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## Bah, humbug! *Scrooge* at Cabrillo

20 DECEMBER 2009 NO COMMENT



Joseph Ribeiro stars as Scrooge for Cabrillo Stage. (photo courtesy of Cabrillo Stage)

Strip Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* down to its bones and you'll find the story of a haunted man who comes to terms with his past and finds redemption. It's that essence that director Andrew Ceglio wants audiences to find in his production of *Scrooge*, through January 3 at Cabrillo College's Crocker Theater.

"It isn't a Christmas show," Ceglio said of the Cabrillo Stage production. "It's a ghost story with Christmas as the main setting."

The musical, by Leslie Bricusse of *Dr. Doolittle* fame, takes audiences through the life of misanthropic miser Ebenezer Scrooge via visitations by three spirits on Christmas Eve. Songs including "Thank You Very Much," "A Better Life" and "A Christmas Carol" help propel the narrative. Cabrillo College professor Joseph Ribeiro plays the title character, who learns lessons about family, love and giving.

*Scrooge* is a production of firsts. It is the first time director Ceglio has worked with

such a large cast — there are 31 actors involved in the show, including 10 children. It's also the first show Cabrillo Stage has done on the new Crocker Theater and the first winter show for the professional musical theater company. The latter has created new challenges. The director has found himself juggling school schedules and the demands of the holiday season during the month-long rehearsal.

"The team and I, we're used to dominating the theater in summertime when there's not so much school going on," said Ceglio, who directed *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* for Cabrillo Stage this summer.

"Rooms are available and schedules don't change as much.... [In the winter], you're constantly asking your cast to adjust their perspective. One night you'll be working a large dance studio and the next night you'll be working in a small classroom."

The concept of the show and design is minimalist, with a pared down set meant to suggest rather than define the settings. Scrooge's office is created with simply a desk and a door, allowing the audience to use its imagination. The show, said Ceglio, is definitely done from the main character's perspective.

"The best way I could describe it is that it's as if you were looking through a spyglass with around the edge all frosted," he said. "It's all taking place in his mind.... The past and the future are coming together in his head." Ceglio hopes that by putting the audience in the main character's head, Scrooge's redemption will be even stronger.



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"What I would love for people to take away from this show is the idea that we all have a choice. We are the makers of our own destiny.... how easy it is with just a thought to be able to treat your fellow man with kindness and dignity," the director said. "I can't understand why people cannot keep the Christmas Spirit all throughout the year."

[Scrooge](#). 7:30 p.m. December 18, 19, 22, 29, 30 & January 2; 2 & 7:30 p.m. December 20, 23, 26 & 27 and 2 p.m. January 3. *Cabrillo Crocker Theater, 6500 Soquel Drive, VAPA 4150, Aptos. \$15 – \$34. (831) 479-6464.*



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