGE: Male.

WIDOW CRACHITT/SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Female.

AGATHA (AND ACTOR #1 OR TBA): Female.

VICTORIA (AND ACTOR #2. OR TBA): Female.

FREDERICKA: The niece of Scrooge.

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Female.

GREEK CHORUS (VOICES 1 THROUGH 9 OR TBA): Males and/or females.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Male or female.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE: Male or female.

SOUND PERSON: Works backstage.

GREEK CHORUS parts are at director's discretion. They may sing, speak sing, or just speak the lines if singing is not comfortable, as the director sees fit. Parts may be doubled.

Pre show: Setting the Mood

Some carolers (in London dress) greet the audience in the anteroom.

They sing and pass out candy canes and programs prior to show time.

Optional upbeat carols might include:

Deck the Hall

Angels We Have Heard

Jingle Bells

Oh, Christmas Tree

The first carol is repeated as singers walk into the set. NARRATOR, singers and any other Greeks enter past the audience and go to their stage positions where there is a high stool and a podium for NARRATOR and chairs for the GREEK CHORUS at SR or SL. Some Greek chorus members, who are carolers from the hallway, will want to go backstage to change from London dress to Greek costume, in their sheet and head wreath.

The seven short scenes of the show should be done as continuously as possible without taking actual breaks and blending them together.

SCENE 1

Place

A street in London. Several lampposts are lit and it is early evening.

NARRATOR: Greetings of the Season! Welcome, welcome to the _____ (name of group) presentation of "Scrooge With a Twist." (*sits on high stool DC*) Once upon a time, or should I say, "and this is how it all began," Charles Dickens wrote the story of Scrooge. A story of redemption, of family love, of...adaptation and change, well, everyone knows the story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Right? At least I think you do, yes? Right?

AUDIENCE AND GREEKS: Yes! Sure do! Read it before, etc.

NARRATOR: Well, good. I'm glad that's settled because I'd hate to bring up this whole thing for the very first time in your life, and then have to do it all by myself!...(*shakes head and sighs*) So would you mind if I ask you to give me a hand now and then?

AUDIENCE AND GREEKS: (*respond by clapping, led by agreeable GREEK CHORUS*) Ok. Thank you, thank you so much. Now, as I was saying, (*sees ACTOR #1 entering*) Oh, no!, (*looks up, flustered*) it's starting! I don't think I was quite ready. Here comes, Actor #1! You see, we couldn't think of a good name for her, so...maybe a number will have to do...unless of course, you can think of a name for us. What do you think?

GREEK CHORUS AND AUDIENCE: Well, maybe...I like...How about...? (*offer names*)

NARRATOR: What? That's good. Well, aha...so what shall we call her? Hmm...(*stalls for time for audience to come up with more. GREEK CHORUS make suggestions until NARRATOR hears one from the audience to use*) What's that you want to call her, George? I don't think so. Hortense? Oh, _____, I really like that. From now on, (*looks at her*) you're _____.

ACTOR #1: (*Bows to audience*) Thank you ever so. (*a la Marilyn Monroe*) May I begin? (*sits down on bench SR--Opens a large book*)

NARRATOR: Well, since you auditioned for the part, I suggest you start now.

ACTOR #1: *(slowly and with great dramatic enunciation)* Marley was dead to begin with. There was no doubt whatever about that, and...

NARRATOR: Yes, yes, yes, *(gets up and goes over to ACTOR #1)* Can't we just skip that part? Everybody knows that Marley was dead.

ACTOR #1: Well, I was just reading the script and it says that...

NARRATOR: I know what it says, I have a copy right here, but it's so depressing. Couldn't we have a different beginning just for once? *(gets up and asks audience)* Don't you think so? *(Yes!)* How about it? How should we start this?

(AUDIENCE response, GREEK CHORUS if necessary, GREEKS: "Yes! Ok," etc.)

GREEK #5: Yes, just skip the Marley was dead part and get on with it!

ACTOR #1: *(Miffed, huffs, and leaves the stage. NARRATOR watches him/her go)*

NARRATOR: Oh, well, never mind, at least we still have that traditionally famous part of theater, the Greek Chorus, who will...hopefully remain to help us tell the story.

GREEK CHORUS: *(All stand, take a step forward and bow during the piano intro)*

Music Cue: Piano Introduction

GREEK CHORUS:
God rest ye merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
This miser that we sing about
Can't spoil your Christmas day!
We'll sing of joy and peace, good will,
So listen what we say,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
Oh glad tidings to all this Christmas day.

(piano transition to "We Three Kings")

ALL: Sing a song of gladness and cheer,
Never mind miserly Scrooge,

GREEK #9: Yes, he's here.

GREEK #4: We'll control him,

GREEK #6: We'll console him,

ALL: As his demise grows near.
Oh, --What a pity,
What a sight,
On this blessed Christmas night.
Sitting there by candle light,

GREEK #1: In his miserable!

GREEK #2: Miserable plight!

(piano transition to "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen")

GREEK #9: I doubt you can appreciate, appreciate at all,

GREEK #8: If you have never been that mean, and never had a fall,

GREEK #7: If you have never had a fall,

GREEK #6: A fall,

GREEK #5: A fall,

GREEK #4: At all!

ALL: Marley warned him that he would take a fall,

GREEK #1: No pity at all!

ALL: There are things that old Scrooge must now recall!

(Verse 2. Piano continues from the beginning during the following dialogue. Speak in rhythm.)

NARRATOR: He says he lives in a world of fools, who babble all about,
Says Christmas Eve's a humbug!

GREEK #1: Miserly unlovable lout!

NARRATOR: He finds himself just older, and not richer by a measure,
He's forgotten that love's a special treasure,
Yes, forgotten that love's a special treasure!

*Music Cue: piano repeat from beginning again, play during following lines.
(each person steps out to deliver line then moves back into position)*

GREEK #4: If you have never been down!

GREEK #5: Oh, then you wouldn't know!

GREEK #6: How awful that his life will be!

GREEK #3: Especially, down below!

GREEK #8: To carry all the chains he forged will be his misery.

ALL:

They're heavy, so heavy, you'll see!

(all drag their bodies down stage)

You must agree,

That they're heavy,

oh, this is Marley's decree!

NARRATOR: *(clapping politely)* Well done! Well done!

GREEKS: Thank you thank you! *(bowing while they move back)* And now with that gloomy foreshadowing opening, we can, without any sense of guilt, move on, but with the depressing thought that soon we shall have to bring out that ornery, scallywag. I think we can't delay it any longer...ah, ah, let's see...what was his name again...you know, the mean guy in this play? *(madly looking through his script seeking help from audience)*

AUDIENCE AND GREEKS: Scrooge! Yes, I think it's Scrooge, maybe Scrooge?
etc.

NARRATOR: Oh, yes, yes, Scrooge. Well, we already know that Marley was Scrooge's "SOLE executor, SOLE administrator, SOLE legatee, SOLE friend,...etc. etc. and so forth," (*accent as the King in King and I*)

GREEK #5: No, that's a different show!

NARRATOR: Oh, ...yes, and that he finally he lost his own soul...lost his soul! You know soul, not sole...(laughs at own joke)...oh, ahem, well, he was almost moved down into a very bad place! Lost his soul! (*looks down and rolls eyes--cracks up laughing--pretends to fall forward laughing so hard*)

ACTOR #1: Ok. Ok. (*comes forward to the NARRATOR*) If you fall backwards, you'll get a bigger laugh. Can't we just let the audience laugh at the jokes? (*shakes head, looks to audience*) So much for page one. (*throws it away- gets up and leaves still shaking head*)

NARRATOR: Whew! (*still chuckling*) moving on. Here's Actor Number 2. We'll call him/her Number 2. Ok?...No?...Not number two? What then? Well, then, who's got a proper name we can use? (*Suggestions from AUDIENCE/GREEKS if necessary*) Oh, _____. Ok, _____ I like it!

(*Enter CHARACTER #2*)

NARRATOR: Enter _____! (*name chosen by audience*)

ACTOR #2: (*enters SL-stands with book- Bows*) Thank you, thank you. As my colleague has already stated, Scrooge, that old scoundrel, almost lost his own soul, and had it not been for the gracious concern of the three spirits of the past, present, and future, I'm certain that it would have been all over for Ebenezer Scrooge. To continue...(narration begins during song)

(*piano cue*) We Wish You A Merry Christmas
(*GREEK CHORUS sings "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" in sotto voce*)
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
And a Happy New Year!

ACTOR #2: Yes, once upon a time, of all the good days in the year, and even on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge sat busy in his counting house, working. It was cold, bleak, biting, weather, *(looks at audience and steps forward)* No, I mean really cold, bleak...

GREEK #9: How cold was it?

ACTOR #2: It was so cold that...

NARRATOR: Now cut that out! *(clears throat: looks at GREEKS and singing stops)*
The city clocks had just gone three.

SOUND PERSON: *(from backstage says)* bong...bong...

NARRATOR: *(waits a beat)* Bong, bong? Now what is that? I said, the city clocks had just gone THREE! *(looks back toward sound person backstage)* Now might be a good time to introduce our sound person _____, who obviously needs a little help. Shall we? The city clocks had just gone THREE! *(motions to audience)*

GREEKS AND AUDIENCE: Bong, bong, bong.

SOUND PERSON: *(from backstage)* Soooooorry!

NARRATOR: Well, that certainly helps! Thank you, _____. We aren't going to tell anyone about this little problem he/she has with doing sound because what happens in _____ (city name) stays in _____. Ah, yes...it was a dark day already. Suddenly, into the already cold and gloomy office of Scrooge came...Fred, no...*(checks script)*...sorry, the...the...niece, Fredericka. Well, yes, why not Fredericka?

ACTOR #2: Now here's the part where Scrooge insists that he thinks Christmas is a humbug!

ACTOR #1: A Humbug? Nobody says that anymore! A Humbug?

ACTOR #2: Yes! A Humbug!

NARRATOR: Is there an echo in here?

Music Cue: piano gives pitches

GREEK CHORUS: (*Sings harmony: c7 chord--4 notes*) c-Humbug!, e-Humbug!, g-Humbug, b flat-Humbug! (*They hold on until NARRATOR gives them the 'cut' sign*)

NARRATOR: (*directing GREEK CHORUS: then cuts them off sharply with hand to throat cut motion*) Ok. cut! (*STAGE CREW begins to change the set for Scene 2*) Now they know that Scrooge hates spending money on the poor, on the orphans, on his poor assistant, the Widow Cratchitt, or on anything, even on himself. He was bad!

GREEK #3: How bad was he?

GREEK CHORUS: Very Bad!!! Boo! Hiss! Boo! (*motions to bring in audience*)

NARRATOR: (*to GREEK CHORUS who are hissing and booing*) Ok. Enough already! (*to audience*) Scrooge especially ignores the crime and the poverty, he hates orphans, little kids...and oh...and he hates big kids too! (*Sings "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" while crew changes set*)

END SCENE 1

SCENE 2

Place

The Office of Scrooge.

(*CREW brings on SCROOGE's desk, chair and WIDOW CRATCHITT's desk, chair, etc. during song*)

(*music*)

Oh, Come All Ye Faithful

Oh, come let us adore him,

Oh, come let us adore him,

Oh, come let us adore him,

(*Enter SCROOGE...bowing overbearingly to audience*)

NARRATOR: Not you, you lout!

Music Cue: segue into alphabet song

SCROOGE: A, I'm adorable,

NARRATOR: B, You're a beastly guy!

SCROOGE: C, just a cheapskate full of charm, D, for duplicity, despicable, I say it's me! E, for exasperating harm! (*laughs*)

NARRATOR: Good, but we'll have to cut that adorable part! F, is for fickle fate,

SCROOGE: G, is for Scrooge I'm Grrreat! (*ala the Tiger*) H, to the rest of you, tiz' true! I, I am the virtual victim of a musical.

NARRATOR: And your demise is overdue!

SCROOGE: Untrue! M, N, O, P, I could go on all day!

NARRATOR: There's a limit! (*looks at watch*)

SCROOGE: Q, R, S, T, alphabetically speaking, U, you intrude it's true! (*trying to get angry*)

NARRATOR: V, means you've lost a screw!

SCROOGE: W, X, Y, Z! It's vanity and misery, you are accusing me?

NARRATOR: Glad that this song is almost through!

SCROOGE: Me too! (*out of rhythmic pattern*) I'm really a good guy and you're all gangling up on me. (*Takes out handkerchief and sniffs, wipes eyes*)

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!