

Auditions

Acting Up! is producing the Charles Dickens Classic “*A Christmas Carol*” for presentation at the Weld Theatre this July School Holidays.

Director: Stephen Lee

- We warmly encourage anyone interested in performing in what promises to be a spectacular production, to book an audition please complete the audition form at the end of this pack and email it to prodmgr@actingup.com.au. You will be emailed a specific audition time (a 10 minute slot)

This document provides the information you need to decide whether to audition, what to audition for, and how to prepare for your audition. You will need to allow 10 minutes or so to read this through and digest its contents.

Firstly, some general comments:

- **Auditions will be held on Friday 26th, Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th March 2021** at Acting up or the Weld theatre.
- If you wish to audition and cannot attend on these dates, you can submit a video audition. You will need to record acting (as required – see below) and submit the recording to us before the audition weekend. Contact us (email / phone above) with any questions and to register your intention to submit a video audition.
- Please prepare a one minute rehearsed acting piece for your audition. Preferably not funny. No song rehearsal required but please specify on your form if you can sing chorus or solo.
- In addition to the named characters there is ensemble, comprising many small character roles. All cast will be part of the ensemble.
- There will be an audition panel of two or three, who will expect auditionees to demonstrate their acting abilities.
- In order to be cast in the show you will need to be available (in principle) to attend all rehearsals (and performances) to which you are called. Rehearsals will commence in May 2021 and will be as follows:
 - Friday evenings and Saturdays – (mornings and/or afternoons) – for blocking etc.
 - Singing rehearsals : evenings during the week (to be advised for specific singing roles)
- You will also need to be available throughout the production weeks (July School Holidays) for evening rehearsals and performances, and also for matinée performances on weekends
- There is an ‘audition form’ for you to complete and bring to your audition – at the end of this document.
- Non-members of Acting Up who are cast will need to become ‘single event associate members’ before they can rehearse or perform in this production. The cost will be \$50.



Your participation in this production requires your undivided commitment in order to ensure a production of the highest possible quality. If cast, you cannot commit to any other production during the rehearsal period and production season. You should not audition if you are unable to commit to the rehearsal and production schedule.

If you have any other commitments (personal or work) that may impact on your ability to attend rehearsals, please provide full relevant details on your audition form.

THE STORY

For anyone who has never heard of the classic tale: a short novella, set in London in 1843, it is the story of a sad old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge. Cold, mean and greedy he does nothing for anyone but himself and declares Christmas to be a "humbug" (a lovely old fashioned word for a cheat or a scam). One Christmas Eve he is visited by the ghost of his old partner and told the only way he can be saved is by help from the spirit world. He is visited by three spirits - Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come. They show him his life as it was, as it is, and as it will be if he carries on his present path. Scrooge becomes a changed man.

It may all sound a bit Disney/Hallmark but, other than the ghostly element, Dickens keeps his story fully grounded in the real world and makes many valid comments about the worth and value of Christmas, and the terrible situation of those who cannot afford to celebrate the holiday. 180 years later, so much of what he says is still so true.

THE PRODUCTION

Many versions of this story play a bit fast and loose with the basic story-line, sometimes adding in extra scenes, and often leaving out many incidents. This adaptation is completely faithful to the original...every scene is included and every single word of dialogue from the book is there. On top of that, a large number of the brilliant descriptive passages from the book are included. The production has been staged a number of times since adapted it in 1985, and it has always been received excellently by audiences. Also, because it is a shorter novel we can cover the entire story in under two hours.

The style of the production will be with simple dynamic staging and true ensemble playing. The piece has about 50 parts, plus crowd scenes, but will be played by about 10 adult actors and a number of younger roles. For the adults, it will be a busy time with everyone except Scrooge himself playing three or four main roles plus ensemble work. The play includes singing, dancing and live music: plus magic, superb characters and a heartwarming story.

It will not be updated but costumed and set in its original period of 1800 - 1843 (plus some scenes in an unspecified future of around 1850)

WHAT IS ENSEMBLE?

The style is based the style on the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Dicken's novel Nicholas Nickleby. A small(ish) group of actors play many different roles, moving from being in



the crowd in one sequence and then playing an important speaking role in the next. A narration is shared around the company, no special narrator.

Imagine doing a pantomime and the same people play chorus AND leads, switching around as needed. But let me be clear: this is not a pantomime or comic send up of the book; there are funny scenes; songs and dances, yes. But there are also some powerful scenes of anger, grief and passion.

Roles to be Auditioned

We have about 50 main roles. 14 of these are for younger actors (Under 15) which we will probably double cast.

There are 35 other roles which depending on numbers interested will be played by around 10-12 older youth or adult actors.

We need people of all ages who are prepared to be a part of the ensemble.

Too many roles to list but to give you an idea (all ages mentioned are PLAYING AGE). Be aware the play is set both in London and the provinces of England and we DO need the accents!!

Ebenezer Scrooge

Stage Age: 60+

Description: Mean, old and bitter. A cold and practical business man who becomes a wild and giddy convert to Christmas

Jacob Marley

Stage Age: 50 +

Description: Once very like Scrooge, but since dying has had his eyes opened. Full of sadness and regret.

Fred

Stage Age: 20 - 30

Description: Warm and likeable, and infinitely patient with his Uncle Scrooge

Fred's Wife

Stage Age: 20 – 25

Description: A clever, quick, intelligent lady who loves her husband but also finds him exasperating. Sings a solo

Bob Cratchit

Stage Age: 30 - 50

Description: One of nature's underdogs. Works for Scrooge and has to put up with being treated badly. Loves his family

Emily Cratchit

Stage Age: 25 - 45

Description: Bob's wife. A Londoner who struggles to bring up a family on very little money. FAR less patient than Bob.

Belle

Stage Age: 20+

Description: Fiancé to the younger Scrooge, forced to end the engagement when she realises how much he is changing for the worst.

Christmas Past

Stage Age: ANY / Non gender specific

Description: Described as neither young nor old, she gently makes Scrooge aware of what he has given away.

Christmas Present

Stage Age: ANY / Non gender specific

Description: The true essence of Christmas, warm and happy, but often with a real edge of anger and warning.

Old Joe

Stage Age: 40+

Description: The owner of a shop in the worst part of London where he buys and sells goods often stolen or suspect.

Mrs Dilber

Stage Age: 30+

Description: Works for Scrooge in a menial role. In the future is prepared to loot his dead body for anything she can get.

Martha Cratchit

Stage Age: 14- 16

Description: Works in a milliner's shop. Londoner, strong and independent.

Young Scrooge

Stage Age: 12 - 17

Description: We need a couple of Younger versions of the role, one as a boy, another as a young man.

Fan

Stage Age: about 12

Description: Scrooge's sister. Happy and lively she does need to sing a solo.

Tim Cratchit

Stage Age: 8 - 10 non gender specific

Description: Bob's son. Crippled walks with a crutch.



AUDITION Form

(Please complete and email to prodmgr@actingup.com.au)

NAME

ADDRESS

CONTACT NUMBERS

Home:

Mobile:

AGE / HEIGHT

VOICE TYPE (can you sing ? Solo or with others in a chorus ?)

What ROLE(s) would you like to play?

Will you accept a different role?

Perform in the chorus?

PREVIOUS THEATRE / MUSIC EXPERIENCE:

SPECIAL SKILLS (eg. Juggling / Dancing / Playing an instrument)

Are you interested in contributing to the show by helping in any of these areas?

☐

Set construction

☐ Props

☐ Costumes

☐ Make-up

☐ Hair
