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Party time for Scrooge and friends

### Miser making music

Review by Caron Parsons

**Scrooge - the Musical; Bristol Hippodrome until 21st January 2006; starring Shane Richie.**

Whether you are full of the joys of Christmas, or feeling a little, well bah humbug! One show guaranteed to get you into the holiday spirit this festive season, is Scrooge, based on Dickens' classic A Christmas Carol.

Dickens is undergoing a bit of a renaissance at the moment – with the BBC serial Bleak House going down a storm – and it's great to have one of his best stories brought to the Bristol stage, in what is a highly accomplished and polished manner.

And let's face it, the immensely popular Shane Riche, fresh from the streets of Walford, is a big draw for any show.

Any fan of the 1970 film starring Albert Finney in the title role, is sure to love the show, which features many of the great musical numbers by Leslie Bricusse.

Richie, in a frightful wig and a ton of make-up, plays Ebenezer Scrooge, the crusty old miser whose penny-pinching lifestyle is turned around by visiting spirits of Christmases past, present and future.

The entire case is excellent, with some great ensemble moments.

Special mentions for the large and melodic voice of Anthony Stuart Lloyd as the Ghost of Christmas Present; Stephen Weller as Scrooge's nephew and the young Ebenezer, who had another fine set of lungs; and all the children from Bristol School of Performing Arts.

Then, of course, there's Richie himself. He may not have the strongest of singing voices, but what he lacks in strength he more than makes up for in energy.

Even when playing secondary roles in a scene, Richie's on-stage presence was such that you felt your eyes constantly being drawn towards him.

And he seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself – his enthusiasm communicating itself to a highly receptive audience.

Illusionist Paul Kieve provided the magical effects which were, well, magical, and conductor David Steadman and his orchestra helped give the wonderful musical numbers such as "I Like Life" and my personal favourite "Thank You Very Much", the resonance they needed.

All in all this was a great evening's entertainment – and anyone who came out of the theatre not humming at least one of the tunes - is a stronger person than me!

last updated: 09/12/05

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Seen the show - what did you think?

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**jenny**

LOVED IT, especially the children(particularly tiny tim and young gost of christmas past)went home with a huge smile

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