

Cape Town City Ballet's 'A Christmas Carol - The Story of Scrooge' is sensational seasonal fare

 By [Debbie Hathway](#)

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As we hurtle towards the end of what most will agree has been a tough year, Cape Town City Ballet's production of *A Christmas Carol - The Story of Scrooge* loomed as one of the too many festive season commitments in my diary. How pleased I was to be able to accept the invitation to attend though, motivated by the excitement of my favourite volunteer sidekick who was keen to accompany me.

Worth seeing twice

A refreshing alternative to *The Nutcracker*, traditionally staged at this time of year, *A Christmas Carol – The Story of Scrooge* was brand new for many of us in the opening night audience who remained captivated by the on-stage action throughout. The production, one of many full-length ballets created by Paepers during her illustrious career, has not been seen for two decades.



I love nothing more than watching trained actors take character roles in ballet. For me, that's half the battle won when investors and administrators are banking on a successful production. And I'd see this one again just to admire Marcel Meyer's depiction of Scrooge.

The award-winning actor, nominated for a 2019 Best Actor Naledi award for his performance in *Macbeth*, has held leading roles in several plays by Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams staged in South Africa, Europe and the US. With ballet training clearly to his credit, this is, however, his first role in a professional ballet production.



Marcel Meyer and Kirstel Paterson

Craig Hedderwick as Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's long-suffering clerk, also holds his own in the acting stakes, particularly during the interactions with his on-stage wife and seven-strong brood. The little ones are absolutely delightful too. Georgie Fryer as Tiny Tim times his big moment brilliantly!

At least 23 of Cape Town's young dancers join the 40 members of Cape Town City Ballet to tell this story of the "triumph of joy and the human spirit over greed".



Mariette Opperman

Dramatic impact

Clever lighting casts a sinister spotlight on an imposing clock on the wall, giving dramatic impact to the ghostly entrance of Scrooge's former business partner, Joseph Marley – ably portrayed by Johnny Bovang, as the start of a series of warnings to mend his miserly ways or else.

It was Christmas Eve and the lead into visits from the Spirit of Christmas Past (Hannah Ward), the Spirit of Christmas Present (Mariette Opperman and Craig Pedro in his final season with the company) and the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come (Kirstel Paterson). If Scrooge does not get the message he faces a future trapped in chains of damnation. Marley's Ghost's demonstration of the latter is arguably one of Bovang's best performances to date, well-matched as he is with Meyer as an adversary.



Marcel Meyer and Johnny Bovang

Coaxed out of retirement to collaborate once again with Paeper and revisit his previous set design for this ballet, Peter

Cazalet takes a well-deserved bow with the cast at the end. Esteemed worldwide for his costume and set design, *A Christmas Carol – The Story of Scrooge* is a strong reminder of Cazalet's artistic skill. Curtain up on Act II certainly got the desired reaction from an enraptured audience.

Of all the options one has for theatrical escapism in Cape Town this holiday, *A Christmas Carol – The Story of Scrooge* should be high on your list of things to do before Christmas Eve. Kudos to the cast for a job well done.



Marcel Meyer

A Christmas Carol – The Story of Scrooge will be presented at Artscape Theatre until 24 December. Tickets cost R150 to R295. Bookings can be made at Computicket on 0861 915 8000, online at [computicket.com](https://www.computicket.com) or at any Shoprite Checkers outlet. The final day features a Fairy and Prince Fancy Dress Parade after each performance.

Photography by Pat Bromilow-Downing

ABOUT DEBBIE HATHWAY

Debbie Hathway is an award-winning writer, with a special interest in luxury lifestyle (watches, jewellery, travel, property investment) and the arts.

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