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Scary Christmas fun

A Christmas Carol

By [Maxwell McKee](#)

How many times can you see *A Christmas Carol*?

You know the story: Scrooge, warning ghost of his business partner Marley, past ghost, present ghost, future ghost, reformed Scrooge. The tale of Scrooge making the choices of love over money, happiness over bitterness and friendship over solitude ring true any time of year, but it is this story of Christmas harmony that might make the lights and decorations on the streets around you glint even brighter.

Michael Laun directs as the Sacramento Theatre Company celebrates a quarter-century of producing Richard Helleesen's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. Incidentally, this year also marks the bicentennial birthday of Charles Dickens. The performances breathe new life into the production, and it is the cohesiveness and tight timing—no doubt in part due to the wonderful music of David de Berry and orchestration by Gregg Coffin (who added some new arrangements this year)—that makes this a don't-miss holiday production.

Matt K. Miller, former artistic director of STC, has been starring as Scrooge for five years. In each production, his performance has evolved, and this time, Miller's in excellent form. Marley's ghost is terrifyingly portrayed by Jerry Lee, whose rattling chains and forceful voice set a phenomenal vision of



What's better than a visit from a scary dead friend on Christmas Eve?

PHOTO BY KELLY CHRISTOFFERSEN

A Christmas Carol, 7 p.m. Wednesday; 12:30 and 7 p.m. Thursday; 7 p.m. Friday; 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday; and 2 p.m. Sunday; \$17-\$37. Sacramento Theatre Company, 1419 H Street; (916) 443-6722; www.sactheatre.org. Through December 23.

the businessman doomed to roam the Earth shackled.

The ensemble is tight and just plain sounds good. The children work well with the adults, and Tiny Tim (Liam Nevin/Max Miller) gets the audible “aw” for delivery of his famous line. Happily, English accents range from excellent to passable.

B. Modern’s costumes—with some recent updating by Jessica Minnihan—are still gorgeous, and John Klonowski’s and Victor En Yu Tan’s stage and lights are still supercool. The entrances of all three ghosts (Devon Hayakawa/Courtney Shannon; Michael R.J. Campbell; and Shane Turner as past, present and future, respectively) are particularly stunning, and ... well, actually, kinda scary. Hell, I’m even gonna give props to the stage manager (Andreanna Konomos), pun intended.

The Sacramento Theatre Company has had 25 years to build up to this production, and it shows. *A Christmas Carol* deserves a piece of your holiday-entertainment budget—and this is the last chance to see it for five years, as the company is putting it on hiatus until 2017.