



South Coast Repertory
Orange County's Tony Award-winning Theatre

Sensory-Friendly/ Relaxed Performance Pre-Visit Sensory Guide

A Christmas Carol



Welcome!

We're so glad you're here.

This play is an adaptation of the short novel *A Christmas Carol*, written in 1843 by Charles Dickens. There are lots of other adaptations out there, like *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, but this one was created by a team of people here at South Coast Repertory, lead by director Hisa Takakuwa and adapter Jerry Patch.

You will hear a variety of sound effects, music, see several kinds of lights and listen to the actors as they tell the story. Some of the lights in the theatre will remain on during the performance so you are able to move around, enter and exit to the lobby as you need.

A Christmas Carol is two hours long, with a fifteen-minute intermission. You are free to leave and come back at any time.

A Christmas Carol has a pretty big cast, so you'll want to check your program to see all of their names and photos.

Happy holidays!

The Plot

The show begins with Ebenezer Scrooge and his employee, Bob Cratchit, at work. Scrooge is mean and penny-pinching, and he doesn't think anyone should enjoy Christmas, including his nephew Fred, some solicitors and the Cratchit family.

Scrooge goes home and prepares for bed. He is visited by the ghost of his old friend and business partner, Jacob Marley. Marley warns Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits who will teach him the error of his ways.

The Spirit of Christmas Past arrives first. She takes Scrooge on a journey through his own past, including his childhood at school, his relationship with his sister Fan, his apprenticeship under Mr. Fezziwig and his engagement to Belle.

The Spirit of Christmas Present arrives next. He takes Scrooge to see the poor Cratchit family's Christmas dinner and his nephew Fred's Christmas party. The Cratchits and Fred's friends are unkind when they talk about Scrooge, because he is a miserable person who hates Christmas.

The Spirit of Christmas Future arrives last. It shows Scrooge different visions of what the future might bring, including the death of Tiny Tim Cratchit and Scrooge's own grave.

Scrooge wakes the next morning on Christmas Day, a changed man. On his walk, he is generous to everyone he meets. He visits the Cratchit family with gifts and the promise of a raise, and makes amends with his nephew Fred.

Sensory Breakdown

A Christmas Carol is a play with music, which means there are a few songs throughout the performance! If you enjoy a song, feel free to clap when it's over. Please note that the times listed here are approximate.

At...show start – Blackout on stage, then lights up. “Wassail” begins with a crowd onstage.

Snow falls onstage, but it isn't real snow—it's made of soap!

3 minutes – This is the first time scenery moves on stage. Two big sections come together from each side of the stage. Every time locations change, the scenery moves.

4 minutes – The bell over the office door jingles. This will happen every time someone enters the office.

8 minutes – Fred shouts “Merry Christmas!” and it startles Scrooge.

9 minutes – A child outside the office sings “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen.”

12 minutes – Church bells ring in the distance.

12 minutes – The lighting onstage darkens, signifying that it's evening.

14 minutes – Scrooge shouts “BAH!” and throws Fred's gift across the stage. “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” plays in the background as the scenery changes.

15 minutes – **Jacob Marley appears onstage for the first time in his coffin. Church bells ring.**

15 minutes 30 seconds – Marley sits up in his coffin.

16 minutes – Marley startles Scrooge, with ghostly sound effects, additional lighting and fog. Blackout on stage. Ghostly sounds will mostly end by 17 minutes.

17 minutes – Scrooge's grandfather clock chimes. This clock will chime frequently throughout the show to show the passage of time through the night.

18 minutes – Scrooge changes from his daytime clothes into his nighttime clothes. He never undresses completely but he does walk around in long johns for a little while.

18 minutes – **Dragging chains and moaning sound effects begin at low levels. These will pick up the closer Marley gets to entering.**

21 minutes – The lighting onstage gets darker.

21 minutes – Lots of sound effects pick up here, like a haunted house. You'll hear hooting, a cat screech, clattering, wind, and bells, and things in Scrooge's house, like his curtains, will move without being touched.

22 minutes – There is a brief silence, and then there is the sound of footsteps and chains dragging. Fog will appear onstage.

22 minutes 30 seconds – **Marley bursts through the door on the right side of the stage and shouts, “EBENEZER SCROOGE!”**

23 minutes – As Marley talks, there are additional sound effects, including: chains, ghostly moaning, and “power” sounds when Marley forces Scrooge to the ground.

26 minutes – Marley flies away out of Scrooge’s window on the left side of the stage. He doesn’t really fly, but it looks like it! **The ghost of Marley will not reappear in the show after this point, but the young version of him will.**

27 minutes – The Spirit of Christmas Past is on her way, with fog effects, giggling sounds and singsong and musical sound effects. The wardrobe lights up.

29 minutes – The sound of children playing begins before they come onstage.

30 minutes – A sound effect happens to signify wind and cold.

33 minutes – Background music begins as Scrooge and Christmas Past enter Fezziwig’s party. There is lots of commotion at Fezziwig’s party!

36 minutes – As someone enters, they sing “Deck the Halls” and the whole group sings along.

37 minutes – Dancing and fiddling begin quietly in the background.

38 minutes – Young Jacob Marley (not the ghost!) startles the Fezziwigs.

40 minutes – The whole group dances the Roger de Coverly, a dance with music, clapping and cheering. If someone makes a mistake, they must “forfeit” and offer an apology to their partner.

44 minutes – Fezziwig’s party ends. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig exit, laughing and shrieking. Lighting darkens.

45 minutes – Lighting remains low. Carriages rumble and church bells ring.

46 minutes – There is a coffin onstage, but there’s no funny business this time. No one comes out of the coffin.

48 minutes – Church bells ring. Scrooge is upset and asks Christmas Past to show him no more. As the scene ends, he shouts “Belleeeeeee!”

49 minutes – The Spirit of Christmas Present is not yet onstage, but musical sound effects begin to show that he’s on his way. You’ll hear music, laughter, crowd noise, and eventually, Christmas Present shouts “Ebenezer Scrooge!”

50 minutes – Christmas Present climbs out of the trunk at the foot of the bed, as distant crowd noise and laughter continues.

51 minutes – Anytime Christmas Present uses his powers, like to force open the wardrobe, there is a musical sound effect.

54 minutes – The Cratchit family sings part of “12 Days of Christmas.”

56 minutes – Martha, hiding under the table, startles Bob.

57 minutes – The Cratchit family sings a hymn.

58 minutes – Scrooge and Christmas Present speak of Tiny Tim’s illness. Tiny Tim does not die for real in this play.

62 minutes – The Cratchits exit, and Fred’s party enters. There’s lots of giggling, shouting and counting.

63 minutes – A blindfolded man chases a woman around the room.

68 minutes – A harpsichord plays in the background, and dancing begins. The whole ground at Fred's party begins to sing "Past Three O'Clock."

69 minutes – Lights fade, scenery moves, dancing continues.

70 minutes – Christmas Present begins a monologue about Christmas, with music in the background as the lights continue to go down.

Blackout on stage, end of Act One.

At intermission, you're welcome to get up, stretch your legs and step out of the theatre for a few minutes if you haven't done so yet. A recorded voice will announce to the lobby when it's time to go back inside.

At...beginning of Act Two – Lights come up on a much older version of Christmas Present. The children Want and Ignorance crawl out from under his robe with a sound effect. The clock chimes, and fog rises. Want and Ignorance fly away, and Christmas Present exits.

1 minute – **The Spirit of Christmas Future appears. It wears a dark cloak and has skeleton hands. This spirit is scarier than Christmas Past or Christmas Present.**

2 minutes – A sound effect happens when they "fly."

5 minutes – A sound effect happens as the scenery changes.

5 minutes – The Cratchits discuss the death of Tiny Tim. They are very sad, but this is only a vision of what might happen. Tiny Tim does not actually die in this play.

9 minutes – Scrooge is shown his grave. **This is a very loud scene**, with thunder, screaming, echoes, the grandfather clock, cats screeching and owls hooting. It goes on for about three minutes.

12 minutes – As things settle down, chains echo and the wind blows.

15 minutes – When Scrooge opens his window, it's snowing.

17 minutes – Musical underscoring begins. It continues through most of the final scenes.

18 minutes – Scrooge does a small little trick with his hat before he puts it on. People like to clap for this, and you can too!

21 minutes – Scrooge startles the Cratchits.

25 minutes – The play returns to Fred's loud party.

26 minutes – Scrooge startles Fred.

28 minutes – Scrooge begins to recite "Ring Out Wild Bells" in low light, with scenery moving in the background.

28 minutes – When Scrooge is done, the whole cast sings "Wassail" and clinks cups with Scrooge and each other.

30 minutes – The cast raises their cups to the audience and offers a final "Wassail!"

30 minutes – The actors do their bows, wave to the audience and leave stage. Lights up.

Jacob Marley

The ghost of Jacob Marley appears twice in Act One of *A Christmas Carol*. Marley first appears in a coffin about 15 minutes into the show, then reappears in Scrooge's bedroom about 22 minutes in.

Marley's role in the story is to scare Scrooge into becoming a better man, so you might find him a little scary, too! Both of his big entrances are "jump scares."

When Marley first appears, he is wheeled on stage in a coffin. He stays still for a while, but when Scrooge gets near him, he sits up and shouts. Marley never gets out of the coffin and then he is wheeled away in the dark.

There are sound effects and things that happen on stage that come before Marley's second entrance. You'll hear an owl hooting, footsteps, a yowling cat, bells and chains dragging. These sounds will come from all over the theatre. There is also lots of motion that happens on stage, including Scrooge's curtains moving up and down.

Marley bursts onto stage from the right, shouting "EBENEZER SCROOGE!" He warns Scrooge that he will be visited by three spirits. When he is done, he flies out the window on the left side of the stage. He doesn't actually fly, but it looks like it!

Jacob Marley on stage:



Played by Michael Manuel:



The Spirits of Christmas

There are three spirits who visit Scrooge: Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future. While Christmas Future is considered the scariest of the three, we wanted to show you all three just in case!

Christmas Past:



Christmas Present:



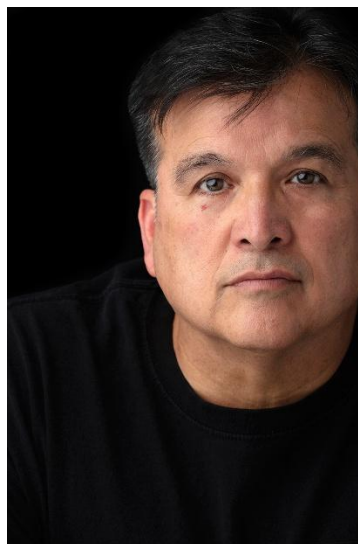
Christmas Future:



Played by Jennifer Parsons:



Played by Richard Soto:



Played by Nick Slimmer:

