

THE CHRISTMAS STORY IN POETRY AND SONG

POEM

“We Are Called to Proclaim the Truth”

Allan Boesak

SONG

“Every Valley” From the cantata The Winter Rose Words and music by Joseph M. Martin

This energetic chorus is the fourth movement of Joseph Martin’s cantata “The Winter Rose”. Based on the prophecy of Isaiah 40:4-5, the chorus incorporates portions of O Come, O Come Emmanuel, and calls to mind Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus with its echoing refrain “Sound the trumpet”.

SONG

“African Noel” Arranged by Andre Thomas

André Jerome Thomas is an American composer and conductor, who currently serves as a professor of music at Florida State University and is the artistic director for the Tallahassee Community Chorus. In addition to his conducting and composition credits, Thomas is the author of Way Over in Beulah Lan': Understanding and Performing the Negro Spiritual. This selection uses techniques that place it very much in the style of an African chant.

POEM

“The Risk of Birth”

Madeleine L’Engle

SONG

“Silent Night” Words by Joseph Mohr Tune based on Stille Nacht by Franz Gruber Accompaniment based on Prelude in C by J.S. Bach Setting by Douglas E. Wagner

Indianapolis-based composer Douglas Wagner has taken perhaps the most well-known Christmas song of all time and merged it skillfully with Johann Sebastian Bach’s Prelude in C to give us this moving setting, expressing in a new way the calm and peace of Christmas night. We are using a harpsichord accompaniment, since the piano (or, at that time, “pianoforte”) had not yet come into common use in Bach’s time.

SONG

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” Polish traditional carol Arranged by Barlow Bradford

Dr. Barlow Bradford has distinguished himself as a conductor, composer, arranger, pianist, organist, and teacher. Dr. Bradford's focused conducting style led to his appointment as music director of the Orchestra at Temple Square in Salt Lake City and associate director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Prior to that, he was director of orchestras at the University of Utah. His setting of this gentle carol evokes the beauty and quiet of the birth of Jesus.

POEM

“Shepherd’s Song at Christmas”
Langston Hughes

SONG

*“Whisper! Whisper!” Words and music by Jay Althouse Soloists: Vivian Hixson, Ed Smith, Peggy Dunn,
Joel King*

Jay Althouse has composed works in many different musical styles, and excels at producing music that calls to mind cultural influences from around the world. This piece, in a Caribbean style, celebrates in quiet wonder the arrival of the newborn baby, and the choir just can’t stay silent in their excitement.

SONG

“Hark! In 7/8” Word by Charles Wesley Music by Felix Mendelssohn Arranged by Steven Landau
Composer Steven Landau has taken Mendelssohn’s well-loved hymn and given it a new twist, by putting it in an “irregular” meter (7/8 – which means that each measure has seven notes in it, an unusual rhythm for any piece, and especially this one!). The middle section adds some new harmonies to the traditional arrangement, giving the choir new challenges in this classic work!

POEM

“Welcome, Welcome”
A New Zealand Prayer Book