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Dramatic Publishing



ANGELS AND ALL CHILDREN

A Musical

Book and lyrics by
WALTER WANGERIN JR.

Music by
RANDY COURTS



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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To my grandchildren
With shining eyes
I dedicate this story,
Emma Michelle and Maxwell David
— WW

To my sons—Harley and Riley
— RC

AUTHORS' NOTES—for those who will conduct the Christmas Service of:

ANGELS AND ALL CHILDREN

1. Follow the written script (not the score) when planning and performing this program.
2. Be as creative (or as spare) in your performance as you have people and resources and space. The suggestions that follow are only that: suggestions.
3. For performers, you will need:
 - A Narrator (much reading, no singing)
 - Gabriel (both speaking and singing; he may read his lines, but since he might act as a stage manager, leading people here and there—especially the children near the end—it would be best if he memorizes the lines)
 - Mary (some lines spoken, one beautiful carol)
 - Joseph (likewise, lines spoken and a carol)
 - A choir
 - A children's choir
 - Whether you choose someone to speak the lines of God is up to you. They may be read by the narrator instead.

4. You may be elaborate in your use of the church or performance space. If so, there might be three areas set aside for staging:
 - a. The place where Gabriel speaks to Mary.
 - b. The place where Gabriel speaks to Joseph.
 - c. The place of the manger, where Jesus is born. It is to this area that the children will come during the “Carol of All Instruments,” whence they will sing their final Christmas songs for the congregation. If in a church, this place ought to be at or in front of the altar.

Gabriel moves among these places—even as he returns to the place of “God”—which may simply be a return to the side of the narrator.

5. Both Mary’s and Joseph’s bedrooms could each have (or could indicate) a bed and a light. Let it be what the children would recognize as a place they themselves might sleep in. The light could be a candle on a stand, though that will be more symbolic than actual; or it could be a standing lamp of some brightness (as a halogen light). If you have the means to illuminate these areas externally, good. Take advantage of your advantage, and raise lights when the action goes that way, dim them when it retreats.

These “bedrooms” should be opposite each other.

And both should be at some distance from the front, in order that the Mary figure and the Joseph have some distance to process between their places and to the front.

This service makes much of walking/processing/motion, both on earth and from above, just as God *came* down to earth and stirred the earth to activity.

6. You could also use all your actors as readers, simply standing in one place to read their lines from some kind of lectern or stand.
7. Costumes? Well, what if both Mary and Joseph wore bedroom clothes at first? It will create a wonderfully intimate atmosphere, especially if all the little children are wearing pajamas too (since they are all “sleeping” until morning comes).

When Mary and Joseph process to “Bethlehem,” they might remove the bedroom cloths and reveal costumes of the times: tunic, robe.

Gabriel might also be costumed, but not heavily. Remember that for the angel the most important thing is to be clothed in *light*:

- a crown of light?
- a robe of light?
- a torch in hand?
- a lantern of amazing proportion and brilliance?

8. As for the little children:
 - They (in pajamas) might be arranged as little “sleepers” in various groupings (though they will and should watch the proceedings from wherever they are)
 - Or they could remain with their parents in the pews, or audience, until Gabriel comes to bring them forward.

Ask each child to bring something to show the baby Jesus as a gift. Be creative. It could be a personal toy or doll or teddy bear. But it could also be some true offering to be used thereafter for those in need.

Once they have awakened, have shouted their lines, have sung “Angels We Have Heard on High,” let them lead the congregation in other carols you have chosen for this event.

It is assumed that the children do more than represent the shepherds—that they, rather, take the place of the shepherds as children awaking to the love of Jesus, as the next generation to know and tell the story abroad.

9. The church, or performing group, that has the means will surely want to use the musical score and the talents of its members. An accompaniment CD is also available.

ANGELS AND ALL CHILDREN

NARRATOR.

“The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwell in a land of deep darkness,
on them the light has shined.”

— Isaiah 9:2

“God is light and in him is no darkness at all.
If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in
darkness
we lie and do not live according to the truth;
but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

— 1 John 1:5-7

1. Preparation

SINGERS.

Once upon a time.

Once upon a time.

NARRATOR. Once upon a time people were walking in darkness. People were living in a land so dark that the day was as dim as the night. So dim, so gloomy that no one could tell the difference, and why? Well, the people had turned away from God—and God, you know, is light.

The people had stopped loving God. Ahhh, they had begun to love themselves the more and the more and the most.

Each one said:

PEOPLE.

**WHO'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN WE ARE—MY
FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, AND ME?
NO ONE SHOULD
TELL US WHAT TO DO.
WE DON'T LIKE RULES. DON'T NEED
COMMANDMENTS. AND WE SURELY
DON'T NEED THAT TEN-COMMANDMENT GOD!**

NARRATOR. And this was the same as saying,

PEOPLE.

WE DON'T NEED THE SUN IN THE SKY.

NARRATOR. So the people walked in the dark of refusal, a darkness darker than night. And this peculiar darkness caused a sad thing to happen...

PEOPLE.

CHILDREN! CHILDREN, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

NARRATOR. But none of the children could answer. All of the children were sleeping. As long as the deep and the dark and the long night lasted, none of the children would wake again. No, not till the morning returned.

PEOPLE.

**WHAT'S THE MATTER, MY SON, MY
DAUGHTER? WAKE UP!
WAKE UP AND COME TO ME.**

NARRATOR. The adults who had caused the darkness: they were lonely and sad. They missed the children.

PEOPLE.

**WE MISS YOUR LAUGHTER, YOUR HAPPY
CHATTER,
YOUR HUGS AND YOUR LOVE AND YOUR
TRUST.
OH, WHEN WILL YOU COME BACK TO US?**

+ + +

2. Gabriel and Mary

SINGERS.

**Once upon a time,
Once upon a time...**

NARRATOR. But, once upon a midnight time, when the people had stopped loving God, God was still in love with them. He looked down from heaven and saw that the earth was stuck, like a clock, at midnight. He said:

GOD. No, this isn't good. It's time to make time tick again, time to turn the land from night to morning.

NARRATOR. God felt the sorrow of the people, how lonely they were for their children, so he said:

GOD. It's time to do a whole new thing.

NARRATOR. God so loved the world, that he sent his only Son into the world itself, and this is how he did it.

GOD. Gabriel? Gabriel,

NARRATOR. He said. And Gabriel answered:

GABRIEL. Here, Lord! Here I am. What do you want me to do?

GOD & SINGERS.

**Gabriel, down—go down
With my favor
Now and ever;
Fly to my Mary: say
She'll deliver a child, a son.**

**“Jesus” his name must be,
Great as David,
Savior ever;
Tell her my Spirit will fall
Like the morning upon her womb.**

NARRATOR. Suddenly there was an angel flying through the night. Swiftly, silently, over the oceans, down to a province named Galilee, down to a city named Nazareth, down to a house in that city, down to a woman in that house—down, down to Mary, young and blameless, sleeping in her bed.

The angel came like light.

The angel grew very, very bright—and the angel said:

SINGERS.

**Hail, Mary.
Fav'rite of God!
The Lord is with you!**

NARRATOR. Mary awoke, shaking with terror.

MARY. Thunder? Lightning? Is it storming? What is coming to me?

NARRATOR. God saw how scared she was, so he leaned down and whispered:

GOD. Hurry, Gabriel. Comfort young Mary. Give her the good news quietly.

NARRATOR. So the angel said to Mary:

SINGERS.

Mary, don't be afraid—

GABRIEL. For you have found favor with God.

SINGERS.

Mary, you will conceive—

GABRIEL. And bear a son and name him "Jesus."

SINGERS.

Mary, he will be great—

GABRIEL. The Son of the Highest, on the throne of David.

SINGERS.

Mary, and he will reign—



Walter Wangerin Jr.

(left) first came into prominence as the National Book Award-winning author of *The Book of the Dun Cow*. He has since won many awards and honors for his books. He has published more than 30 books including *Miz Lil and the Chronicles of Grace*, *The Crying for a Vision*, *Saint Julian* and *The Book of God*. Wangerin lives in Valparaiso, Indiana, where he holds the Jochum Chair at Valparaiso University and is writer in residence.

Randy Courts, composer/lyricist, collaborated with playwright/lyricist Mark St. Germain on the

musicals *The Gifts of the Magi* (10 consecutive seasons at the Lambs Theater, two national tours, over 200 productions around the world); *Johnny Pye and the Foolkiller* (Lambs Theater, AT&T New Plays of the Nineties Award); *Joseph and Mary* (Los Angeles, Dallas, Indianapolis and in concert in New York, starring Kris Kristofferson); *Jack's Holiday* (Playwrights Horizons, three Outer Critics Circle Award nominations including best musical); *The Book of the Dun Cow* and *The Gingerbread House*. Courts and St. Germain also contributed songs to the review *A...My Name Is Still Alice* and to Cass Morgan's *True Home*. Courts is a member of The Dramatists Guild and a regular participant at the New Harmony Project. His work has been published by Dramatic Publishing, Dramatists Play Service, Samuel French, Fireside Theatre and Augsburg Fortress Publishing.