

THE CHRISTMAS PROMISE

A Christmas Program in Three Suites

for S.A.T.B. Chorus, 2 Narrators, Congregation
and Optional Children's Choir

Written and Arranged by
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FOREWORD

The Christmas Promise is a musical program arranged for worship by Lloyd Larson. It is constructed in three suites, one each for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. Each suite may be presented separately, lasting approximately 7-10 minutes, or the program may be presented in its entirety, lasting approximately 30 minutes.

Narration

The promise of Christmas is the timeless story of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. Narrator 1 provides the biblical foundation of our story, and Narrator 2 responds as the voice of the people of God. The narration is quickly and easily prepared and may be performed by pastors, lay readers or choir members.

Christmas Customs

The author highly recommends the integration of seasonal customs into the performance of this work. The hanging of the greens and lighting of Advent or sanctuary candles may be observed during the first suite, *Let Every Heart Prepare*. In the second, *Glory to the Newborn King*, the nativity scene may be re-enacted by congregants or choir members, or a creche may be displayed. A procession of the wise men may begin the final movement, *Let Earth Receive Her King*, and gifts may be received for church missions and charitable distribution.

The Family of God

The entire family of God is encouraged to participate in this special Christmas program. Familiar melodies and texts, sometimes arranged in unique combinations, adorn this work and contribute to the ease of congregational singing at key junctures. A *reprintable* program, including lyrics for congregational singing, is provided on pages 54-56.

A unison children's choir may sing along with the congregation. Throughout the program, additional opportunities are indicated for children to sing in lieu of the adult choir or in combination with them.

Instrumental Accompaniment

The Christmas Promise may be presented with keyboard accompaniment only or with the addition of 2 woodwinds (opt. strings), opt. B♭ Clarinet, 2 B♭ trumpets, French horn or B♭ trumpet 3, 2 trombones, opt. tuba and percussion. Instrumental parts, No. 19079, and a fully-orchestrated performance/accompaniment compact disc (CD) recording, No. 19078, are available separately.

I. LET EVERY HEART PREPARE

(Advent)

1. Overture

PRODUCTION NOTE: Choir processional and/or the presentation of decorative greens may take place during the opening keyboard/instrumental section (measures 1-32), if desired. These measures may also merely function as the ending portion of a worship prelude or interlude leading into this presentation. The segment may be repeated as needed. The narration should be read during the last time through the music.

Gently, freely (♩ = ca. 92)

ACCOMP.

NARRATOR 1: "Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (*Isaiah 40:3*)

NARRATOR 2: As we meet to worship in this place, we gather to prepare ourselves anew for the Messiah's

coming, like Israel of old and Christians through the ages. The prophetic words of Isaiah provide us challenge and focus as we anticipate the Messiah's arrival:

NARRATOR 1: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; the crooked shall

20

be made straight and the rough places plain. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all shall see it together." (Isaiah 40:4-5)

25

NARRATOR 2: Let every heart prepare for the long-awaited Messiah's coming.

30

2. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

34 UNISON MEN
a tempo

mp

O come, O come, Em - man - u - el,

mp
a tempo

* VENI EMMANUEL (O Come, O Come, Emmanuel). Music based on plainsong by Thomas Helmore, (1811-1890); 12th C. Latin hymn text, trans. John M. Neale (1818-1866).