

Journey to Bethlehem

An Advent/Christmas musical for unison, two- or three-part treble voices and piano,
with optional chamber orchestra

by
Erik Whitehill

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Foreword

Christmas blessings to you as we sing, yet again, the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem! This 20-minute, sermon-length musical was created to share the good news AND be flexible to accommodate ensembles of varying age, size and ability. It was also designed to be attainable within the limited rehearsal time of the holiday season.

The vocal parts are scored for unison choir with optional harmony parts. Written in the style of the classic oratorio, the songs feature vocal solos followed by choral refrains. Recurring themes appear throughout the score. The angel encounters with Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds incorporate the same melodic ideas. In other words, even though there are nine musical selections in this score, choirs only need to learn six melodic ideas. This will build confidence with younger singers and maximize rehearsal time.

Journey to Bethlehem has many accompaniment options. The piano part has been crafted to work equally well either as solo accompaniment or as part of a chamber ensemble. A reproducible instrumental folio is available with parts for a small chamber orchestra. With the exception of the three-octave tonebells, which are beginner-level, the instrumental parts are intended for adult players. Any combination (or all) of these instrumental parts can be played in addition to the piano accompaniment to create a warm, orchestral sound. Accompaniment tracks with the full orchestration are available.

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Blessings,

Erik Whitehill
November 2016

The Cast of Characters

Costuming the cast can be as traditional or contemporary as desired. Similarly, the only set requirement is a manger. You are free to be as detailed – or not! – as you wish.

Singing and Speaking Roles

MARY, a young Jewish woman

GABRIEL, an angel who appears to Mary

Speaking-Only Roles

NARRATOR(S)

Singing-Only Roles

JOSEPH, a Jewish carpenter

DREAM ANGEL, an angel who appears to Joseph in a dream

ELIZABETH, Mary's cousin

SHEPHERD, a young shepherd tending flocks near Bethlehem

HERALD ANGEL, the angel who announces Jesus' birth

Optional Non-Speaking and Non-Singing Roles

SHEPHERDS

ANGELS

ANIMALS

Musical Selections

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9. O Come, All Ye Faithful....(CHORUS, CONGREGATION).....	40

1. Processional

attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786
tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880

ADESTE FIDELIS
attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786
arr. Erik Whitehill

♩ = 100

Piano *mp*

4 *mf*

8 CHORUS *mf*

O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri -

12

um - phant! O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le -

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2. Mary and Gabriel

Erik Whitehill
Based on Luke 1:26-38

Erik Whitehill

MARY enters.

NARRATOR: Our journey begins in Nazareth of Galilee, where we find a young woman named Mary, having a restless night. She was about to be married. What would her life be like? She raised her eyes to the heavens and prayed.

Legato (♩ = 84)

Piano *p*

4

MARY *mp*

O

Lord, hear the prayer_ of your ser - vant, Mar - y. I

9

come to you, please help me un - der - stand. How do I fit

11

Part I *rit.* *mp* **+CHORUS** *mf a tempo*

in with what you have planned? I want my life to re-lect your

Part II (optional) *rit.* *mp* *mf a tempo*

I want my life to re-lect your

14

I glo - ry. Let my heart be your home. I am

II glo - ry. Let my heart be your home. I am

3. Magnificat

MARY and ELIZABETH enter.

NARRATOR: As our journey continues, Mary went to visit her family in Judah. When she arrived, her cousin, Elizabeth, was stunned! The baby within her leapt for joy!

Joyful and Rhythmic (♩ = 66)

Piano

ELIZABETH

mf

Blest are you a-mong wo-men! Blest be the child God con -

ceives! Blest am I by this vis - it!

ceives! Blest am I by this vis - it!

+CHORUS

opt. div.

11 *mf* *f*

Blest is she who be - lieves!

14

mp

17 *mf*

MARY

My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord and my

mf

20 *mp*

spir-it re-joic-es in God. God has re-gard-ed this low - ly ser-vant.

mp