

# Listen to the Lambs



## A Children's Christmas Musical

by Vera Neff

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## CAST

Lambs	Prophet	Angel Choir	Mary
Shepherds	First Angel	Animals	Joseph

There are four groups involved in the musical – the *lambs*, *shepherds*, *angels* and the *characters* in the nativity scene. The size of these groups may vary. The younger boys and girls should be selected to play the part of the *lambs* while the older children should be used in the parts of the *shepherds* and *angels* respectively. The number of *shepherds* can range from four to eight boys. If only four boys are used, *Shepherd I* should memorize the parts for *Shepherd I* and *V*; *Shepherd II* should memorize the parts for *Shepherd II* and *VI*; etc. An older girl with a strong speaking voice should play the part of the *First Angel*. The nativity group could include (in addition to *Mary*, *Joseph* and the Baby – a doll) a *donkey*, *cow*, *calf*, *lambs* and one or two *angels*.

## COSTUMES

The *shepherds* should wear tunics draped with contrasting material, headpieces and sandals. They should carry staffs.

*Joseph* and the *Prophet* should wear the traditional biblical-style costumes – tunics, cloaks or robes with headpieces. The *Prophet* should read from a scroll. Soft pastel colors should be used for *Mary's* robe and scarf. She should hold the *Holy Child* in her arms.

The *angel* costumes can be made from a basic robe pattern using white muslin or a sheet. Their wings and halos should be trimmed with gold tinsel and glitter. They could carry golden instruments – harps, trumpets, etc., made from heavy cardboard and sprayed with gold metallic paint.

A basic costume pattern can be used for the *animal* costumes. Fake fur and flannel materials are the most practical. The *lamb* costumes can be decorated with cotton. Their mouths should not be covered since their singing parts must be audible. The headpieces for the other *animals* should be designed to depict individual characteristics of the *animals* – long ears for the donkey, etc.

## BASIC PROPERTIES

Shepherd Staffs	Scroll
Angel Wings and Halos	Manger
Choir Risers	Hay
Instruments for the <i>angels</i>	Doll
Rocks for the hillside (optional)	

# MUSIC SELECTIONS

Listen!

Immanuel

Gloria!

Let Us Go to Bethlehem

Sing Softly

Immanuel (Reprise)

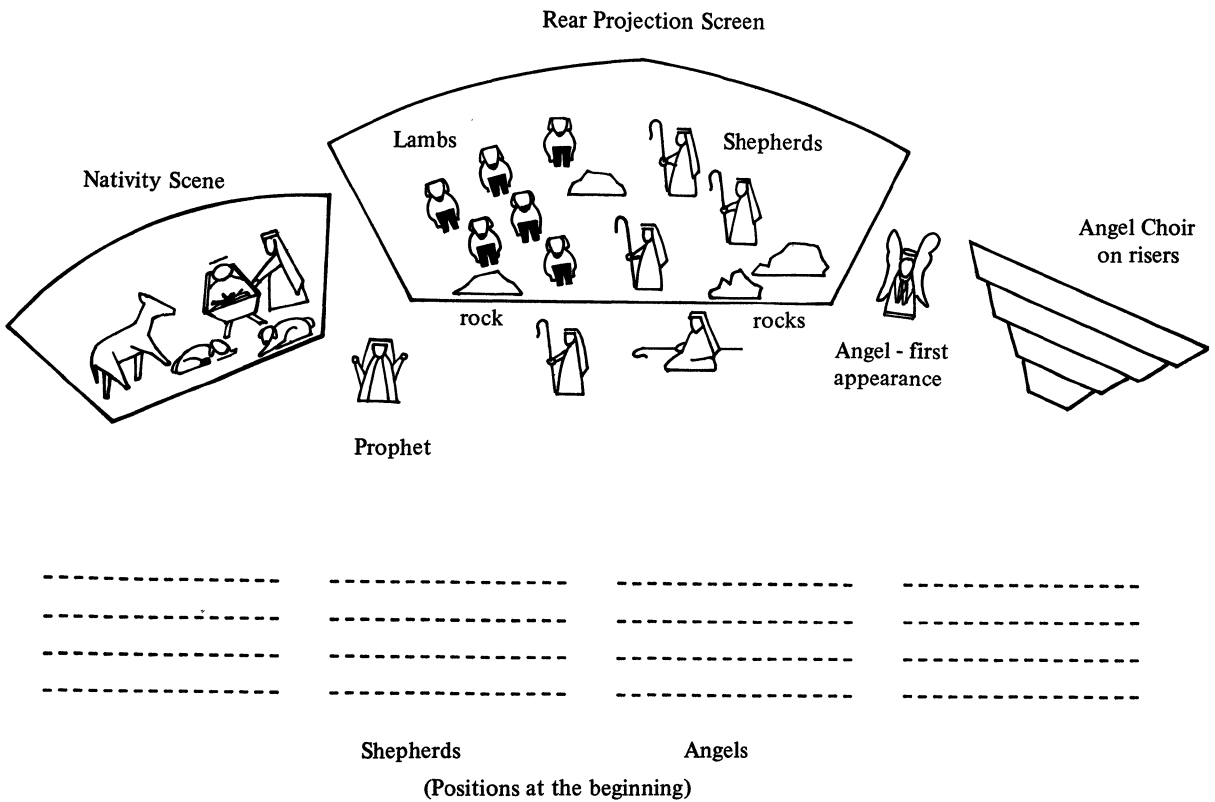
Good News!

He's the Lamb

Give a Gift

What a Beautiful Night!

## STAGE DIRECTIONS



The setting is a Judean hillside the night of Christ's birth.

Three stage positions or platforms should be designated for the different groups during the performance. A large rear-view projection screen could serve as the back-drop for the center stage and slides could be used for the background. If a permanent back-drop is preferred, the setting should be a pastoral scene.

The use of follow spots will highlight the action on the three stages. Colored tiered lights and floor spots will enhance the lighting effects. Before starting the presentation, the house lights should be dimmed to create an atmosphere of nighttime. A deep blue setting with colored lighting would be effective.

# LISTEN TO THE LAMBS

*(The shepherds and angels take their positions in the back of the sanctuary. During the introduction to the song, "Listen!," the lambs enter from a room behind the center platform and take their positions on the center stage. The lambs sing the "echo" part in the song.)*

## Listen!

V.R.N.

Moderately

Vera R. Neff

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of three systems of music. The first system is a piano introduction with a treble clef and a bass clef. The piano part is marked *pp* (semi-detached) and features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a *gva* (glissando) and a fermata. The second system is for the choir, labeled "Choir (Shepherds and Lambs)". It includes a *Warmly* marking and a *p* dynamic. The vocal line has lyrics: "Lis - ten! (Lis - ten!) Lis - ten! (Lis - ten!)". There are *gva* markings and a *8va* (octave up) marking above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note pattern. The third system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "Lis - ten, lis - ten, lis - ten to the sto - ry Of the Ho - ly Child". The piano accompaniment remains consistent.

**Prophet:**

*(Reading from a scroll)* For centuries, prophets, inspired by God, kept alive the hope that the Son of God, the Messiah, was coming to redeem the people from their sins. Seven hundred years earlier, Isaiah foretold that there was to come from the House of David a Messiah, the anointed One, the Savior! He said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She shall give birth to a son, and he shall be called Immanuel, meaning God is with us. This will fulfill God's message through his prophets."

# Immanuel

V. R. N.

Vera R. Neff

Moderately, with feeling

*f*

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand starts with a series of chords in the treble clef, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The tempo is marked 'Moderately, with feeling' and the dynamic is 'f'.

*mf* *With feeling*

Choir (Prophet, Lambs, Shepherds and Angels)

1. Im - man - u - el, Im - man - u - el, a  
 2. Im - man - u - el, Im - man - u - el, a

The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef. It begins with a rest followed by the lyrics. The piano accompaniment is in two staves (treble and bass clefs). The dynamic is marked 'mf'.

*Shepherd V:* Don't you think we deserve a break?

*Shepherd VI:* I certainly do.

*Shepherd VIII:* I am so sleepy. *(Yawns)*

*(All shepherds sit down except Shepherds I and II)*

*Shepherd I:* *(To Shepherd II)* Go ahead and rest. I'm going to roam over the hillside.  
*(Wanders around)*

*Shepherd II:* I don't feel like doing anything except watching the stars. Look! Over there!

*Shepherd I:* That one seems to be getting brighter and brighter.

*Lambs*  
*Warmly*  
*mp*



Lis - ten!\_ Lis - ten!\_ Lis - ten, lis - ten, lis - ten to the sto - ry.

*(They huddle together as the lambs sing. The other shepherds gather closely to the two shepherds. The spotlight is focused on the angel who appears at stage right. The shepherds react fearfully. As the First Angel speaks, the angel choir comes from the back of the sanctuary. The angels take their positions on the risers.)*

*First Angel:* Don't be afraid! I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Savior, yes, the Messiah, the Lord has been born tonight in Bethlehem! How will you know Him? You will find a baby wrapped in a blanket, lying in a manger!

*(Spotlight moves to the other angels as they begin singing the song, "Gloria!" The First Angel joins the angel choir. Shepherds stand and join the angels on the second chorus of the song. Lambs also join in singing where indicated.)*

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