



Audio Description Notes for *A Christmas Carol*

WELCOME

Welcome to the Guthrie Theater's 50th production of *A Christmas Carol*. The play was written by Charles Dickens and adapted by Lavina Jadhvani. This production is directed by Addie Gorlin-Han (based on the original direction by Joseph Haj).

My name is Connie Fullmer, and I will be your audio describer for this performance, which is approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

The creative team for this production includes:

- Choreographer: Regina Peluso
- Composer: Jane Shaw
- Music Director: Jason Hansen
- Scenic and Projection Designer: Matt Saunders
- Costume Designer: Toni-Leslie James
- Costume Design Recreation: Emily Tappan
- Lighting Designer: Yi Zhao
- Sound Designer: Mikhaal Sulaiman

This production contains loud noises, strobe lights, haze and fog.

SYNOPSIS

A miserly and miserable man, Ebenezer Scrooge greets each Christmas with “Bah! Humbug!” until he is visited one Christmas Eve by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future. In Charles Dickens' beloved classic, the three spirits show Scrooge happy memories from his past, difficult realities from the present and a grim future should he continue his closed-hearted ways. Throughout his journey, Scrooge is forced to reckon with the man he has become and contemplate the man he could be — but only if his restless night leads to a change of heart by morning.

Faithful to the Dickens tale, Lavina Jadhvani's adaptation carefully tracks Scrooge's journey to redemption to mark the moments when Scrooge becomes a willing participant in his own change of heart, from the tears he sheds upon seeing his boyhood school to the fear that Death will claim him before he can make good on his resolution to change.

There are five staves in the play. Staves, you ask? Yes, staves, which is the plural of a “staff” used in music, such as carols. In the novella, Charles Dickens used “staves” instead of chapters or verses. All staves are set in London and occur over the course of two days, December 24 and 25, in 1843. Listen for when the Ghost of Christmas Present refers to her 1842 siblings.

The music in this production features traditional carols and hymns, some with new lyrics, a few broadside ballads put to music and several original songs.



STAGING AND PROPS

Throughout the play, two stage craft devices are used. There are two turntables: one expansive, full round measuring 24 feet in diameter, and one 3-foot-wide ring that encircles the larger turntable and can move independently. This ring is nicknamed “the doughnut.”

When you walk into the theater, the stage is empty. At the back of the stage is a streetscape in stark black, alluding to London in 1843. Three-story buildings, built in bas-relief and covered with coal soot, reach from floor to ceiling. There are lights shining through the windows. The stage floor is painted to look like cobblestones. The impression is that you are in a dark, sooty, urban area.

During the introduction, an engraved sign that reads “Scrooge and Marley” comes down from the ceiling. A large, full moon hangs over the buildings.

When we enter Scrooge’s counting house, the moon turns into a giant clock — the hands on the clock move as the play progresses.

The furniture pieces in the Scrooge and Marley office enter from the right on the large turntable. Items include Bob Cratchit’s stool and small writing desk (complete with candle, ledger book, quill and ink), Scrooge’s large desk littered with money, books and papers, Scrooge’s armchair, a file cabinet, a large vault with gold bars inside, bags of money, a coat rack and a coal stove with an accompanying bucket and shovel.

When Scrooge leaves the office to go to his home, one of the black buildings comes from the back of the stage to the middle. We see the outside of a house with three windows and a door. The door has a large oval in the middle that Scrooge calls a knocker. As Scrooge reaches to open the door, there is a large boom, and the knocker suddenly has the face of Jacob Marley on it — which is actually a projection — along with the ghostly sound of “Ebenezer.” As Scrooge walks through the door, the building turns around and we are inside Scrooge’s house. On the main level is the vestibule and an inner door. There is a wooden rocking chair facing a glowing fireplace with a mantle and a painting hanging over the mantle. To the left of the fireplace is a staircase to the second level. Upstairs is a four-poster bed, a hope chest at the end of the bed and a window with white curtains. Over the bed is a large headboard flanked by gold curtains hanging on rings.

When Scrooge goes outside with the Ghost of Christmas Past, snow falls from the sky as he looks down on the town where he lived as a child. The town’s buildings sit in a row on the large turntable and move slowly past Scrooge’s feet. The town contains several tiny houses and a church, all white and between 2-feet and 3-feet tall, with lights glowing inside the small windows.

When Boy Scrooge is in the school, he enters on that same turntable seated at a desk. Behind him is a chalkboard that reads, “Merry Christmas, Children! See you in the New Year.”

STAGING AND PROPS (continued)

In the Fezziwig party scene, 15 decorated lanterns come down from the ceiling. From the left, a staircase enters with Mrs. Fezziwig and her three daughters standing on the stairs.

Later, Young Scrooge and Belle meet under a lamppost outside while it is snowing. The turntable moves the lamppost slowly across the stage.

Belle's house features a red velvet Queen Anne chair, a matching red velvet footstool and a 6-foot Christmas tree decorated with ribbons and handmade ornaments.

The Cratchit home has a long, picnic-style dining table with benches, a small, coal-burning stove, a small table with food on the top and table settings on a lower shelf, a small table with a 2-foot Christmas tree and a lamp hanging from above.

Midway through the play, Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present look up at three sailors standing on a 20-foot platform with a ship's wheel as a projection of a roiling sea fills the stage.

Fred's house is on the large, round turntable, and it is first seen from the outside with lights shining through the windows. As the turntable moves, we see the inside, which features upscale furniture and many bright, festive decorations, including an elaborate gingerbread house. There is a table covered in silver serving pieces, a 10-foot Christmas tree adorned with tinsel and 20 wrapped presents sitting beneath the tree. A small, square piano with a garland of greenery sits on the left side of the stage.

Later in the play, the Ghost of Christmas Future takes Scrooge to a cemetery where there are 10 tombstones.

CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

This play has a large company of 30 actors. In the beginning of the play, 14 actors walk onstage and give a narrative preamble to the play, with each actor saying one line at a time. I won't identify them by their character names because that is not important at this point — they are simply an ensemble of narrators telling the story. Now, on to the main characters.

Ebenezer Scrooge is played by **David Beach**. Scrooge has messy white hair and white mutton chops. When he is in his office or visiting the Cratchits, he wears a black cutaway with tails and a velvet collar over a black brocade vest with a white collar and black pants. When he goes outside, he puts on a long, black, double-breasted topcoat. From the shoulders, four layers of cloth hang in a pattern resembling shingles. On his head, he wears a top hat. In the bedroom and during the ghost scenes, he wears a floor-length, muslin night shirt with ruffles at the collar and down the front, plus a blue-and-black, brocade, floor-length robe and a muslin nightcap.

Bob Cratchit is played by **Tyler Michaels King**. Bob Cratchit wears brown, plaid pants under a brown, knee-length coat. He wears a brown vest over a white shirt and a black cravat. When he is in the cold office, he pulls a knitted shawl over his coat.

CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES (continued)

Mrs. Cratchit is played by **Emjoy Gavino**. Mrs. Cratchit wears a drab, brown dress with puffy sleeves. She wears an apron over the skirt, and her long, brown hair is drawn up into a bun.

The four **Cratchit children** all wear clothing in drab, muted colors. **Tiny Tim** wears a puff-sleeved, mustard-colored shirt with a large, Buster Brown collar and mustard-colored britches. He wears a brace on his right leg and carries a small wooden crutch.

Two children called **Ignorance** and **Want** are dressed in rags, bent over and shivering.

Fred, Scrooge's nephew, is played by **John Catron**. As Fred, he wears a top hat and a green, knee-length, double-breasted coat over a short, red jacket, a white shirt with a black cravat, tan pants and black shoes.

A **Collector** for the poor and Scrooge's childhood friend, **Dick Wilkins**, are both played by **Max Wojtanowicz**. He wears a black top hat and a brown, knee-length topcoat over a black cutaway coat, tan pants and black shoes.

The other **Collector** is played by **Becca Claire Hart**, who also plays the role of **Mother**. She wears a black hat with bows and feathers, plus a long, flowery cloak with fringe on the shoulders and hem over a long, large, bell-shaped purple dress.

Marley is played by **Charity Jones**. As Marley, she wears white pants and a gray cutaway jacket. Her wig is made of wild, frazzled white hair. Most noticeable are the chains that hang around her neck, which are attached to manacles at her wrists and hang down to her knees. Many locks hang from the chains. Later in the play, Charity Jones also plays the captain of a ship and wears a navy-blue uniform and cap.

The **Ghost of Christmas Past** is played by **Eric Sharp**, who also plays the role of **Father**. As Past, he wears a floor-length, white gown with wizard sleeves. He has a long, white beard and long, white hair. There is a greenery wreath encircling his head that lights up.

Boy Scrooge, played by a young actor, wears a short, red jacket and black slacks.

Fan is played by **Audrey Mojica**. She wears a long, dark-blue dress with large puffy sleeves and a high-waisted cutaway in the front showing a white underdress. Her hair is piled on her head in curls.

Young Scrooge is played by **Sebastian Grim**, wearing a tan cutaway with tails over black pants and black shoes.

CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES (continued)

Belle is played by **Stephanie Anne Bertumen**. She wears a high-waisted, long, white dress with short, puffy sleeves and a flower in her hair. When she is outside with Young Scrooge, she wears a long, black cloak over her white dress. Later, she wears a long dress with a green velvet bodice and a white skirt.

Mr. Fezziwig is played by **Paul de Cordova**. Mr. Fezziwig sports matching mutton chops and a paunch. He wears black-and-white, high-waisted, checkered pants, a tan cutaway with tails over a maroon plaid shirt and a large, black bow tie.

Mrs. Fezziwig is played by **Regina Marie Williams**. As Mrs. Fezziwig, she wears a floor-length, teal-blue dress with a high waistband of white and purple. From the hem up, there are two wavy loop patterns. The collar is white and frilly and matches the bonnet on her head.

Regina Marie Williams also plays the **Ghost of Christmas Present**, who wears a long, white dress with a large, bell-shaped skirt. From the hem up, there is about 6 inches of white faux fur, followed by layers of white fabric with silver sequins up to the waist, with four rows of green garland in a wave pattern. The top of the dress has puffy sleeves with more faux fur trimming the cuffs and collar. On her head, she wears a crown with a white, silver, sequined headband with 10 gold rays jutting out about 4 inches. When we first see her, she is seated in front of Scrooge's fireplace and surrounded by holiday foods and candies in baskets, platters and layered serving dishes. Festive foods also cover the mantel above the fireplace.

The three **Fezziwig Daughters** are played by **China Brickey**, **Emily Gunyou Halaas** and **Summer Hagen**. All three are dressed very gaudily. Their dresses are identical in shape — just different colors. As a Fezziwig Daughter, **China Brickey** wears an emerald-green dress with pink piping on the sleeves that makes a cascade of ruffles. China also plays **Fred's Wife**, who wears a stylish gold dress with a large bell skirt.

As a Fezziwig Daughter, **Emily Gunyou Halaas** wears a gaudy orange dress with puffy sleeves and a large bell skirt. She also plays the **Charwoman**, who wears gray rags, a white apron and a white bonnet.

As a Fezziwig Daughter, **Summer Hagen** wears a purple dress with puffy sleeves and a large bell skirt. She also plays the **Poultruss** and **Laundress**, wearing rags, a white apron and a white bonnet.

Belle's Husband is played by **Nathan Huberty**. As Belle's Husband, he wears black pants, a maroon cutaway coat over a white shirt, a maroon vest and a black cravat. He also plays the **Ghost of Christmas Future**, first appearing as a dark, hunched-over shadow. As he rises to his full 8-foot height, we see his legs are like that of a fawn. His head pops up to reveal a mane of stringy black hair. His torso is covered with gold and copper snakeskin. His movements are slow and deliberate, and while he never speaks, he points to communicate with Scrooge.



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CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES (continued)

Old Joe is played by **Nathaniel Fuller**. As Old Joe, he wears long hair and a long beard, plus a long, gray overcoat and a brown top hat.

Members of the acting ensemble also appear as **Londoners, Townspeople, Carolers** and **Party Guests**.