

PROJECT TWO

Ellie Daff

Performance and Production Arts

Level 3

A Christmas Carol

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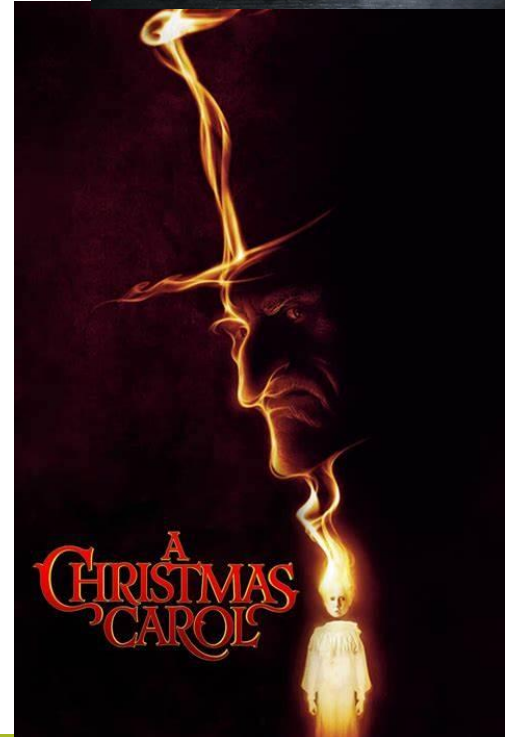
A Christmas Carol

A Christmas Carol, a novella written by Charles Dickens, follows a Christmas Eve of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserable and mean spirited man. 7 years after the passing of his business partner, Jacob Marley, he believes he sees his face in a doorknob. Convincing himself he's seeing things, he heads home only to be greeted by Marley's ghost once again. Marley tells him that since he was a bad person in life, he has to make it up in the afterlife. Wanting to give Scrooge a chance, Marley warns him that three ghosts will be appearing before Christmas Day. If Scrooge doesn't accept the offer, he will be forced to spend his afterlife in chains just as Marley does. The three ghosts show and take Scrooge to different destinations of the past, present and future in hopes of making him a better person by Christmas Day

For this performance I have been given the roles of Fezziwig and The Ghost of Christmas Present. This has given me the task of multiroling, which is something I haven't done a lot of so I am looking forward to the challenge.

For the audience, it is open to the public which means the company's family and friends will coming to watch. This is a bigger audience compared to our last performance which is defiantly more nerve wracking but I think it will also push us to our best ability.

In this performance we will all be multiroling by becoming background characters. This can be quite difficult as although we are in the back, we can't distract the audience from our main characters, or pay attention to Scrooge or the Ghosts while we're doing split scenes which will be challenging.



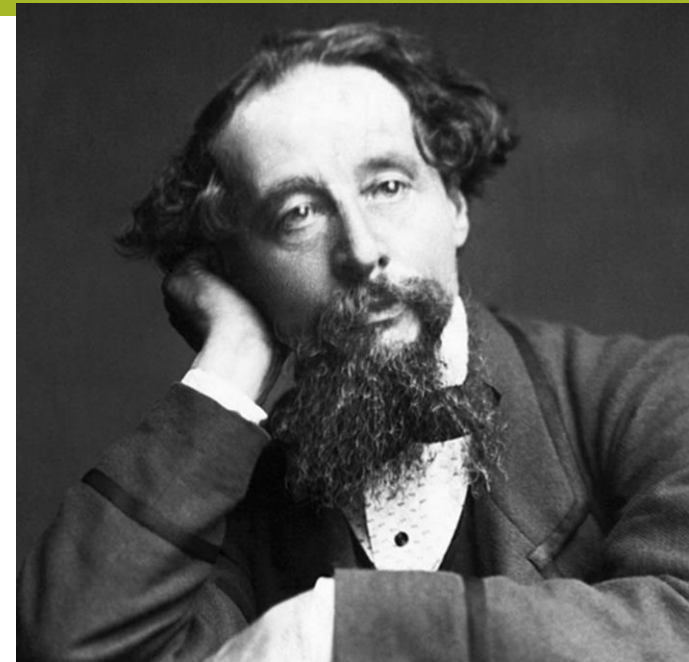
The Plot

Throughout the play, Scrooge is forced to face not only his past but is future as well. The ghosts take him through a lifetime of different moments, eventually showing him how he will end up in the future if he doesn't change how he treats people. In this play, while Scrooge is forced to re-evaluate his own situation, he is also shown how the people he knows live, and the challenges they go through. The play is set in London during the Victorian era. While Scrooge is a very profitable business man, his employee, Bob Cratchit, is quite poor so he doesn't live in the best conditions. This relates closely to Dickens' childhood, as his family lived in poverty. The characters have different environments, while Scrooge lives in a big house, Cratchit and his family aren't as lucky as well as the charity workers that Scrooge refuses to give money to, and suggested they go to a workhouse instead similar to what Dickens' had to do when he was young.



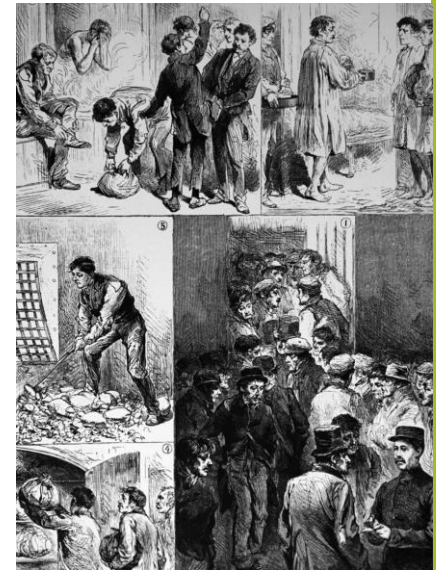
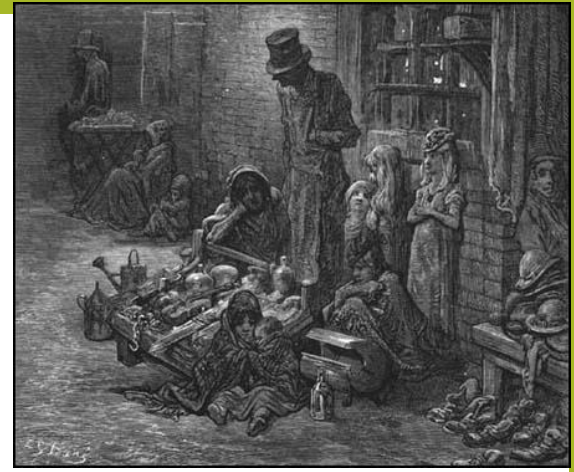
The Playwright: Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens, born 7th February 1812 and died 9th June 1870, was an English writer. He is known to many as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era, 'A Christmas Carol', 'Oliver Twist' and 'A Tale of Two Cities' being a few of his popular works. As a child, Dickens' family was very poor. At age 12, his father went to Debster's prison and Dickens was pulled out of school, being forced to work in a factory. His father was released after his grandmother passed away, and Charles was able to go back to school. Once he finished school, Dickens went on to work in reporters before he decided to move on, wanting to go on into the acting industry, however he didn't get his first acting job due to having a bad cold. In 1833, Charles posted his first story 'A Dinner at Poplar Walk' to the London Periodical Monthly Magazine. After this, he began working on 'Oliver Twist' in 1836, writing as much as 90 pages at a time. It was later published in 1838 and it became known as one of Dickens' better known series, as well as one of the first Victorian novels with a child protagonist. As Dickens came from a poor family, he began to post his novels in sections into cheap magazines, as only rich people were able to afford books. In 1870, Charles Dickens unfortunately passed away due to a stroke.



Poverty In London: The Victorian Era

In the 19th century, Great Britain witnessed a large population growth. Due to this, there was a rapid change in employment, housing and social welfare, which brought a huge change in peoples lives. It was noted that when the century came to an end, the population had grown three times more than what it was at the start of the century. While there isn't a specific reason for the growth in population, there is many things to be considered, such as children surviving infancy, immigration, larger families, higher life expectancy, a large number of unemployment's and the large number of immigrants that came from Ireland. There was a big fall back on employments because of a major factor, immigrants. Due to the boom of the population, there was both skilled and unskilled workers looking for employment. The wages of workers became very low due to the high demand for employment. This resulted in employment becoming seasonal, which meant men got laid off. The numbers in child labour became high as families looked towards their children, forcing them to work. They would do jobs such as chimney sweeps, as they would fit easily and there wasn't the requirement to read or write. They would also sell match boxes or flowers, or even some dangerous jobs such as working in coal mines or factories, crawling under machines to collect cotton, in which the wages were also low. With employment being so difficult, people wanted to live closer to their place of work which lead to a shortage of houses. The high demand for houses meant rent became expensive, causing an obvious increase of slums, as houses given out on rent were not maintained in a good way.



The Delius Church: Venue of Play

The Delius Church, the venue we are going to perform in, was built in 1877. the church was founded by the parents of Frederick Delius: Julian and Elise Delius. The church fits around 125 people which gives our company a bigger audience compared to our last performance. The Delius church has been at the heart of Bradford's German community for over 130 years as it welcomed an influx of German immigrants in the 19th Century. The church had undergone renovations, and it has since changed its name to the Delius Arts Centre where the Artworks Creative Communities currently work. Artworks is committed to the belief that creative activity is good for you, and engages people as participants, audiences and artists. There mission is to use creativity to achieve positive social change in communities as well as individuals while improving wealth and wellbeing. They do this by giving a voice to people who often feel as though they are unheard, and they're building a strong evidence base to influence strategy.



Fezziwig; A Christmas Carol

Fezziwig character has been said to not only symbolize the true meaning of Christmas but also to symbolise everything that Scrooge isn't. He symbolises the good that someone who has power and money can spread, the complete opposite of Scrooge. He chooses to use his wealth to support of others. He would throw parties every Christmas, a lavish celebration which all of his employees would enjoy, including young Scrooge. When the Ghost of Christmas Past criticises Fezziwig for his generosity and calls it a small thing only costing a few pounds, Scrooge rushes to Fezziwig's defence. Mr Fezziwig is a reminder of Scrooge's forgotten youth, a time of his innocence before he was introduced to the power that came with wealth, as well as the greed that overwhelmed him. Seeing Fezziwig again begins to remind Scrooge of memories that he has repressed for years. These memories remind him of what it was like to be happy and involved in a caring community and how much he enjoyed those days. Scrooge is filled with regret that he can't go back in time, even for a couple of hours and change his behaviour to his own employee, Bob Cratchit.



"THINK OF ME, THEN, NOT AS I AM, BUT AS I WAS."

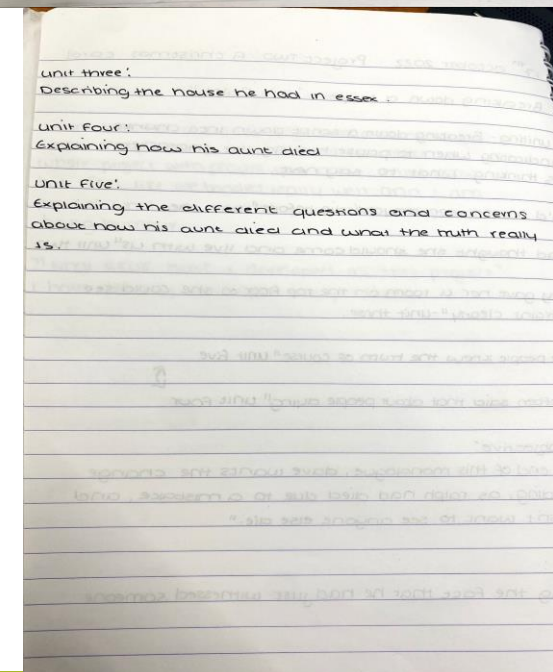
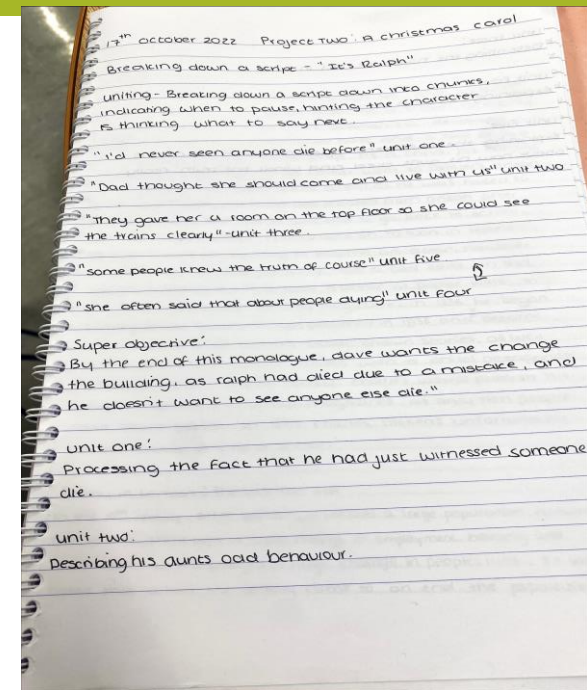
The Ghost of Christmas Present: A Christmas Carol

The Ghost of Christmas Present represents what a life that was lived with friends and family looks like, a life with authenticity, love and celebration. This is the opposite of how Scrooge lived his life. His life was dark and gloomy and he was lonely. He cut himself away from family and associates. He doesn't seem to care about himself either, he lived in a dark and empty house, he only cared about his wealth. The Ghost of Christmas Present showed Scrooge that it wasn't his wealth that brought him happiness, because he uses it as a protection from the world. The Ghost takes him around, showing him a contrast to his current life by taking him to see his nephew, Fred, along with his employee, Bob Cratchit, who is surrounded by his family happily despite the small salary he gets from working with Scrooge. The character of the Ghost of Christmas Present is to show Scrooge that money isn't going to make him happy, a truth that Scrooge is forced to look upon.



AUDITION PROCESS

For our audition process, we were given a selection of different monologues. There was a choice of both male and female characters. I chose a male monologue as I was auditioning for a male role. The script I chose was called 'It's Ralph' by Hugh Whitmore. I started by uniting the script, breaking it down into different chunks that would indicate me to take a break, hinting the character is thinking about what to say next as well as including the super object behind it. I then walked around the room, going over the lines and beginning to find my characterisation. The character, Dave, was someone who quite resembled Jesus, as stated by the playwright, so I stood tall with my head held high, as to show a high class, I also went over the monologue for a while, one paragraph at a time to start to get it imbedded into my head. As I was auditioning for Scrooge, I wanted to show that I am able to memorise scripts clearly and quickly. During the audition, we were recorded which I feel added a little more pressure but I feel it helped me do the best I could. Although I didn't get the role of Scrooge, I am pleased to be playing Fezziwig and The Ghost of Christmas Present.



HOW HAVE I USED MY RESEARCH?

I have used my research to help me with characterisation. Looking into the characters and what they represent has taught me how to stand and speak as them. With Fezziwig, he is a man of middle class, meaning he can live comfortably. He has money, which is shown by the full suit he wears, and he will stand tall with his head held high. Unlike Scrooge, he is very generous with his money, and uses it too treat his colleagues so he is looked up too, while Scrooge is not. For The Ghost of Christmas Present, he is superior to all of the other beings, as he is a spirit. The Ghost is meant to bring happiness and is severely disappointed in Scrooge for not finding it in his current life when everyone else, including Bob Cratchit, who has very little, is happy. I have also used my research to contribute ideas towards our overture. We decide to create a very busy London street for the beginning of our play, and we added characters such as small children throwing snowballs, rich people going round the markets buying things, as well as homeless people begging for money to keep warm during the cold winter.

REHEARSAL PICTURES



REHEARSAL VIDEOS



Ghost of Christmas Past Entrance



Ghost of Christmas Past Entrance Improved



Opening Scene



Marely's Entrance



Carriage Scene



Carriage Scene

REHEARSAL NOTES

From the first rehearsal, some of my biggest struggles include projecting my voice loud enough and staying in character. Throughout the weeks I worked on getting louder but it was still a big struggle. I tried shouting my lines during rehearsals to help me get comfortable with working on projection so when it came to the actual show the audience could actually hear me. Another thing that I struggled with was remembering the lines and not letting it clear to the audience that I couldn't remember so when it came to the day of the show if I messed up my lines I could find away to keep going and also hint to the cast when I was struggling so they knew to carry on with the lines. I did this by relating as closely to line as I could to keep the show running smoothly.

MINUTES FROM PRODUCTION MEETINGS

In our first meeting, we discussed many things such as costuming for main characters, staging, front of house and props. We discussed as a company what we thought was needed most and what wouldn't be useful. We had another meeting later on in the rehearsal weeks, closer to the show to focus on what was missing and what we could bring to make the set and stage seem more like a Victorian era house.

Props:

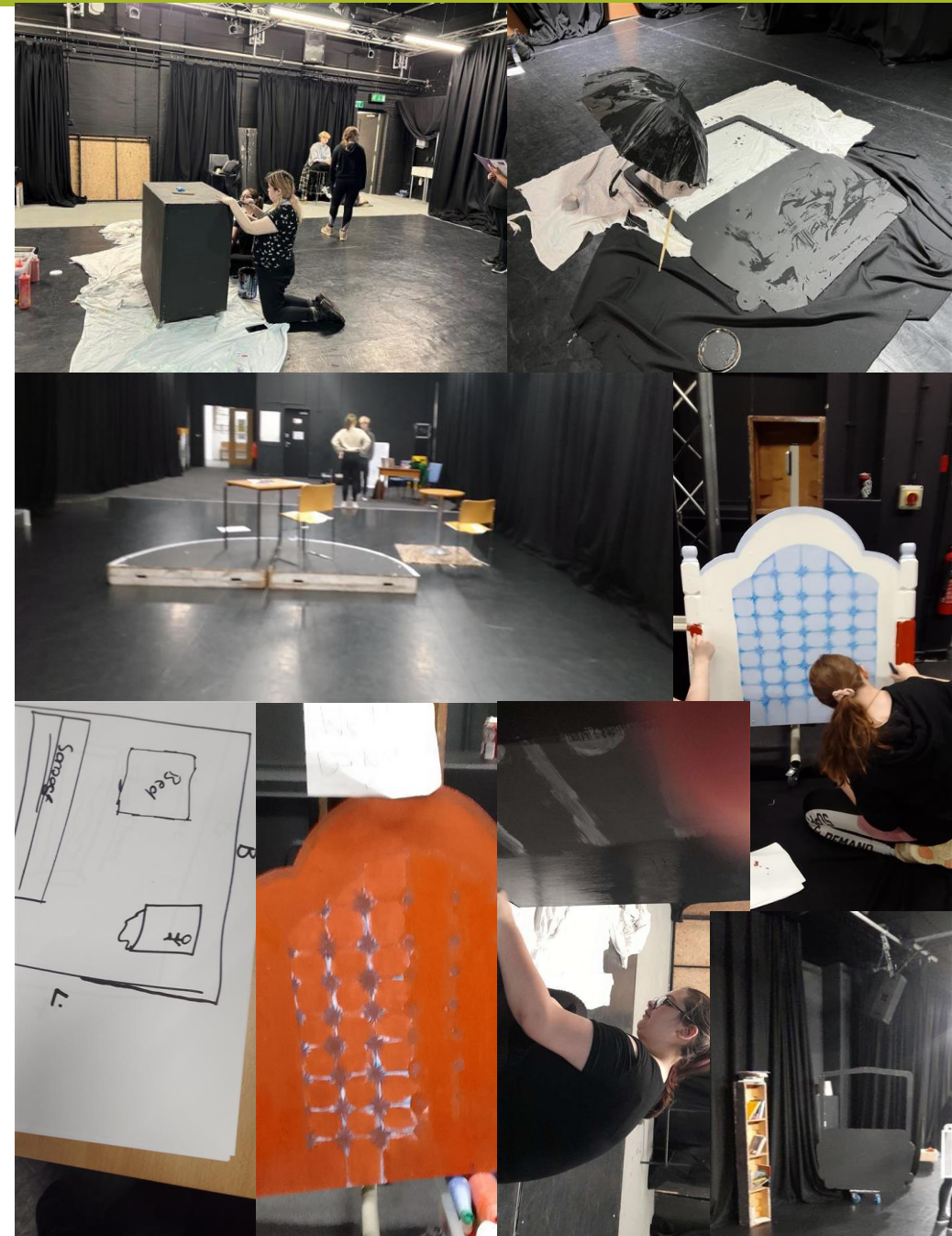
- Lanterns - Ana + Alex
- Canes - Ellie?
- Chams - Emily?
- ^{plastic} Glasses - Keira
- Lyrics for Carol singers - Keira
- Rings, Jewellery, Emily
- Candle Sticks - Alex + Tia
- Candle holder - Ollie
- Gull - ?
- Coins - Emily, Ashley, Rose
- Books - Keira
- Paperwork - Sky, Tia, Rose
- Wreath - Keira
- Fake Food - ? Tia
- Christmas tree - Emily

Set

- Christmas tree - Emily
- painting the fireplace - Rose and Sophie
- Scrooge's bed - Jack and Ollie
- Coat rack - Rose
- Christmas decoration - Ana

SET IDEAS & DESIGNS

For the set, we made a lot of things from scratch, such as Scrooge's bed, a fire place with two sides to have a big fire for Scrooge's house and a small fire for the Cratchits house. We made a coach and painted umbrellas black for wheels. We made a grave stone to be included in the funeral procession scene as well in the third ghost scene for Scrooge and Tiny Tim. We ended up painting the bed frame black to represent Scrooge's personality. We also used two of the tables in the classroom for Scrooge and Cratchits desk. Since we're setting the play in the Victorian era we tried to keep to the theme as much as possible such as having a small, plain Christmas tree, presents wrapped in tissue paper and we didn't have too much coloured things as houses would have been kept to simpler colours due to poverty.



SET DESIGN



COSTUME IDEAS & DESIGNS

In the play, Fezziwig wears a blue suit with a white undershirt, which represents his riches. I don't own a blue suit, and I wouldn't be able to buy one in the short time we had before the play. I asked around the class and no one else had one either. I asked one of my friends who luckily had a blue suit jacket that I can borrow. I had some black trousers at home that I used for his costume, and I decided to use a black shirt instead of a white one as I am in other scenes as a background character so being in studio blacks would be more convenient. Before I had this costume, I was thinking of changing Fezziwig's costume to green, as that is the colour of the Ghost of Christmas Present, and since the scenes are so close together, it would've been able to cut any unnecessary costume changes, however I, or anyone else I knew had a green suit. In the prop room we found some green fabric to wrap around me on top of the blue suit to represent the Ghosts resemblance to Fezziwig. I also had a Christmas reef made by my make-up artist, Megan, as the spirits crown as well as to show the difference between the two characters more.



RISK ASSESSMENTS

For the risks, we mainly focused on if we would be performing on a high platform in the Delius Church so we made sure that it wasn't too crowded with the set so it was easy to move around to prevent any slips or falls, however we ended up performing at our college, but we still kept set minimal for the same reason. For some of the set, such as the windows, we had them propped up so we made sure to keep the left side of the wings clear so nobody would trip and fall or knock it over. When it came to makeup, we had patch tests done to ensure we weren't having products applied that we were allergic too. For lighting, we had some flashing lights so we created a warning that was included in the programme so they were aware of the lights in case anyone had epilepsy.

CAUTION

**THIS SHOW
MAY NOT BE SAFE FOR SOME
PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY.**



**Some lighting is used at this show
that may be disruptive to people
who are sensitive to light.**

for more information please visit:
LEADDIY.org



WARNING

**Strobe lighting and other intense lighting
will be used during this show. It will not
be safe for those with epilepsy and
other conditions with sensitivity to light.**



Please see a staff member for details.

for more information please visit
LEADDIY.org



BUDGETING INFORMATION

When it comes to budget, we didn't have much of one so when it came to props and costume we had to be creative. We made a lot of set, brought in props that we needed for the most part. We focused the budget on any pieces of costume that we didn't have available to us, such as top hats for the richer characters like Scrooge and Fred. We would go to charity shops to save money and also because we found them the best for finding any costume we needed. I think having a small budget limited costume design but we also managed to find great costumes that fit with the time between the small budget as well as costuming we already had.

LIGHTING IDEAS & DESIGNS

For lighting, we had a lot of spotlights, especially focusing on Scrooge. Not only because Scrooge is the main character but to draw the audience into his story. We also used a lot of dark lights, mainly around Jacob Marely's entrance as well as the scene with the Ghost of Christmas Future to create tension, building on the darkness they both represent as the show Scrooge his future in life and death. When we did the dance, red and flashing lights were included. This creates more of a whirlwind effect to add to the spinning in the dance to give the impact of dizziness and something much different to reality.

SOUND IDEAS & DESIGNS

To start off, we had Christmas music playing in the background as we welcomed the audience in, we have chosen this as the effect it would have on the audience is that of euphoria due to the reminiscence and reminder of Christmas. As the play is set in the Christmas spirit and during Christmas we believe this is most appropriate to set the mood and adjust the audience for a certain expectation. This overall can reel the audience appropriately into the play which thusly means that the audience will enjoy the play more. We then used the song joy to the world for the overture as it has a very uplifting melody but it also decreases in tempo towards the end emphasising that scrooge is about to enter the stage putting the audience into a state of anticipation. We used bells for scrooge's office as well as the school bells in the scene between ben Benjamin and jack Walton. The company created a soundscape with instruments and stomping their feet to create tension for marleys entrance we also used a lot of older generation Christmas music to relate closer to the Victorian times and to match the setting. Finally we used monotone instrumentals during the dance section including the scenes with the ghost of Christmas future to give the audience the feeling of tension of possible tragedy or misfortune which further hooks the audience on the play and characters.

MARKETING IDEAS & DESIGNS

For marketing, we had a programme made that was shared on teams that we could share to friends and family, we also had this programme printed out and placed on seats when the audience arrived that they could take home. Although I think this was a good start for our first attempt to market our performance for an open audience, I still believe we could've done more to advertise, such as placing posters around college, to gain a bigger audience instead of having it shared through the company. I also think we could've advertised it online, if, that is, it was okay with everyone in the audience on any college accounts to share it more around the college.



REFERENCES

A Christmas Carol & The Plot: E-Notes

Fezziwig, A Christmas Carol: E-Notes

The Ghost of Christmas Present: E-Notes

The Playwright, Charles Dickens: E-Notes and Wikipedia

Poverty in London, The Victorian Era: Wikipedia

The Delius Church, Venue of Play- Delius Arts and Cultural Centre

Pictures included in these slides- Google Images.

FEEDBACK – TUTOR & PEER OBS/DIRECTION/VERBAL FEEDBACK

Peer Feedback from Lucas

Tutor Feedback from Steph

Verbal Feedback:

A lot of the feedback has been focused on my vocal projection. To help with this I would shout my lines to find the level I need to be projecting to so I could start working how to project my voice.

EVALUATION

From the start of the project I think the company has been working together a lot closer to bring this show together. We've blocked the scenes and helped each other when our peers were struggling. I feel we've become closer as a company. In this project I learnt not only how quickly rehearsal runs by and how quickly you work to create something, but I have also learnt that being in theatre doesn't just include the acting. Through this project we have been building and painting set, which I think we did quite well as we made painted most of the set in around three or four days, which was not a long time. Throughout this project, I have been developing a number of skills such as my multiroling skills, projection skills and memorising skills, this being a skill I struggled greatly with at the start. I think that although we had such a small amount of time to pull this show together, we are all extremely proud of what we have created, and are incredibly pleased with the outcome. I think a skill we all need to develop more is being off script, while most of us were off script, some of us struggled with remembering lines, and this can effect how we characterize our roles, so next time we should work quickly, using memorizing techniques so we can get off script quicker. For our next project, I am going to focus on getting off script in the first two weeks so I can begin developing my character. In the upcoming project, I want to be more organized when it comes to costuming for my character and props.