PROGRAMME NOTES FOR BAH HUMBUG

Conor Grimes and Alan McKee return with a new festive comedy show “Bah Humbug” following their successful play “The Troubles According To Me Da”, and “What the Reindeer Saw”. The show is directed by Frankie McCafferty, set design by Stuart Marshall and musical director Rod McVey.

 Bah Humbug is a modern day Belfast take on the classic Dicken’s “A Christmas Carol”, with Ebeneezer Scrooge as the richest property developer in Belfast keen to make a profit as his poorly finished apartments go on Sale on Boxing Day. Bob Cratchit, his loyal foreman is getting just one day’s unpaid leave for Christmas. Scrooge is visited by his former business partner Jacob Marley who has been dead for ten years. Three more spirits will visit Ebeneezer to show him the error of his ways.

There are a number of characters in the show so the cast will play multiple roles, with the exception of Michael Condron who exclusively plays Scrooge.

SCROOGE, Michael Condron is of medium height with slightly receding black hair and a neatly trimmed moustache, beard and side burns. He is fit looking and is sharply dressed in expensive clothes. He wears a white shirt and striped tie, 3 piece blue suit with matching waistcoat over which he wears a double breasted, black knee length “great coat” of quality, which has a satin lining. The “great coat” is much admired throughout the show. He drapes a short woollen scarf round his neck.

BOB CRATCHIT, Conor Grimes plays various parts, his main character been Scrooge’s good natured foreman, Cratchit. He is tall and thin with short grey hair, wears black glasses and a huge cheeky grin. We first see him at the building site wearing a yellow high viz jacket over a tee shirt, denims and brown builders boots. In Scrooge’s office he wears a grey jumper with a logo, tie over the top of his jumper which Scrooge complains about. His shirt, trousers and shoes are black. When leaving the office he dons a sleeveless puffer jacket, a scarf, a woollen hat like a Christmas pudding, and red festive mittens.

 Later he wears a red tracksuit with stripes down the arms and legs, baseball cap and trainers. To celebrate Christmas he wears dark slacks and a Christmas jumper in green with red and white striped sleeves, red detail on the neck and the word Elf on the chest.

AS MR FEZZIWIG owner of Fezziwig’s Estate and Land Agents, Grimes is dressed in country brown tweeds and brown brogues. He has a little moustache and glasses. Generous in nature he hosts a big Christmas party every year for staff, clients and their wives. He smokes a pipe and has a habit of standing with his legs wide, left one behind right. As his shoes slide on the floor he frequently is in danger of doing the splits and has to be helped up.

Grimes also plays BULLY 1 in Scrooge’s primary school. The 2nd BULLY is played by Alan McKee but both wear tank tops with white short sleeved school shirts and ties, short baggy trousers, long grey socks and brown shoes.

As TOPPER a friend of Scrooge’s niece, Ashley, he wears a white tee shirt with a logo, an open checked shirt, jeans, leather belt, and expensive leather boots and bobble hat. He dances with a candy cane walking stick while performing a party piece for Ashley’s Christmas party.

JACOB MARLEY, Alan McKee also plays Black Santa, Ghost of Christmas Present, Bully 2, Scrooge’s rival estate agent and auctioneer, Dermot and Tiny Tim, Cratchit’s ailing son, and a friend of Ashley’s. As Jacob Marley he is tall and heavy set with balding ginger hair. But we first see him as Belfast’s Black Santa, the Reverend Robinson, rattling a bucket, in a long black cassock with a cape feature at the shoulders and a hood. He wears a black woollen hat and has a cross round his neck. As JACOB he wears a brown suit, shoes, and a tie, all of which are soiled with mud. He is draped with heavy chains. His eyes are blackened and face ashen.

As the young Marley at Fezziwig’s he wears a Don Johnston 80’s style loose jacket and matching trousers in a pastel colour, a pale blue tee shirt, and white shoes. His long hair is tied back in a ponytail.

As Dermot, auctioneer and estate agent, he wears a camel coloured knee length coat, scarf, dark trousers and brown shoes.

The Ghost of Christmas Present appears wearing a white shirt with tails out over his brown trousers. His tie is askew and he is merrily drunk carrying a glass, and wearing party reindeer antlers. He is also bully 2 in Scrooge’s school.

Tiny Tim, Cratchit’s sick son is a strapping lad wearing full Celtic green and white football kit and green trainers. Later he will wear Pogba PJ’s that have red and white bottoms, and slippers like footballs.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST (Jeremy Charles Younghusband-Smythe, 2nd Lieutenant Kings Troop of the 12th Royal Bengal Hussars) Sophie Harkness. She is small and pretty with short ginger hair cut in a bob. She is also Ashley, Scrooge’s niece, Petula, Cratchit’s daughter and minor other appearances as street urchin and carol singer. As the Ghost of Christmas present she is a soldier in full army khaki, with a feathered beret, army boots, leather gloves and carrying a rifle.

 Ashley is dressed in brown tight top with transparent sleeves, baggy denims, and has an exercise mat slung across her back. Later she wears a black top with a shirt over it and ankle baggy trousers, flat boots and a baseball cap.

As Petula she wears white track suits with the hood up and trainers. Later for Christmas she wears a Lurex track suit, white bomber jacket and heels.

ALICE, (Scrooge’s former beau) is played by Roisin Gallagher who also plays April (Ashley’s wife), Doreen rival estate agent, Mrs Cratchit, and a street urchin. She is small and full busted with red hair cut in a 60’s style bob. As Alice she has long fair hair in a ponytail, wears a tight blue leather mini skirt with a denim jacket and red shoes. As Mrs Cratchit she has back combed blond hair, wears animal print blouses, black leggings and kitten heels. She has a huge fake bum which wiggles when she moves. Later she will wear an animal print cat suit with an open pleat on the back and heels. Doreen the estate agent wears a black ¾ length fur coat with bat sleeves, a grey dress and black patent shoes.

April is dressed in a silk open shirt with a Chinese design with a white top underneath, black leggings, and flat shoes.

Other appearances of the cast include a Band Aid type group at the start of the show with men in scruffy jeans and checked shirts, boots, and girls in short miniskirts or jeans. Also they appear as PIRA watching the army with uniform black glasses, berets, leather jackets, anoraks and boots.

Little Fan, Scrooge’s dead sister appears in a grey pleated school pinafore, white short sleeved shirt with white socks and brown shoes. Her blond hair is in pigtails.

The Ghost of Christmas Future appears as the Grim Reaper in full length black garb, pointy hood and carrying his scythe, he doesn’t speak and we don’t see his face.

Costume design is by Chris Hunter.

SCENERY NOTES BAH HUMBUG

The curtains are open when we first enter the theatre. On the stage floor is a circle of light on which stands a microphone where a group will play at the start of the show, this is set inside a rectangular frame of white light, like the entrance to a building. The light will change colour from white to blue at various times, but will be obscured in shadow as the action requires. Around the frame we can see seasonal greeting written like graffiti that light up at different times.

On the right the musical director, Rod McVey, sits left side facing us and his face looking towards centre stage. He is surrounded by a podium and microphones where he mixes music. The sides of the podium bear words such as Bells, Ho Ho Ho, and Jingle. He remains throughout the show, but at times he is in shadow while we focus on the action.

Ebenezer Plaza Apartments are in the process of been finished and appear as silhouettes on the central back wall of the stage. A small radio playing festive tunes sits on the floor to the left which the builders have been listening to.

A tall hat stand sits outside the rectangular frame and is used in various scenes.

Scrooge’s Office has a large rectangular window consisting of 6 square panes of glass. An architect’s drawing board on metal legs stands on the right, and on the left is a white metal computer desk with a laptop, with files on the lower shelf.

Scrooge’s Apartment is sparsely furnished with a large tan and black recliner chair with cushy arm rests. Facing the chair a flat screen television sits on a coffee table with a thick wooden top. The room’s temperature and lighting is automatically controlled by Alexia. He keeps his vintage brandy by his chair side. On the left is a coat stand.

The school room has an old fashioned wooden desk with the seat attached to its metal frame and a lid that lifts up with graffiti scored inside. A coat stand with a pink scarf draped on it stands on the left of the room.

McFezziwig’s Estate Agents has a rectangular window of 6 panes and in front of it stands a decorated Christmas tree with some presents underneath. A small desk covered by a cloth sits on the left with a brown high-backed swivel office chair behind it. Snow will fall outside the office later.

The Cratchit Home on The Falls Road has flashing outdoor Christmas lights. The interior has a cream leather two seater settee with a high back and cushy arm rests where the family crush up together. It is on wheels and is moved back and forth by the cast at times. The wallpaper has a cream and brown diamond design and is draped with Christmas lights and bells. There is a large Santa face attached to the wall which lights up. The decorations behind the settee will later be replaced with a framed photograph of Tiny Tim.

Ashley’s home in a posh area of the city has an outdoor all year round patio area where they do their entertaining. It has 7 multi coloured bean bags on the ground and a metal fire pit containing logs and standing on 3 legs so that looks like a cauldron. The patio is bathed in tasteful red light for Christmas. It stands on a circle of Celtic designs.

Other scenes are a dark meadow somewhere in Northern Ireland where someone has built a snow man, but which the army believes is a booby trap. A Lynx helicopter is represented by a high podium into which Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Past climb, the blades are projected onto the stage floor and the noise of a helicopter is heard. The podium rocks back and forth. A car is represented by two car seats brought onto the stage by the cast.

The Auctioneer’s podium is black and has the words Quality Auctioneers on the front.

Lighting effects include a spinning red circle where the Spirit of Christmas Future takes Scrooge and shows him his simple tomb stone.

A platform raised slightly above the stage floor at the back wall will have two children standing on it.

Other props include mobile phones, a transistor radio, coffee cups, laptop, flat screen TV, and Tiny Tim drives his mini quad bike around at the end of the show. Ashley’s friends carry a Talking Stick and play whistles and samba drums.

The set designer is Stuart Marshall. Lighting designer Paul Keogan and Sound designer is Chris Warner.