

A BACH NOEL

for S.A.T.B. voices, accompanied*

Arranged by
PATRICK M. LIEBERGEN

Cantata No. 208, Mvt. 9, Sheep May Safely Graze,
by JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750),
and a Traditional English Carol

Joyously and rhythmically (♩ = ca. 66-69)

ACCOMP. *mp*

3

5 UNISON VOICES *mp* 6

The first No -

7 ** el the an - gel did

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* Also available for S.A.B. voices, No. 11486, and 2-Part (Treble) voices, No. 11487.

** No breath.

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9 S. *unis.*
A. say was to cer - tain poor
T. *unis.*
B.

11
shep - herds in fields as they

13
lay; In _____ fields _____ where

14

15

they lay keep - ing their

17

sheep, on a cold win - ter's

19

night that was so

21

deep. No - el, sing No -

22 *mf* *unis. mf* Sing No - el, No -

23 *f* el, No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el, No -

25 *mp* el, born is the

11485

27

King of Is - ra -

29

mf

30

el. No el, sing No -

mf

sing No -

31

el, No el, No el, sing No -

f

el,

f

33 *ff* *f* *funis.*

el, born is the King of

35

Is - ra - el, the Lord, Em - man - u -

37 *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

el; the King of Is - ra -

mf *mp* Is - ra -

Is - ra -

(optional)

mf *mp* *poco rit.*

40 *a tempo*

el.
el.
el.

a tempo
(play)
(mp)

42

A Bach Noel is an anthem for Christmas or Epiphany. Suggested corresponding lectionary readings include Psalm 148, Isaiah 63: 7-9, Matthew 2: 1-23, Luke 2: 1-20, and Hebrews 2: 10-18. One basic homiletical theme is that the Child who is born in the Bethlehem stable is the Savior of ancient prophecy and the King of Israel.

This anthem ingeniously combines the popular traditional English carol **The First Noel** with an accompaniment modelled after the beloved ninth movement, commonly known as *Sheep May Safely Graze* (*Schafe können sicher weiden*) from Cantata No. 208, *Was mir behagt, ist die muntre Jagd*, by **Johann Sebastian Bach**. In rehearsal, strive for long, sustained phrases imbued with a joyous inner pulse. Instruct all voices to sing the melody in mm. 5-21 on "noo," pulsing a constant eighth note that is exactly aligned with the left hand of the accompaniment. As they do so, carefully shape the phrases dynamically, responding to their contours, and work to achieve a uniform choral tone throughout the vocal register. Teach the concept of the "choral breath" so that the long phrases (e.g., mm. 5-9) sound as if they are being sung in one breath when, in fact, each individual singer is breathing discreetly and imperceptibly, as necessary. Continue these techniques as the singers add the vocal parts as written. Add the text without sacrificing musical artistry.

Patrick M. Liebergen is Director of Choral Activities at the University of Wisconsin (Stout) and Director of the Chancel Choir at United Methodist Church, Menomonie, Wisconsin. With music degrees from St. Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin (Madison), and the University of Colorado (Boulder), Dr. Liebergen frequently appears throughout the country as an adjudicator and clinician. His choral editions, arrangements and original works are widely published. Dr. Liebergen was the 1988 winner of the Wisconsin Choral Directors Association Composition Competition and the 1990 winner of the Anthem Contest sponsored by the Twin Cities Church Musicians Association.

