SCROOGE
(frightened, looking around the room)
I am here. Who are you? Where are you?

The lights on the bedroom fade up as PRESENT speaks.

PRESENT
I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Come and know me better, man!

The bedroom has been transformed into a Christmas display case! Holly, ivy, mistletoe – the works! Seated on a chair, like a throne, is CHRISTMAS PRESENT. PRESENT is dressed in the traditional costume of a rich, green velvet robe, lined with fur, and a holly wreath around the head. PRESENT also carries with him a torch of “peace and good-will” that will be used during the scene. PRESENT is surrounded by food – turkey, game, breads, and luscious fruits – as befitting a grand holiday celebration.

Music ends.

PRESENT
Look upon me! You have never seen the like of me before!

SCROOGE
Never!

PRESENT
Have you never met the younger members of my family?

SCROOGE
I don’t think I have. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

PRESENT
More than eighteen hundred!

SCROOGE
So many mouths to feed! I don’t like large families.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT rises and steps toward SCROOGE.

PRESENT
They aren’t so fond of you, either. Touch my robe!

SCROOGE does, and, immediately, music begins.
ON THIS MERRY CHRISTMAS MORNING,
ON THIS BLESS-ED CHRISTMAS DAY!

After the applause, we immediately hear church bells ringing.

Music begins.

#14 O Come, All Ye Faithful – Medley (CHORUS, SCROOGE)

Selected CHORUS members immediately begin to move toward a church service. It is not necessary that all CHORUS members are there – only a small representation, with the rest singing in the dark from other parts of the stage. The church represented is small and simple – a Wesleyan, separatist congregation.

As music continues:

SCROOGE
What is happening? Where are they all going?

PRESENT
To worship, of course! Christmas is not only a holiday, Mr. Scrooge. It is a **holy** day! Perhaps you forgot?

CHORUS

(Singing as they make their way)

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL,
JOYFUL AND TRIUMPHANT.
O COME YE, O COME YE TO BETHLEHEM.
COME AND BEHOLD HIM,
BORN THE KING OF ANGELS.
O COME, LET US ADORE HIM,
O COME LET US ADORE HIM,
O COME, LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST, THE LORD.

(Arriving into their places as the “service” begins)

THE FIRST NOWELL
THE ANGEL DID SAY
WAS TO CERTAIN POOR SHEPHERDS
IN FIELDS WHERE THEY LAY.
IN FIELDS WHERE THEY LAY KEEPING THEIR SHEEP
ON A COLD WINTER’S NIGHT THAT WAS SO DEEP.
NOWELL, NOWELL, NOWELL, NOWELL.
BORN IS THE KING OF ISRAEL.
Music continues underneath. A MINISTER stands before them, dressed simply, with an open Bible, miming reading aloud to the congregation. Seated last, toward the back, is BOB CRATCHIT and TINY TIM.

SCROOGE
Spirit? Look, there! Is that my clerk, Bob Cratchit?

PRESENT
Yes. So glad that you noticed him.

SCROOGE
And the boy . . . the crippled one . . . is that his son?

PRESENT
Yes. Tiny Tim.

MINISTER
And the angel said unto them, Fear not! For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you, is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.”

CHORUS
GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE
WITH HEART AND SOUL AND VOICE!
GIVE YE HEED TO WHAT WE SAY:
JESUS CHRIST IS BORN TODAY.
OX AND ASS BEFORE HIM BOW,
AND HE IS IN THE MANGER NOW:
CHRIST IS BORN TODAY, CHRIST IS BORN TODAY!

The people stand and begin to leave, singing as they go. SCROOGE gets caught up in the moment and blends his voice with theirs.

SCROOGE & CHORUS
GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE
WITH HEART AND SOUL AND VOICE!
NOW YE NEED NOT FEAR THE GRAVE:
JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN TO SAVE;
CALLS YOU ONE AND CALLS YOU ALL
TO GAIN HIS EVERLASTING HALL.
CHRIST WAS BORN TO SAVE, CHRIST WAS BORN TO SAVE!

(Orchestral ending as the scene continues.)

PRESENT
Mr. Scrooge?! So you do know the carols of Christmas?

SCROOGE
I learned them as a boy.

PRESENT
Yet you never sing them!

SCROOGE
(submissively)
Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion and I learned a lesson that is working now. Tonight, if you have something to teach me, let me profit by it.

PRESENT
Walk with me . . . and see a Christmas dinner, delightful to behold!

Music begins.

#14 Cratchit – Underscore 1 (ORCHESTRA)

They move to another area of the stage as the lights fade up on the home of Bob Cratchit. MRS. CRATCHIT, and the Cratchit children are preparing for Christmas dinner. The Cratchit home is certainly one that belongs to a poor family. Yet, it is clean and warm. It has been decorated, albeit cheaply, but joyfully, for Christmas.

PRESENT, unseen by the Cratchits, moves toward them and “sprinkles” the house with his torch.

SCROOGE
Is there a peculiar flavor in what you sprinkle from your torch?

PRESENT
There is. My own.
SCROOGE
Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?

PRESENT
To any kindly given, but to a poor one most of all.

SCROOGE
Why to a poor one most?

PRESENT
Because it needs it the most.

SCROOGE
This is a poor one, indeed. Where are we, Spirit?

PRESENT
Bob Cratchit’s.

SCROOGE
The house is so small – and all these children? How do they live?

PRESENT
Excellent question! How do they live on just fifteen shilling a week, Mr. Scrooge?

The lights fade up more fully on the Cratchit house.

Music ends.

MRS. CRATCHIT
What could be keeping your Father and Tiny Tim? And Martha wasn’t as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!

ELIZABETH
Oh, I hope they will be home soon! Mother, are there presents?

MRS. CRATCHIT
There are a few. But – dinner comes first, dear.

BELINDA
(looking out the door, or window)
Here’s Martha, mother!

MARTHA enters.
Music begins.

FRED
He told me to keep Christmas in my own way, and so I shall, Uncle Scrooge, so I shall . . .

(singing)
GOD BLESS CHRISTMAS!
WE NEED IT, SO HEED IT!

VIRGINIA
GOD BLESS CHRISTMAS!
THIS IS THE VERY DAY!

FRED & VIRGINIA
IT WON’T BRING US A SCRAP OF GOLD,
STILL, WE BELIEVE WHAT WE’VE BEEN TOLD:
THAT CHRISTMAS DOES US GOOD AND SO WE SAY GOD
BLESS CHRISTMAS ANYWAY!

Lights fade on Fred’s house. During this last musical sequence, PRESENT has moved out of the light to another part of the stage, where he has also hidden the two children - IGNORANCE and WANT - inside his robe.

SCROOGE
Spirit . . . must we leave now?
(looking around)
Spirit, where are you? You can’t leave me here in the middle of the street without a word! Spirit! Is your life so short?

PRESENT
(from across the stage)
My life upon this globe, is very brief. It ends tonight.

SCROOGE
Tonight!

PRESENT
Tonight at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.

Clock chimes ring out. SCROOGE walks toward PRESENT.
SCROOGE
Forgive me if I am mistaken . . . but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts.

PRESENT

(opening his robe)
Look here! Oh, man! Look here, look down here!

_Two children, IGNORANCE and WANT, step out, from inside PRESENT’s robe. They are sickly, poor and dirty, and, most of all, sad. SCROOGE is repulsed by them and begins to unconsciously walk backwards, away from them._

SCROOGE

Spirit! Are they yours?

PRESENT

They are Man’s . . . and they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.

SCROOGE

Have they no refuge or resource?

PRESENT

(in a dramatic cry)
Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

_The clock chimes twelve, loudly. PRESENT exits quickly._

_Music begins._

#19 Christmas Future (ORCHESTRA)

_SCROOGE, alone onstage, staggers about. Smoke, as before, begins to flood the stage._

SCROOGE

Spirit! Where are you going?! Will you not answer me? Spirit! Jacob! Marley! I beg of you, I repent, I say, I repent! What—