

Room for Christmas

A children's Christmas musical
for unison/two-part voices, piano and flute

by
Mark Burrows

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Cover art by Kate Brennan Hall

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Foreword

I was so excited when Choristers Guild asked me to write a Christmas musical. Then it hit me – *How in the world am I going to write a Christmas musical?!* There are already so many Christmas musicals out there. How can I possibly offer a fresh take on such a beloved story that everyone knows?

In *Room for Christmas*, it's one week before the church Christmas pageant. The director is sick and it's up to the children to do the best they can...but it won't be easy. No one has learned their lines.

The pageant feels like “just one more thing” during a busy time of year.

Everyone has their own opinions about how to make this old story feel brand new.

A bossy angel.

Wisecracking shepherds.

Unruly sheep.

Will the children get it together in time? Will the Christmas pageant be a complete flop? Or will the children discover, in their own unabashedly child-like ways, the joy and wonder that comes from making room for what really matters?

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Room for Christmas

SCENE 1: The Rehearsal

*A rehearsal space. It could have the feel of a choir room, Sunday school classroom, or the worship space. A makeshift manger is at center. Various Christmas pageant costumes and props are strewn across the area. During **Running Out of Room**, the children gather on stage. They seem to be rushing in from all directions.*

Running Out of Room

Mark Burrows

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Frenzied (♩ = 120)

Piano

mf

The piano introduction consists of four measures in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in a G major triad (G, B, D), while the left hand plays a steady bass line of quarter notes (G, B, D, G).

(OPTIONAL SOLOIST)

5

mf

There is - n't an - y time for

The first line of the song begins at measure 5. The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter rest, and then the lyrics "There is - n't an - y time for". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern as the introduction.

8

laugh - ter, — there is - n't an - y time for cheer. There's

The second line of the song begins at measure 8. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "laugh - ter, — there is - n't an - y time for cheer. There's". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

11

traf-fic at the mall, the worst I can re-call. This is the most fre - ne-tic time of

14

(CHOIR) *f*

year. We're run-ning out of room for Christ - mas. There's

17

on-ly eight more shop-ping days to go. We're bu-sy buy-ing stuff. Will it

20

ev-er be e - nough? This whole sea-son has us run-ning to and fro. We're

23

run-ning out of room for Christ - mas. So man-y dif-f'rent par-ties to at-

26

tend. We're run-ning out of room for Christ - mas. When

29

will this bu - sy sea - son ev - er end?

(OPTIONAL SOLOIST)

32

mf

Who has the time to sip hot co - coa? Or

mf

ANGEL: Let's just stick to the script. *Please* tell me you've learned your lines.

ALL: (*muttering as they go to their places for beginning of pageant – ANGEL at center, NARRATOR to one side, all others slightly to each side for entrances*)

ANGEL: Seriously?! The pageant is next week!

SHEPHERD 2: Hey. It's a busy time of year.

JOSEPH: Yeah. We've already got a lot going on.

ANGEL: Whatever. All right, Narrator, hit it.

NARRATOR: (*tentatively*) Ahem. Four score and seven years ago, Caesar Salad declared that...

SHEPHERD 1: (*trying to be helpful*) No. It's – *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Salad.*

ANGEL: There is no Caesar salad in the story.

SHEPHERD 1: (*matter-of-factly*) That's too bad. Caesar salad is delicious.

ANGEL: (*to NARRATOR*) I suggest you practice your lines, or you'll just have to use your script at the pageant. Let's go to the part where Mary and Joseph arrive at the inn.

(*INNKEEPER enters at area beside manger. MARY and JOSEPH enter and cross to INNKEEPER.*)

JOSEPH: I am Joseph and this is my wife, Mary. She is expecting a baby.

MARY: We have traveled a long way. Do you have any room for us?

INNKEEPER: Ah yes, Mary and Joseph. We've been expecting you. Here is your key and room number. Elevators are on the left. Complimentary breakfast is from six to nine.

ANGEL: Here's your key? Complimentary breakfast?! There isn't any room at the inn.

INNKEEPER: Do you know who this is? It's Mary and Joseph. We have to make room for them... (*tenderly*) and for Baby Jesus.

ANGEL: But that's not how the story goes.

INNKEEPER: (*impassioned*) I don't like that part. No one made room for Christmas way back in Bethlehem, and 2,000 years later, what has changed? Am I right, people?!

MARY: S/he's got a point. (*JOSEPH and MARY go to stand behind manger.*)

ANGEL: No, *the point* is to stick to the story. Let's just skip to the angel – me – bringing the news to the shepherds.

(*SHEPHERDS and SHEEP enter. SHEEP are on all fours. Through this part, the SHEEP "baa" so loudly that ANGEL's line cannot be heard.*)

ANGEL: Fear not, for... (*lots of "baa"-ing*)...for behold I bring you...(more "baa"-ing)...I bring you good news of...(too much "baa"-ing)... Hey, sheep! Seriously! (*The "baa"-ing stops. All the SHEEP stand up.*)

SHEEP 1: At least we know *our* part.

ANGEL: But you're stepping on my big moment.

SHEEP 1: The sheep only get one line.

SHEEP 2: Yeah. What about *our* big moment?

SHEEP 3: (*defiantly*) Baa!

ANGEL: But...you're *sheep*.

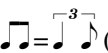
SHEEP 1: Well, *these* sheep want their moment in the spotlight.

SHEEP 3: Baa!

We Are the Sheep

Mark Burrows

UP ON THE HOUSE TOP
Benjamin Hanby, 1833-1867
arr. Mark Burrows

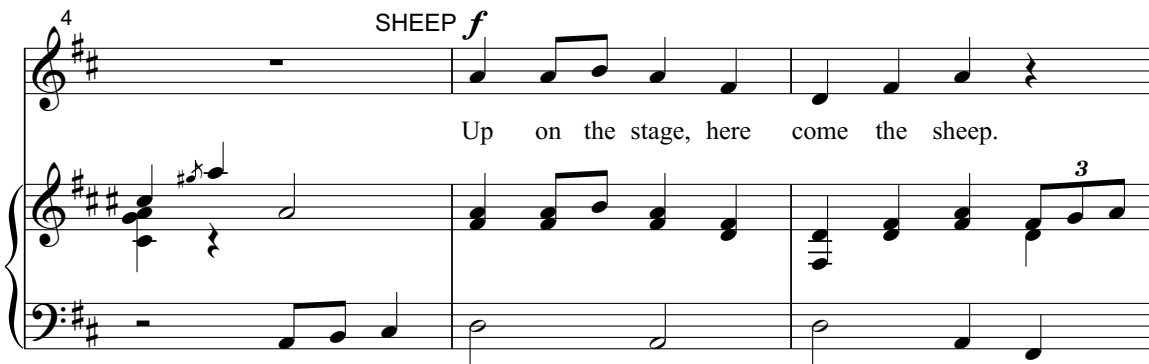
Swing!  (♩ = 120)

Piano *f*



4 SHEEP *f*

Up on the stage, here come the sheep.



7 Watch us boo-gie, watch us leap. We make the most of



SHEPHERD 1: Our pageant doesn't have to be just like the Bible story.

ANGEL: Yes it does! That's what people *expect*. It has to be just right so we can...make it feel like Christmas.

MARY: But Christmas isn't something you make. Christmas is something that *is*.

There Was Love

Mark Burrows

Incorporating *MUELLER*
James R. Murray (1841-1905)
Mark Burrows

With awe (♩ = 98)

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-5) features a Flute* part and a Piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 6-10) includes a vocal line for an optional soloist, a piano accompaniment, and the lyrics: "Be - fore there were shep-herds out". The third system (measures 11-15) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment with the lyrics: "in the field keep-ing watch o - ver flocks by night." The piano part features a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands.

*A reproducible flute part is printed on pages 61-62.

16

Be - fore there were wise men from dis - tant lands guid-ed

21

Flute

mf warmly
(CHOIR)
mf

on by a star so bright. Be - fore there were

26

an - gels to sing the song, one Voice was sing - ing

31

all a - long. Be - fore you and I, or the

36

stars in the sky, there was Light, there was Life,

41

there was Love. Be -

poco rit. *mp*

Room in My Heart

Mark Burrows

Mark Burrows

Swing! $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^3$ ($\text{♩} = 120$)
Gospel feel

Piano *f*

1st time: INNKEEPER
2nd time: CHOIR

f

1. I'm mak-ing room in my heart for
2. I'm mak-ing room in my heart for

7

love. I'm mak-ing room in my heart for love. I'm mak-ing
peace. I'm mak-ing room in my heart for peace. I'm mak-ing

10

room in my heart for love. Room for the ba-by. No,
 room in my heart for peace. Room for the ba-by. No,

13

I don't mean may - be. Room in my heart for
 I don't mean may - be. Room in my heart for

15

love. I'm mak-ing
 peace.

1. CHOIR 2.

18

I

II

Part II (optional)

Room, room, room for the ba-by. Room, room,

21

I

II

Part I

3. I'm mak-ing room in my heart for joy. I'm mak-ing

room for the ba-by. Room, room, room for the ba-by.

24

I

II

room in my heart for joy.— I'm mak-ing room in my heart for

Room, room, room for the ba-by. Room, room,

27

I joy. Room for the ba - by. No, -

II room for the ba - by. Room for the ba - by. No, -

29

I — I don't mean may-be. Room in my heart for

II — I don't mean may-be. Room in my heart for

32

I joy!

II joy!

NARRATOR: So, um...after the song, Mary and Joseph found a stable. And this is where the baby was born. Mary wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

(SHEPHERDS and SHEEP enter.)

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, there were shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their quiet sheep by night.

SHEEP 1, 2, and 3: *(softly)* Baa. *(SHEEP continue "baa"-ing very softly so the following dialogue can be easily heard.)*

NARRATOR: An angel appeared to them and said...

(ANGEL looks straight ahead at all the people, realizes this is her/his big moment, and completely freezes up.)

NARRATOR: And the angel said...

(ANGEL still frozen.)

SHEPHERD 1: *(to ANGEL)* Fear not.

ANGEL: *(to SHEPHERD 1)* I know that part, but I can't remember what comes after it.

SHEPHERD 1: No, I mean *fear not*. Your friends are with you. You can do it.

ALL: *(words of support for ANGEL – "Yeah," "You can do it," "We're here for you," etc.)*

ANGEL: *(tentatively)* Fear not. *(takes deep breath and says with more assurance)* Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy. *(gathering confidence with every word)* For to you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, Christ the Lord. You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. *(sigh of relief)*

SHEPHERD 2: *(to ANGEL)* Way to go.

SHEEP 3: *(softly)* Baa.

NARRATOR: The shepherds and sheep hurried all the way to Bethlehem. There they found Mary, Joseph, and the baby.

(SHEPHERDS and SHEEP go to manger scene and stand to the side.)

NARRATOR: After a time there came...um...an indeterminate number of wise men from the east.

(WISE MEN enter at opposite side from SHEPHERDS and SHEEP, carrying toys for the toy drive.)

WISE MAN 1: We have followed your star since its rising. *(starting to launch into another know-it-all moment)* Although actually, stars don't technically rise, they –

WISE MAN 2: *(to WISE MAN 1)* Shh! *(to MARY and JOSEPH)* We knew it would lead us to you.

WISE MAN 3: And look, we've brought gifts of...um...well, we brought gifts.

(WISE MEN lay the toys beside the manger.)

WISE MAN 3: Hey! I think he likes them.

(The CAST faces the congregation.)

NARRATOR: All those years ago a Savior was born.

JOSEPH: A child so small that the hopes of the whole world...

MARY: ...could be held in a mother's arms.

INNKEEPER: All those years ago there was no room for this child.

SHEPHERDS 1 and 2: The Savior of the world,

WISE MAN 1, 2, and 3: the King of Kings,

SHEEP 1, 2, and 3: was born in a stable.

ANGEL: Today, Lord Jesus, we make room for you in our lives.

ALL: We make room for you in our hearts.

NARRATOR: Many of you have brought gifts. We invite you to bring these forward and lay them beside the manger.

(As music for In the Bleak Midwinter begins, the cast members, a few at a time, can get their toys from the side of the stage, lay them in front of the manger, and go back to their places.)

Note: A few strategically placed ushers or parents should facilitate the congregational participation in bringing toys to the manger and then returning to their seats.