

# BWW Review: Ross Petty's A CHRISTMAS CAROL Panto is Undeniably Fun

by Taylor Long Dec. 1, 2017



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[Ross Petty](#)'s annual holiday musical is a tradition for many Torontonians. With this year's production, A CHRISTMAS CAROL - The Family Musical with a SCROOGE LOOSE!, that tradition is sure to continue. Led by [AJ Bridel](#) and [Dan Chameroy](#), A CHRISTMAS CAROL is undeniable fun, performed by an abundantly talented cast in what many are calling "the best panto yet!".

Everyone knows the [Charles Dickens](#) classic - it is nearly impossible to escape this year with Shaw Fest's production already underway and Soupepper opening their show next week. But [Ross Petty](#)'s pantomime has a bit more creative freedom, using the Dickens story as a frame for his holiday madness to take centre stage.

Directed and choreographed by Tracey Flye, A CHRISTMAS CAROL features a hilariously on-point script by writers Matt Murray and Jeremy Diamond. The show is tailored to this audience at this time, with lines like, "I need you to be more YTV, less CBC Kids," resonating firmly with the crowd. The absurd randomness of some the jokes have a very Seth McFarlane *Family Guy* feel to them. No one is safe from

this show's comedy - not Kellyanne Conway, not *House of Cards*, not even *Grease the Musical* upstairs. The show is slapstick gold from start to finish, even in the ingenious way that they thank their sponsors. Flye keeps the action moving through the comedy - her impressive choreography a highlight of the production. The ensemble of dancers maintain a manic level of buzzing, high-energy - kicking and pirouetting with radiant holiday spirit (surpassing "YTV" in my books). Dana Osbourne's colourful costumes, like a trip to the *Hunger Games*' Capital, accentuate the choreography, nearly blinding the audience when placed against Cameron Davis' cartoon projections.



Cyrus Lane and Dan Chameroy. Photo by Racheal McCaig.

Although most of the story revolves around Murray and Diamond's catalogue of exaggerated humour, there are some themes at play here that are worth discussing. Most notable is Bridel's character, Jane, taking a strong feminist stance in the show. Upon discovering a pay gap between male and female employees, Jane demands an equal pay structure for Scrooge Enterprises, resorting to a strike instead of backing down from her mission. Jane's line, "We shall be paid the same," results in unanimous cheering from the audience. The cast also explores our obsession with our smartphones - greedy Scrooge devises a plan to lock people into paying him money through a Candy Crush-inspired app, "Christmas Crush". Both examples are a testament to the show's relevance to modern affairs. Dickens' themes of forgiveness and love are still there, of course, warming the hearts of even the "scroogiest" audience member.

Even if you are a scrooge-y theatregoer, a theatre full of people booing and cheering is tremendously fun. As the villain, [Cyrus Lane](#)'s Scrooge gets most of the boos - and he thrives on it. Lane is a talented voice actor, nailing his sarcastic, cynical one-liners. As the show's heroine, Bridel displays vocal virtuosity, as she easily floats through even the highest parts of her singing voice, approaching whistle tone territory with little effort. By the end of her first musical number, Bridel proves that she's queen of the riffs. Jane finds romance in [Kyle Golemba](#)'s Jack. Golemba's whiny portrayal is best when interrupted by his sweet singing voice.



Dan Chameroy. Photo by Racheal McCaig.

Chameroy, who plays the ghostly Plumbum, is magnificent. A captivating scene-stealer in the best possible way, Chameroy also sings with unmatched male vocals. In this role, Chameroy is impossible not to love. [Eddie Glen](#)'s Bob Cratchit is also lovable. Glen is the audience's guide to this wacky world, often breaking the fourth wall to create the immersive experience that keeps every child's focus.

As it's now December 1st, it's time to get into the holiday spirit, and [Ross Petty](#)'s A CHRISTMAS CAROL is the perfect way to do it. With jokes for the kids, and some hidden jokes for the grown-ups, A CHRISTMAS CAROL will have the whole family laughing.

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**A CHRISTMAS CAROL - The Family Musical with a SCROOGE LOOSE** is presented by [Ross Petty](#) Productions and runs through December 31, 2017 at the Elgin Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto, ON.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [rosspetty.com](http://rosspetty.com)

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