

The Living Crèche

The Christmas Story in Scripture, Legend, and Song

A Nativity Pageant or Service of Lessons and Carols

for S.A.T.B. Chorus, Soloists and Narrators
with optional children's choir and congregational participation

Written and Arranged by Anna Laura Page and Jean Anne Shafferman

This work may be performed with keyboard accompaniment alone, keyboard and 3-octave handbells, keyboard and chamber orchestra, or fully-orchestrated accompaniment cassette.

- Choral Score – (11479)
- Preview Pack – (11480)
- Performance/Accompaniment CD – (11874)
- Handbell (3-Octaves) InstruPax – (12242)
- Chamber Orchestra InstruPax – (12243)
(2 Violins, Viola, Cello [Opt. Bass], Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Percussion, 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones [Opt. Tuba], Director's Score)

Performance Time: Approximately 35 Minutes

This work is also available in a unison voicing (11498) titled
The Living Crèche Children's Christmas Pageant.



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FOREWORD

The Living Crèche is a joyous musical celebration that weaves scripture, ancient legend, and carols from around the world into a richly colored Christmas tapestry. Drawing upon scriptural narrative extending from the advent prophecies through the wise men's visit, it illustrates the Christmas story with continuously unfolding carols, including fourteen arranged for choir or vocal solo and nine that accompany the narrative. Included are popular favorites such as "Silent Night," "The Holly and the Ivy," and "Angels from the Realms of Glory," as well as lesser known but equally appealing tunes including the haunting Czech lullaby "Rocking," the spirited annunciation tune "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came," and the charming English carol of the animals, "The Friendly Beasts."

Threading through this fabric are Christmas legends that trace modern customs to their Christian origins (e.g., The Legend of the First Christmas Tree; The Legend of Saint Nicholas) or that separate fact from commonly-accepted fiction (e.g., The Legend of the Three Wise Men). In this way, the authors have attempted to return to their Christian origins many contemporary Christmas customs that have been secularized through the evolution of modern practices.

The Living Crèche is approximately thirty-five minutes long and may be presented in two formats:

• **A Christmas Pageant** — A simply-staged Christmas nativity scene that "comes to life" as each of the central characters in the Christmas story enters the sanctuary or auditorium, processes to the front, and takes its place in the crèche. Directors are encouraged to be creative, developing costumes, adding characters and props, and/or painting a backdrop for the nativity scene. Alternate carol tunes or arrangements may be added or substituted. The Endnotes contain a list of sources that may be especially useful for the staging of pageant presentations. Many of these sources are readily available in public and college libraries.

• **A Service of Lessons and Carols** — Without staging, an inspiring worship service in which scripture, legend, and song combine to "bring to life" the Christmas story. Directors using this format may wish to use only the sub-title (The Christmas Story in Scripture, Legend, and Song) in printed programs.

In either case, **The Living Crèche** may be performed by S.A.T.B. chorus, soloists, and two or more narrators but may also include a unison children's chorus and congregational singing. A section for congregational participation appears on pages 70-71 and may be reprinted as necessary to the presentation of this work. Several accompaniment options are available, including:

- keyboard only (included in the choral score)
- keyboard and 3-octave handbells (handbells available separately, No. 12242)
- keyboard and chamber orchestra (parts for 2 violins, viola, cello [+opt. bass], flute, oboe, clarinet, percussion, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones [+opt. tuba], and director's score available separately, No. 12243)
- fully-orchestrated performance/accompaniment CD (available separately, No. 11874)

This work is also available in an edition adapted for children, grades K-6. Titled **The Living Crèche Children's Christmas Pageant**, it features unison vocals, a fully-supportive accompaniment, and easy speaking parts and may be performed by as few as 15-20 children or by much larger groups:

- Director's Score (No. 11498)
- Singer's Edition 5-Pack (No. 11499)
- Preview Pack (1 Singer's Edition and Performance CD, No. 11501)
- Performance Pack (Director's Score, 10 Singer's Editions, and Performance CD, No. 11502)
- Performance/Accompaniment CD (No. 11503)

CONTENTS

Overture	4
I. The Advent of Christ	
1. Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem (<i>St. Louis</i>)	6
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — The Prophecy (Micah 5: 2-5)	8
Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem (<i>Forest Green</i>)	10
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — The Annunciation of Mary (Luke 1: 26-32)	12
2. Carol: To a Virgin Meek and Mild (<i>The Annunciation</i>)	13
Storyteller: The Legend of the Evergreens	16
3. Carol: The Holly and the Ivy	16
II. The Eve of Christmas	
4. Carol: Silent Night (<i>Stille Nacht</i>)	22
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — The Light of Nations (Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7)	24
Storyteller: The Legend of the First Christmas Tree	25
5. Carol: O Christmas Tree (<i>O Tannenbaum</i>)	26
III. The Friendly Beasts	
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — Christ is Born (Luke 2: 1-7)	28
Storyteller: The Legend of the Friendly Beasts	29
6. Carol: The Friendly Beasts	29
IV. The Children	
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — Emmanuel, God with Us (Matthew 1: 22-23, 25)	35
7. Carol: Rocking (<i>Hajej, Nynej</i>)	36
Storyteller: The Legend of Saint Nicholas	37
8. Carol: O Come, Little Children	38
V. The Shepherds	
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — The Shepherds and the Angels (Luke 2: 8-14)	40
9. Carol: Angels from the Realms of Glory (<i>Les Anges dans nos campagnes</i>)	41
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — The Shepherds at the Manger (Luke 2: 15-18)	48
10. Carol: Rise Up, Shepherd (<i>Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow</i>)	48
Storyteller: The Legend of the Shepherds' Gifts	51
11. Carol: The First Nowell	52
VI. The Wise Men	
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — The Wise Men See the Star (Matthew 2: 1-2)	54
Storyteller: The Legend of the Three Wise Men	55
12. Carol: We Three Kings (<i>We Three Kings of Orient Are</i>)	56
VII. Spread the News: Jesus Christ Is Born!	
Narrator: The Word of the Lord — Spreading the News (Matthew 2: 12, Luke 2: 20)	63
Storyteller: God Is with Us! Christ Is Born!	63
13. Carol: On Christmas Night All Christians Sing (<i>Sussex Carol</i>)	63
14. Carol: He Is Born (<i>Il est né</i>)	65
15. Carol: Gloria in excelsis Deo (<i>Angels from the Realms of Glory</i>)	67
Part for Congregational Participation	70
Endnotes and Bibliography	72

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for S.A.T.B. Chorus, Soloists, and Narrators
with optional children's choir and congregational participation*

Written and Arranged by
ANNA LAURA PAGE and JEAN ANNE SHAFFERMAN

OVERTURE

(Choir, Narrator, and Storyteller enter and move to positions.)

(♩ = ca. 88)

**

ACCOMP. *p*

5 *mp*

10

15 *mf*

20 *mp* *rit.*

* Part for congregational participation may be found on pages 70-71.

** STILLE NACHT (Silent Night! O Holy Night!). Melody by Franz Gruber (1787-1863).

II. THE EVE OF CHRISTMAS

4. SILENT NIGHT

69 Slower (♩ = ca. 84)

mp

73

77 (Congregation may join on melody to m. 100)

S. *mp* *

A. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is

T. *mp*

B.

*STILLE NACHT (Silent Night! Holy Night!). Melody by Franz Gruber (1787-1863); Words by Joseph Mohr (1792-1848);
Translated by John F. Young (1820-1885).