

DRAMA COMPANION / PRODUCTION GUIDE

by Susan Naus Dengler and Pamela Stewart

SEEKERS OF THE LIGHT

A Cantata for Christmas

by Lloyd Larson and Mark Hayes

Narration by Pamela Stewart

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PUBLISHER’S NOTE

This Drama Companion/Production Guide is designed to be used in conjunction with the Christmas musical, *Seekers of the Light* by Lloyd Larson and Mark Hayes. The drama contained does not take the place of the narration in the *Seekers of the Light* choral book but is intended to complement the narrative. Adding the dramatic portions contained in this Guide should extend the work only by about 5 – 7 minutes to the existing length of 30 minutes, resulting in an approximately 35-37-minute total presentation.

Every attempt has been made to keep the dramatization within reach of churches and schools with limited resources. For those with greater resources and desirous of a larger production, there is ample room for imaginative staging enlargement upon the more basic staging presented here. Please know, however, that any desired changes to the dialog requires permission from the publisher.

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We wish you blessings and success in your performance of *Seekers of the Light*.

— *The Publisher*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Production Suggestions	5
Promotional Ideas.....	8
Drama Script	12
Glossary of Theatre Terms	16
Creative Team Bios.....	18

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PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS

CAST

THE PROPHET	<i>Seeker #1:</i>
THE SCRIBE	<i>Seeker #2</i>
THE SHEPHERD	<i>Seeker #3</i>
THE MAGI	<i>Seeker #4</i>
MARY and JOSEPH:	<i>Optional non-speaking roles.</i>

STAGING

Ideally, the dramatic version of this musical should be staged using three main playing areas (even of which the smallest churches generally have): “Center Stage” (the pulpit area in front of the choir); “Stage Right” (the area to the right of Center Stage when facing the audience in front of the choir) and “Stage Left” (the area to the left of Center Stage when facing the audience in front of the choir). However, by moving the simple suggested set pieces quickly and efficiently between scenes, the dramatic portions can be performed effectively solely in the pulpit area in front of the choir.

Another approach to staging the musical is “Reader’s Theatre” style. With this approach, the actors are seated on stools with music stands and they read their lines dramatically and in character. The stools and stands are placed either to the left or right of the choir or could be divided up on both sides of the choir.

SET

No constructed set is needed to produce this musical. However, this dramatization certainly lends itself to that approach for those organizations wishing a larger production.

LIGHTING

Lighting cues are given as a suggestion for those organizations with such capabilities. While the simple lighting cues found in this Guide will heighten the presentation, no special lighting is needed *per se* to present the musical.

Spotlighting the actors is a key aspect of the given lighting suggestions. If your organization doesn’t have lighting useful for solo performers, consider renting or borrowing two spot lights (also known as followspots) from a local high school, college, or community theatre. There are also other affordable options for solo lighting that are easily found on the Internet.

3. PREPARE!

As music begins, Seeker #2 returns to seat. At measure 14, Seeker #3 and #4 rise, and slowly and intentionally, move stools or hay bales to downstage left and right. They then move to reserved seats in the front row of the congregation. At measure 41, Seeker #2 rises, and slowly and intentionally, moves manger to downstage center, and then moves downstage left. At measure 68, Seeker #1 rises and places unlit lantern on table behind manger, and then moves downstage right.

Seeker #1 “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government will be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6 KJV) “...the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14 KJV)

Seeker #2 And yes, it came to pass that, hundreds of years later, an angel visited a young woman in the town of Nazareth and told her, “Mary, do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will bear a Son and will call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be the Son of God.” (Luke 1:30,31 adapted)

Several months later, the Roman government ordered a census of the people. Each household was required to register in the city of its ancestors, [*Mary and Joseph enter and move through the congregation toward the stable. They should be settled in their seats on either side of the manger by the time the narration ends*] so Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem. While they were there, it came time for Mary to give birth. Seeking a room, they found that the inns were filled with visitors. So, it happened that in the darkness of night, the Light of the world was born in a stable, His cradle, a manger used for feeding hay to the animals. Indeed, the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth. [*Seeker #2 moves to chancel and places scroll on table, indicating symbolically, that Jesus is the Word, made flesh. Seekers #1 and #2 move to reserved front row seats.*]

4. COME NEAR TO THE MANGER

At measure 44, Mary and Joseph rise. Mary lifts baby Jesus from manger and holds Him lovingly. Joseph moves to table behind manger, lights lantern and holds it aloft indicating symbolically that the Light has come. Both move downstage center and maintain tableau until the song ends. At the end of the song, Mary returns baby to manger and Joseph returns lantern, still lit, to table. They return to their seats as Seeker #3 rises and moves to chancel, downstage left.

Seeker #3 (*The Shepherd*) I am a seeker. Oh, you may be thinking, “How can a humble shepherd possibly be a Seeker of the Light.?” But make no mistake, I learned the words of the prophets at my mother’s knee. I have seen the desperation of my people. In fact, I haven’t just seen it, I have lived it! The fact is that a shepherd has a lot of time to think during those dark, lonely nights out in the hills. Sometimes...many times...I have passed the time by remembering all the places in the ancient writings that refer to God, and to the One who is to come, as our Good Shepherd. Words like “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;” and “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd” have provided me with comfort during those long nights when each seems just like the one before it.

That was until that night that was like no other! There we were, just a ragtag handful of shepherds. Most of us were half asleep, when suddenly, the dark skies were filled with light and an angel from heaven appeared before us, saying, “I bring news of great joy. This very night in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born. Go and seek Him and let this be a sign: you will find Him wrapped in cloth, lying in a manger.” With those words, a chorus of angels began singing, “Glory to God in the highest! And on earth, peace and good will.”