



A Starlit Night It Was In Bethlehem

A Four-Verse Christmas Carol

for SATB, Treble Solo *ad lib.*, and SAB Voices, with Organ

Text, Music, and Setting by Ennis Fruhauf



Fruhauf Music Publications

2018



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Notes

A Starlit Night It Was In Bethlehem is a hymn-based verse anthem on an original text and tune, composed in the tradition of an English Christmas carol. Each of the four verses is presented in a contrasting manner, with transitional interludes provided by the organ accompaniment.

Following a brief introduction, the first verse is presented in four-voice harmony by choir and organ; the introspective words portray the mother Mary at cradleside, filled with wonder, awe and fear for her new born child. In the second verse, an alto solo depicts mother and child in their starlit nighttime tableau. A modulatory transition leads to the third verse for three voices; here the creche scene is viewed from a wider perspective with angels ranged as guardians around the crib.

After a brief retransition to the original tonic key, the fourth and final verse offers a notably bimodal free harmonization of the hymn tune, sung by unison voices with a soprano descant soaring above. The text is celebratory and prophetic of the joys of the Christmas feast and birth of a new era. A closing “Hallelujah” rings out the anthem with a triumphant peal.

A Starlit Night is a festive work that makes technical demands on the performing ensemble: in addition to an *a cappella* verse, the concluding free harmonization assigns the hymn tune's melodic line to unison voices without accompanimental support.

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Allegro animato [♩ = c. 132]

Soprano
Alto

Tenor
Bass

Organ

Allegro animato [♩ = c. 132]

mp

poco f

7 *poco f* *leggiere, animato*

S
A

mp

1. A star - lit night it was in Beth - le - hem, as Ma - ry lay a -

T
B

mp

7 *leggiere, animato*

Org.

[1.h.]

[Ped. *ad lib.*] *mp*

14

S
A

wake, in won - der that the Lord could place such ho - ly di - a - dem up -

T
B

14

Org.

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20 *meno f*

S A on an in - fant babe born there be - low in hum - ble quar - ters,

T B

Org.

26 *poco f* *poco rit.*

S A that a Rose should stem from Jes - se's kin, to live on earth and grow.

T B

Org.

a tempo

32 *poco f* [Solo *ad lib.*] (9)

S 2. As myr - iad pin-point lights be-decked the sky, a rest - less child, un-know-ing, stretched his

a tempo

32 [gva Sop. *ad lib.*]

Org. *mp*

[Man.] [Ped.] *mp*

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3

40 *mf*

S frame and clenched two ti - ny hands; and at his cry, his moth - er drew him

Org.

47 *meno f*

S near and spoke his name. She hugged him close as if she could de - ny his

Org.

[sempre Ped.] *mp*

53 *poco ritardando* *poco f* *poco rit.* *quasi a tempo*

S frag - ile fate, de - fy all mor-tal claims.

Org.

poco ritardando *poco rit.* *quasi a tempo* *poco f* *poco f* [Man.]

60 *mp* *molto ritardando*

Org.

[Ped.] *mp*

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Allegretto [$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 120$]

68 *mf* *leggiere, ma affetuoso*

S 3. And so it came to pass on Christ-mas night: a fra - gile babe, new -

A *mp* *leggiere, ma affetuoso*

A 3. And so it came to pass on Christ-mas night: a fra - gile babe, new -

B *mp* *leggiere, ma affetuoso*

B 3. And so it came to pass on Christ - mas night: a fra - gile

68 Allegretto [$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 120$]

Org.

75

S born, in man-ger lay, as ho - ly An - gels, bathed in ra - diance bright, stood

A born, in man-ger lay, as ho - ly An - gels, bathed in ra - diance bright, stood

B babe, new-born, in man-ger lay, as ho - ly An - gels, bathed in ra - diance

81 *poco f*

S ranged a - bout his crib in wing-éd ar - ray to shield the Lamb from

A ranged a - bout his crib in wing-éd ar-ray to shield the Lamb

B bright, stood ranged a - bout his crib in wing-éd ar - ray to shield the

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5

87 *poco ritardando*

S harm and hu-man plight, that He might live to see the dawn-ing day.

A from harm and hu - man plight, that He might live to see the dawn - ing

B Lamb from harm and hu - man plight, that He might live to see the dawn-ing

93 *poco rit.*, **Allegro animato** [♩ = c. 132] *poco rit.*

S

A *poco rit.*, *poco rit.*

B day. *poco rit.*

93 *poco rit.* **Allegro animato** [♩ = c. 132] *poco rit.*

Org. *leggero* *poco f* *poco f*

[Ped.] *mp*

100 [Add] *a tempo* *mf* *poco rit.*

Org. *mf* *poco f*

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Moderato [♩ = c. 112] *ma largamente assai*

107

S *mf* 4. Shout psalms of praise! Lift joy - ous strains, and sing in

A *mf* 4. Shout psalms of praise! Lift joy - ous strains, and sing in

B *mf* 4. Shout psalms of praise! Lift joy - ous strains, and sing in

Org. *mf* [Ped.] *f assai* [l.h.] *mf* [sempre Ped.]

113

S grate - ful won - der at the Heav'n's ac - cord: how win - ter's

A grate - ful won - der at the Heav'n's ac - cord: how win - ter's

B grate - ful won - der at the Heav'n's ac - cord: how win - ter's

Org. 113

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118

S
chills are warmed by signs of spring, with pro - mise of new

A
chills are warmed by signs of spring, with pro - mise of new

B
chills are warmed by signs of spring, with pro - mise of new

Org.
[l.h.] [r.h.]

123

S
life to seal God's Word. May peace e'er reign; let Christ - mas bells now

A
life to seal God's Word. May peace e'er reign; let Christ-mas bells now

B
life to seal God's Word. May peace e'er reign; let Christ-mas bells now

Org.

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poco ritardando , *allargando molto*

128

S ring to mark the birth and life of Christ a - dored!

A ring to mark the birth and life of Christ a - dored!

B ring to mark the birth and life of Christ a - dored!

poco ritardando , *allargando molto*

Org. 128

[l.h.]

largamente [♩ = c. 96] *molto allargando al fine*

133

S *f* Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah!

A *f largamente* *molto allargando al fine* Hal - le - - - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah!

B *f largamente* *molto allargando al fine* Hal - le - - - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah!

largamente [♩ = c. 96] *molto allargando al fine*

133

Org. [Add] *f* [r.h.] [l.h.] [r.h.] [l.h.]

Ped. *marcato*



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