

SCRIPT



bending TOWARDS the Light *a Jazz Nativity*

**"...the Christmas story told in thoroughly American musical terms."
Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune***

Written and arranged by Anne Phillips

Additional music by Bob Kindred and Dave Brubeck
Additional lyrics by Henry Timm and Iola Brubeck

Staged by Beth Ann Kennedy

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Notes from the author and musical director:

"Bending Towards the Light" is a very unusual piece. It is a combination of jazz, written and improvised, and theater. Its theatrical nature and the exiting jazz performances are equally important. For the most effective presentation the work should have both a musical director and a theatrical director. Band musicians should stand for their solos.

Since "The Jazz Nativity" is not a "jazz concert," added carols or extended solos should not be inserted. There is a momentum that gathers as the story unfolds and this would hinder the dramatic line.

Even in the most limited performance space, the entrances of Mary and her Spirit, the Shepherds and the Three Kings are dramatically important and the directions in the script should be adhered to.

Care should also be given to the suggested tempi to assure the flow of the story. There should not be any significant pauses between numbers.

Though it is effective to have a percussionist on either side of the stage when they are both playing in "call and response" fashion during the entrance of Mary and her spirit, it is possible to have the drummer play the second percussion part. This is really the only time the second percussionist is needed.

The vocal trio in Silent Night and the vocal group readings can be sung by the full choir.

BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT ...A JAZZ NATIVITY

Written and arranged by Anne Phillips
Additional music by Bob Kindred and Dave Brubeck
Additional lyrics by Henry Timm and Iola Brubeck
Director's notes by Tad and Beth Jones
Staged by Tad and Beth Jones
Based on staging originally conceived by Ronald Roston

BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT...A JAZZ NATIVITY is the traditional Christmas story told through the medium of jazz. The roles of the Shepherds, the Kings, the Angels and Mary and her Spirit are played by singers, dancers and jazz musicians. A ten piece jazz ensemble, a full choir and two children are included in the cast. From the opening moment when "Silent Night" is hauntingly played in the darkness, to the thrilling moment when the orchestra strikes up "We Three Kings" to announce the arrival of the three "Jazz Kings" to the rousing finale of "Deck the Halls" when guest jazz artists come up from the audience to join in the celebration, "Bending Towards the Light" is a fusion of holiday joy, spirituality and jazz history.

"Whether you're on or off the stage, by the end of THE JAZZ NATIVITY you know you've been through something wonderful...a stirring celebration of Christmas."

Billy Taylor, *CBS Sunday Morning*

"When all the gifts are unwrapped and all the tinsel discarded, the memory of this extraordinary performance will keep Christmas in your heart forever."

Alison Steele, *City Guide*

"Christmas is a very spiritual season and jazz is a very spiritual music...what you hear comes straight from the heart."

Charles Kuralt, *Host*

CHARACTERS

OVERTURE VOCALIST: singer

HOST

THE STORYTELLER: soprano

THE VOICES: jazz vocal group - soprano, alto, tenor, bass

MARY: singer

THE SPIRIT OF MARY: young dancer

SHEPHERD I: singer, bass

SHEPHERD II: singer, tenor

THE SAXOPHONE SHEPHERD: alto sax

THE SHEPHERD BOY: boy soprano

THE GUARDIAN ANGELS: male & female jazz vocal duo

THE THREE KINGS: a horn king
 a tap king
 a percussion or horn king

10 PIECE JAZZ ENSEMBLE: trumpet
 alto saxophone, clarinet, flute
 tenor/bari saxophone
 trombone
 piano
 guitar
 bass
 drums
 percussion I - congas
 percussion II - congas, wind chimes etc.

CHOIR

SPECIAL GUESTS: instrumentalists come from audience during "Deck the Halls"

BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT
...A JAZZ NATIVITY

1. OVERTURE: BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT
Vocal

PROLOGUE

Spoken: Host

THE STORY:

2. SILENT NIGHT
Instrumental: Tenor sax solo, The Jazz Ensemble
Vocal background: three female voices
3. READING I - LUKE 2:7, 8
Vocal: The Storyteller, The Voices
Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble
4. ONE STAR
Vocal: Shepherds I & II
Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble
5. THE FIRST NOEL
Instrumental: The Saxophone Shepherd & The Jazz Ensemble
6. READING II - LUKE 2:9-13
Vocal: The Storyteller, The Voices
Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble
7. ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH
Vocal: The Storyteller, The Voices & Choir
Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble
8. READING III - LUKE 2:15
Vocal: The Voices
9. BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT
Vocal: The Shepherd Boy, Choir
Instrumental: piano
10. WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
Vocal: The Guardian Angels
Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble
11. SOFTLY FALLS THE GENTLE NIGHT
Vocal: Mary
Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble
Dancer: The Spirit of Mary

12. WE THREE KINGS

Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble

King I horn

King II tap dancer

King III Latin percussion or horn

13. BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT (Reprise)

Tableau - Full Company

THE CELEBRATION:

14. GOD'S LOVE MADE VISIBLE

Vocal & Instrumental: Full Company

15. DECK THE HALLS

Vocal & Instrumental: Full Company & Special Guests

EPILOGUE

Spoken: Host

16. READING IV - JOHN 1:15, MATTHEW 5:13

Vocal & Instrumental: Full Company & Special Guests

17. BOWS: JOY TO THE WORLD (Dixie Style)

Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble

18. BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

Instrumental: The Jazz Ensemble

Exit music

BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT
A JAZZ NATIVITY

(enter: Choir, Storyteller, Jazz Ensemble, Voices)
(enter: Overture vocalist)

1. OVERTURE: BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

4 BAR INTRO

OVERTURE VOCALIST:

O'ER THE HILLS
OF BETHLEHEM
IN THE DARK OF NIGHT
SHIMMERING AND GLIMMERING
A SHINY WON'DROUS LIGHT

ALL THE GRASS AND TREES THAT GROW
EVERY THING IN SIGHT
IS SHIMMERING AND
GLIMMERING AND
BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

ON THE ROAD
TO BETHLEHEM
OPEN TO THE
SKY WE ARE
OPEN TO THE
TENDER LIGHT OF
SUN AND MOON
AND STAR

LOOK HOW IT
SHINES
O'ER THE MANGER
LOOK HOW THE
DARKNESS HAS WANED
REPLACED BY THE LIGHT
THE BLESSING
THE MIRACLE

AND ON THIS NIGHT
IN BETHLEHEM
ON THIS HOLY NIGHT
WE MAY SEE
THE WORLD BEGIN
A BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

ON THE ROAD
TO BETHLEHEM
OPEN TO THE
THE SKY WE ARE
OPEN TO THE
TENDER LIGHT OF
SUN AND MOON
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LOOK HOW IT
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(enter: Host applauding Vocalist)
(exit: Overture Vocalist)

PROLOGUE

(Host sits on stool or stands DL)

HOST:

GOOD EVENING.

THIS IS AN OLD STORY WE HAVE TO TELL,
A TWO-THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD STORY, PRETTY NEARLY, AND IT'S
BEEN TOLD BEAUTIFULLY BEFORE...BY MATTHEW AND LUKE...BY
BACH AND HANDEL...BY ALL THOSE CHILDREN DOWN ALL THOSE
YEARS PLAYING THE PARTS OF THE ANGELS AND THE SHEPHERDS
AND THE KINGS IN THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS

TONIGHT, WE'RE GOING TO TELL THE OLD STORY IN A NEW
WAY...THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF JAZZ. AND WE HOPE YOU WILL
FIND THIS FITTING AND SEEMLY. IT IS A VERY SPIRITUAL STORY.
AND JAZZ IS A VERY SPIRITUAL MUSIC--THE MOST SPONTANEOUS
AND THE MOST PERSONAL FORM OF MUSICAL EXPRESSION. WHAT
YOU WILL HEAR TONIGHT COMES STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART.

IN BETHLEHEM, IN THE GROTTO WHERE CHRIST WAS BORN, A
LIGHT SHINES INTO THE DARKNESS. THE LIGHT IS MEANT TO
SERVE--AS LIGHT SERVES FOR SO MANY RELIGIONS AND
PHILOSOPHIES--AS A SYMBOL OF TRUTH AND LOVE.

AND HOPE. HOPE THAT EVEN IN A DARK SEASON, WE MAY
BEGIN TO SEE THE WORLD. . .BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT.

(Host indicates "light" and stays on stage to end of SILENT NIGHT)

(House and stage lights out. Saxophone begins in darkness.
Spot on saxophone at second eight bars. Stage lights come up gradually.
Spot on trio of back-up singers in third chorus.)

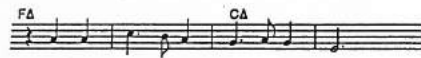
THE STORY

2. SILENT NIGHT

TENOR SAX BEGINS ALONE



GUITAR CHORD



ADD
PIANO & BASS:



ADD
3 FEM VOX:



(Host applauds tenor sax performer - Host exits)

3. READING - LUKE 2:7,8

SR CONGAS: (IMPROV --NOT COUNTED THROUGHOUT)

SL CONGAS: "

SR CONGAS: "

(Spirit Mary & Mary enter left)

SL CONGAS: "

SR CONGAS: "

SL CONGAS: "

acapella

STORYTELLER:

AND SHE BROUGHT FORTH
HER FIRST BORN SON

(Mary sits - Spirit Mary stands behind moving to congas)

AND WRAPPED HIM IN SWADDLING CLOTHES

SR CONGAS: IMPROV

SL CONGAS: "

acapella

STORYTELLER:

AND LAID HIM IN A MANGER

SR CONGAS: IMPROV

SL CONGAS: "

acapella

STORY TELLER:

BECAUSE THERE WAS NO ROOM IN THE INN

SR CONGAS: IMPROV

SL CONGAS: "

acapella

MEN VOICES:

AND THERE WERE IN THE SAME COUNTRY

(Spirit Mary sits behind Mary)

FLUTE:



(Shepherds: Boy, Sax, I, II enter left)
(Boy pointing to "star light")

MEN VOICES:

SHEPHERDS ABIDING IN THE FIELDS

SAX SHEP:

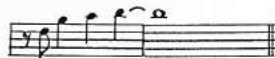


acapella

MEN & WOMEN VOICES:

KEEPING WATCH OVER THEIR FLOCKS BY NIGHT

FLUTE:



SAX SHEP:



(Boy kneels DL, I & II up of Boy, Sax center left of them)

4. ONE STAR

(Boy, Sax, I & II staring at "star light")

SHEPHERD I:

IN THE SILENCE
OF THE NIGHT
SLEEPING SHEEP
SURROUND ME

I SEE ONE STAR
AFAR
A STAR WHOSE LIGHT
ASTOUNDS ME

SHEPHERD II:

IN THE STILLNESS
OF THE NIGHT
LONELY HILLS
AROUND ME

I SEE
ONE STAR
AFAR
A STAR WHOSE LIGHT
CONFOUNDS ME

SHEPHERDS I & II:

IN THE BEAUTY
OF THE NIGHT
SHALL WE LET IT
GUIDE US

LET THAT
ONE STAR
AFAR
GUIDE US TO
THE KING

