

Two examples of Christmas productions, 1952 and 1967

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL
WASHINGTON, D. C.

A Christmas Service

THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

AND

ST. ALBANS, THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1952

8:00 P.M.

I HEAR ALONG OUR STREET

Hugh MacKinnon

I HEAR along our street	In December ring
Pass the minstrel throngs;	Every day the chimes,
Hark! they play so sweet,	Loud, the gleemen sing
On their oboes, Christmas songs.	In the streets their merry rhymes.

Let us ever by the fire,
Ever, ever higher,
Sing them till the night expire.

Shepherds at the grange	Who by thy fireside stands,
Where the Babe was born,	Stamps his feet and sings;
Sang with many a change	But he who blows his hands
Christmas carols until morn.	Not so gay a carol brings.

Old French Carol of the Hearth.

A CHRISTMAS SERVICE

A pageant based on an early mediaeval play, "The Representation of Adam," and on a twelfth century liturgy, "The Office of the Magi."

Script prepared by *Madeline Hicks*

Musical score arranged and composed
by *Richard Dirksen*

¶ *The Congregation shall kneel and join in the singing of the first stanza of "Silent Night, Holy Night," during the final tableau, and remain kneeling for the Blessing.*

THE BLESSING

The Rt. Rev. Angus Dun
Bishop of Washington

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Supporting Interpreters—Players Club, National Cathedral School for Girls

Abraham and his son—Nicolass Jooste and Martin Press

First Interpreter—Franklin Mayo-Wells

Second Interpreter—Letitia Gardner

Moses—Landt Dennis

David before Saul—John Simmons and John Conover

Kings and Leaders of Men—Led by Carlisle Bolton Smith and
Boys of St. Albans School

Daniel—Charles Dickey
with King—William Harsch
and Soothsayers—George Ruestow, Jane Andrews, Mary Meader

Habakkuk—Mark Lindley

Jeremiah—Johannes Somary
Helpless Children of the Earth—Girls of Sixth and Seventh Grades

Isaiah—The Rt. Rev. Angus Dun, D.D.

Angel—Helen Wheeler

Three Magi—Charles Saltzman
Norris Olsen
Swift Martin

Mary—Patricia Sharp

Joseph—James Constantinople

Attendants, Ragamuffins and Shepherds—
Boys and Girls of the Cathedral Schools

Direction—Madeline Hicks and William Savin

Lights—Neil Strawbridge, James Cromwell, Donald Jassowski

Costumes—Margaret Hill

National Cathedral School for Girls Glee Club

St. Albans School for Boys Glee Club

Boys of the Washington Cathedral Choir

Organist and Director, Richard Dirksen

PROGRAM NOTES

The original Mediaeval Play, "The Representation of Adam," begins with the story of the Garden of Eden. A later portion, which has been adapted for this Christmas Service, dramatizes the Advent Story with its promise of a great wonder that shall appear before the world. Beginning with God's Covenant with Man through Abraham, and His law given through Moses, it shows Man rejoicing through David's Psalms in the gifts of God, and foreseeing with Daniel the Coming of the Son of Man whose kingdom shall not be destroyed. Later prophets, Habakkuk and Jeremiah, voice Man's confusion when earlier visions are lost in violence and suffering. Isaiah recalls Man to his first knowledge that God is the center of his being through all generations, and in answer to this recognition announces the great wonder, assuring Man that he may live in the hope of the coming of Christ.

To this Advent Play has been added an early Eleventh Century Church Liturgy of the offering of gifts by the Magi, who seek the new King. The final revelation of the Nativity Scene, first to simple shepherds, then to the Magi, to children, and to all people presents the Christmas Message as the fulfillment of Man's hope.

The sources of the music heard throughout the pageant cover the entire span of time since our Lord was born, and they deserve note because of their great tradition. The processional, "Of the Father's Love Begotten," (No. 20, The Hymnal) is a thirteenth century plainsong, Mode V, and the poem was written in the fourth century by *Aurelius Clemens Prudentius*. The portions of the "Benedictus," (No. 641, The Hymnal) are set to the plainsong, Tone VII, 5, and the carol "Willie, Take Your Little Drum," sung during the Magi's procession is a seventeenth century French carol by *Bernard de la Monnoye*. The peculiarly oriental music heard during the scene of the "Helpless Children of the Earth," is a fifteenth century lute composition by *Neu-seidler*, titled "Judentanz," and reflects the bitterness of the scene. "How Bright Appears the Morning Star," (No. 329, The Hymnal) is dated 1599 and both words and music were written by *Philip Nicolai*. While the carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter," by *Christina Rossetti*, set to music by *Gustav Holst*, (No. 44, The Hymnal) and *Phillips Brooks'* great hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," (No. 21, The Hymnal) are of more recent origin, they have already established their firm place in our Christmas tradition.

The original organ and choral music is intended to blend these contrasting hymns and carols into the continuity of the book, and to create for the actors and their audience both the setting and the mood for the action.

A FESTIVAL OF PLAYS

IN HONOR OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

being certain portions from

The Cycle of Mysteries

as hath oftentimes been presented in the

City of York

adapted by

GWENDOLYN CONEY

for the

National Cathedral School for Girls

with appropriate ancient carols

selected and set to music

by

RICHARD DIRKSEN

to be performed by the classes of

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO

and

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THREE

in the

WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL

on Friday, the fifteenth day of December, nineteen hundred and sixty-seven

at eight-thirty in the morning

and at four-o'clock in the afternoon

(over)

In Medieval times drama was sponsored by the Church, providing pomp and pageantry for the celebration of a festival day, as well as giving a means of educating the people through the dramatization of a Bible story or a point of theological doctrine. By the Fifteenth Century, although the Church continued to keep a Motherly eye on the proceedings, the actual presentation of the plays had been taken over by the local guilds, each craft seeking to outdo the others in magnificence of presentation as well as in advertising the skills of its particular craft. In many Medieval cities the plays were gathered together and presented on a sequence of pageant wagons which could be drawn to various stations throughout the town, providing day-long entertainment for all.

In the complete Cycle of Mysteries from the City of York there were forty-eight playlets, commencing with the Creation, which was presented just as the dawn was breaking over the city walls, and extending through the entire Biblical narrative to the Last Judgment, which needed artificial light to display its full splendor after darkness fell.

Although the narrative was biblical, the performance was essentially Medieval. The actors were guildsmen speaking noisily in their daily language, playing proudly in their best clothes, acting broadly on stages of their own construction, and seeing no incongruity in the mixture of boisterous and profound elements that jostled each other as one gaily-colored pageant followed another.

The present plays concerning the traditional events surrounding the birth of Christ have been arranged from the plays of the Tile Thatchers, the Chandlers, and the Goldsmiths. The ancient stage directions indicate that music was an important part of the plays, and it is fitting that this production has its own musical adornment in which all present may participate.

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The tune of the following chorale (From Heaven High) being readily recognized, the audience is invited to join the singing, remaining seated.

Now let us all right merry be,
And, with the shepherds, go to see
God's own dear Son, within the stall;
His gift, bestowed upon us all.

The action of the plays has been prepared by members of Grade Seven, with a chorus from Grades Seven and Eight.