

The Wondrous Story is a Christmas anthem that incorporates original music with the traditional English carol *Venite adoremus*, commonly known as *The Snow Lay on the Ground*. Suggested corresponding lectionary readings include Psalm 97, Isaiah 9: 1-6, Luke 2: 1-20, and Titus 2: 11-14. One basic homiletical theme is telling the wondrous story: into a world of darkness comes the Light of Salvation, Jesus, God's Son.

The Wondrous Story opens with an 8-measure a cappella section that vividly paints the scene on Christmas night. The choral writing in this section is hymn-like, and the part-writing is quite natural. Rehearse the harmonies on a focused neutral syllable such as "noo" until the pitches, intonation, and blend are secure. Practice mm. 53-61, the return of this opening section, in the same manner. The remaining sections of the anthem are lyric treatments of the English carol tune and should contrast the opening by employing more "bounce," though no less legato. Rehearse these sections on staccato "doo" until a lively energy is attained, carefully highlighting the call-and-response between the women's and men's voices in mm. 86-88, and the men's moving parts in mm. 89 and 93. Add a lyric legato without sacrificing that energy or clarity. The carol tune should be articulated with two pulses per measure and careful attention to text inflection.

Nancy Price holds B.M. and M.M. degrees in music from Ithaca College. She began singing in elementary school choirs directed by Don Besig and in her senior year of college first worked with him as a lyricist. Since 1980 they have collaborated on over two hundred compositions for school and church. Both Besig and Price have received several ASCAP Special awards.

Don Besig is Director of Music at Perinton Presbyterian Church in Fairport, New York. He has over thirty years of experience teaching vocal music in the public schools of western New York. Recognizing a need for choral music written especially for student singers, Besig began composing for his own choirs. Since 1973, over three hundred fifty of his compositions and arrangements have been published.

THE WONDROUS STORY

An Anthem for Christmas

for S.A.T.B. voices, accompanied,
with optional flute or C-Instrument*

Words by DON BESIG
and NANCY PRICE (ASCAP)

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH CAROL, ca. 1860
with additional music and arrangement
by DON BESIG (ASCAP)

Slowly, freely

mf

SOPRANO
ALTO

Once up-on a win-ter night earth was bathed in—

mf

TENOR
BASS

Slowly, freely

(mf) (for rehearsal only to m. 9)

ACCOMP.

4

ra-diant light. There a-mid the wind and cold a won-drous sto-ry—

* Also available for S.A.B. voices, No. 11525, and 2-part voices, No. 11526.
Part for optional flute or C-Instrument may be found on page 12.

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9 In tempo (♩ = ca. 72 - 80)

8

first was told.

In tempo (♩ = ca. 72 - 80)

(Play) *mf*

12 UNISON MEN

mf

The

(+ Flute)

17

snow lay on the ground, a star shone bright when

(- Flute)

21

Christ our Lord was born on Christ - mas night.

(+ Flute)

25 UNISON WOMEN

Up - on a bed of

(+ Flute)

mf

29

straw in sta - ble bare the ba - by lay a -

33

A. sleep, so pure and fair. Ve -

T. *mf unis.*

B.

37

ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num. O

Vocal line for measures 37-40. The melody is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num. O

(+ Flute)

Piano accompaniment for measures 37-40. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand provides a steady bass line with eighth notes. A flute part is indicated by the text "(+ Flute)".

41

come, let us a - dore God's own true Son.

Vocal line for measures 41-44. The melody continues in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: come, let us a - dore God's own true Son.

Piano accompaniment for measures 41-44. The piano continues with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes.

45

f

Piano accompaniment for measures 45-48. The music is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piano part features a more active melodic line in the right hand.

49

dim.

Piano accompaniment for measures 49-52. The music is marked with a decrescendo (*dim.*) dynamic. The piano part concludes with a final cadence in G major.

53

A. *s. mf*
 Win - ter winds blew fierce and cold as the sto - ry

T. *mf*
 B.

(- Flute)
mp

56

did un - fold. Gen - tly, at the ba - by's side, His
unis.

61

moth - er sang a lul - la - ry by.

mf

62 UNISON VOICES

62 UNISON VOICES

(+ Flute)

67

66 *mf*

The snow lay on the ground, the air grew

(- Flute)

70

70

still as shep - herds kept their watch on dis - tant

74

74 *mf*

hills. Then

(- Flute)

78

S. *unis.*

A.

in the sky a - bove ——— they saw a light ——— and

T. *unis.*

B.

(- Flute)

82

heard the an - gels sing that Christ - mas night. ———

86

87

f ——— Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi -

f Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi -

(+ Flute)

90

num. _____ O come, let us a - dore God's own true

num. _____ O come, _____ a - dore God's own _____ true _____

95

Son. _____ *mp unis.* Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi -

Son. _____ *mp unis.*

Son. _____ *mp*

98

num. _____ O come, let us a - dore God's own

O come, _____ a - dore God's own

102

105

unis.

true

Son. _____

Ve - ni - te a - do -

unis.

true

Son. _____

(- Flute)

107

re - mus. _____

Ve -

p
Punis.

(+ Flute)

111

ni - te a - do - re - mus. _____

rit.

p

rit.

(- Flute)

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An Anthem for Christmas

FLUTE or C-INSTRUMENT

Music by DON BESIG (ASCAP)

Slowly, freely 8 9 In tempo (♩ = ca. 72-80) 3

15 17 7 *mf*

28 37 *mf*

42 45 *f*

48 53 8 *mp*

61 *mf*

67 7 78 9 *mf*

87 *f*

93 95 *mp*

99 105 3 *mp*

108 *p* *rit.*

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