

SILENT NIGHT

THE BIRTH OF A CAROL

A Musical for Young Voices

By Hal H. Hopson

Orchestrations by Scott Brasher

Performance Time: Approximately 17 minutes

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1 This symbol indicates a track number for the stereo accompaniment on the InstruTrax CD.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- Herr Franz Gruber:** Organist/Choirmaster of the church.
(Dressed in typical street clothes of the period.)
- Pastor Mohr:** Pastor of St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, Austria.
(Dressed as a minister or a priest with a clerical collar.)
- Hilda:** The devoted church cleaning lady.
(Dressed in peasant clothes with an apron, carrying a feather duster.)
- Karl:** The organ repairman.
(Dressed as a workman, wearing a belt around his waist from which several tools are hanging.)
- Hickory, Dickory, and Dock:** Three mice.
(Dressed in mouse costumes, complete with tails.)
- Chorus:** There are 19 speaking parts for chorus members. Speaking parts may be doubled up or divided depending on number of participants.
(Dressed in typical alpine dress.)

SETTING

The entire action takes place inside St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, Austria, in the Austrian Alps on Christmas Eve, 1818.

STORY

High up in the Austrian Alps, in the region known as Tyrol, “the land in the mountains,” we find the birthplace of “Silent Night, Holy Night.” First sung on Christmas Eve, 1818, the words were written by Joseph Mohr, pastor of St. Nicholas Church. Because of a breakdown of the organ, Franz Gruber, the organist of the church, was forced to prepare a different Christmas Eve service from the one that had been planned. The carol, “Silent, Night, Holy Night,” sung originally to the accompaniment of a guitar, was the result.

1. Church Bells

(Handbells)

1 20

Music by

HAL HOPSON

Slow and intense; from a distance (♩ = ca. 80)



The handbell parts may be omitted throughout or they may be played on choir chimes, tone bells, Orff instruments, a chime setting on the organ or other appropriate instrument.

The following "Antiphonal Gloria" should sound as if it is originating from a far distance, echoing from mountain peak to mountain peak. Some spatial separation of the two parts will contribute to the total effect, with Part 2 always softer than part 1. This is the sound of the children's choir caroling in the village.

2. Antiphonal Gloria

(Choir)

Words and Music by

HAL HOPSON

2 21

Slow and intense; from a distance (♩ = ca. 80)

Part I

Glo-ri-a! *pp* Glo-ri-a! in ex-cel-sis De - o.

Part II

Glo-ri-a! *pp* Glo-ri-a! in ex-cel-sis De - o.

Handbells

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Musical notation for 'Antiphonal Gloria' in 4/4 time. It features three staves: Part I (treble clef), Part II (treble clef), and Handbells (grand staff). Part I and Part II have lyrics: 'Glo-ri-a! in ex-cel-sis De - o.' The Handbells part consists of sustained notes with dynamic markings *p* and *pp*.

8

Glo-ri-a! Glo-ri-a! in ex-cel-sis De - o.

Glo-ri-a! Glo-ri-a! in ex-cel-sis De - o.

p *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

Continuation of the musical notation for 'Antiphonal Gloria'. It shows the same three staves (Part I, Part II, Handbells) with lyrics and dynamics. The Handbells part continues with *p* and *pp* markings.

(Hilda enters during the last four measures of “Antiphonal Gloria” and begins cleaning the church. Pastor Mohr enters a few seconds later.)

PASTOR MOHR: *(with excitement)* Oh, Hilda, I was hoping you were here!

HILDA: Yah Pastor, I am cleaning the church for the Christmas Eve service tonight.

PASTOR MOHR: I have something to show you.

HILDA: What is it?

PASTOR MOHR: It's the words to a new carol that I have just completed.

HILDA: I'd like to hear it.

PASTOR MOHR: All right, lend your ear. *(reading from a folded piece of scrap paper)*
 Silent Night, holy night,
 All is calm, all is bright,

KARL: *(frantically entering the church)* Pastor Mohr! Pastor Mohr!

PASTOR MOHR: What is it, Karl? What's the matter? You're frantic!

KARL: I've got some terrible news about the organ. There is no way I can repair it, at least not today. The mice have made a feast of the bellows. It's a horrible mess up there. *(pointing to the organ chamber)*

PASTOR MOHR: But the service tonight.

HILDA: *(with disappointment)* No organ for the Christmas Eve service?

KARL: I've done all I can do. It will be several weeks before I can get it repaired.

PASTOR MOHR: We must get word to Franz Gruber.

HILDA: He is somewhere in the village caroling with the children. I heard their singing a few minutes ago.

PASTOR MOHR: We must find him at once so that we can make other plans for the service tonight. *(pointing)* Karl, you go that way. Hilda, you go up the hill toward the castle, and I will go the village square.

HILDA and KARL: *(ad libbing as they leave)* Okay, we've got to find him. I wonder what Herr Gruber will do without the organ tonight. *etc.*

(Still holding the carol in his hands, Pastor Mohr stops momentarily, looks at the carol and stuffs it in his pocket.)

PASTOR MOHR: *(chuckling and muttering as he leaves)* Silent night, All is calm?

(The three mice enter quickly. Hickory enters ahead of the other two mice, surveys the territory, and yells in a loud whisper.)

HICKORY: It's clear! They're gone. Come on in. (to audience) Oh, Hi! Let me introduce the gang. I'm Hickory. This is Dickory (Dickory raises hand and greets audience) and there's Dock. (Dock waves to audience)

DICKORY: We are the friendly church mice, and we just love making our home here at St. Nicholas Church. At night we play hide and seek in the sacristy. And what joy it is to run and play in church and scare all the ladies on Sundays!

DOCK: Yeah, this church has some real shriekers.

DICKORY: Herr Franz Gruber is the organist here, and do we give him fits! We sleep in the organ pipes. They're so warm and cozy.

HICKORY: And we have been very successful in absolutely wrecking the sound of the organ.

DICKORY: (giggling) Some notes sound too long. Some squeak, some squawk...

HICKORY: And some don't sound at all.

DOCK: I just love the taste of wooden organ pipes. The bellows are most delicious, too.

ALL MICE: (rubbing stomachs) Yum! Yum! Yum!

3. Song of the Gleeeful Mice

(Mice Only)

Words and Music by
HAL HOPSON

3 **22** Spritely and playful (♩ = ca. 132) **3** Unis. *mf*

Come and play the or-gan, Mis-ter Gru - ber.

Piano *mf*

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All the old fa-mil-iar car-ols play. ——— It's Christ-mas Eve, the night for mer-ry mu - sic.

9 Faster (♩ = ca. 176)

4 **23**
Tempo I (♩ = ca. 132)

21

Come and play the or - gan, Mis - ter

As the mice scamper off, one mouse goes the wrong way, then frantically rejoins the other two. The Tyrolean Street Carol should begin just before the mice are out of sight.

4. Tyrolean Street Carol

(Choir)

Words and Music by

HAL HOPSON

Based on a Tyrolean Carol tune

Choir enters singing and dancing

6 **25** Strongly accented (♩ = ca. 138)

Piano *f*

mp *rit.* *f* *a tempo*

7 **26** (vs. 1)
8 **27** (vs. 2)

11 Slap thighs Clap hands
 All *f* Slap thighs Clap hands
 Slap thighs *p* *sfz*

11

16

f Unis.

1. Come sing, — be — mer — ry, let mu — sic fill the air; Come,
 2. Send forth — the — mu — sic to moun — tains high with snow; Then

16

dance on — this — joy — ful night; Throw a — way all care;
 e — cho — the — Christ — mas joy back to earth be — low.

20

24

Yo — del, yo — del, yo — del, yo — del ay; Yo — del, yo — del, yo — del, yo — del ay;

24

Christ — mas — is — com — ing, Sing “Yo — del, yo — del ay.” ay.” Yeah!

28

PASTOR MOHR: And I know that several of you play musical instruments.

SINGER #5: I can play the trumpet.

SINGER #6: I can play the trumpet too.

SINGER #7: I can play the flute.

SINGER #8: I'm no great virtuoso, but I also play the flute.

SINGER #9: The tuba is my instrument.

SINGER #10: I'm a tuba man, too. Count me in.

PASTOR MOHR: I can see a Christmas Eve Service in the making, complete with a Christmas band.

(Divide the children into three groups: trumpets, flute and tubas.)

5. The Christmas Band

(Choir)

Words and Music by
HAL HOPSON

9 28 vs. 1

10 29 vs. 2

With Spirit (♩ = ca. 132)

3 1st time, trumpets only
2nd time, flutes only
mf

Choir

Piano

1. We will play our trum-pets for the } Christ-mas mu - sic;
2. We will play our flutes _ for the }

7 Slower, with melodrama (Choir should sing these four measures through fake, mournful tears.)
mp All p

We will play our best for all to hear. O de - part - ed or - gan, rest in

mp p rit.

rit. **11** *Tempo I*
pp *mf*

peace. May you hear the songs we _ play. ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta

rit. *pp* *mf*

10

to beginning 2. Flutes only

ta ta ta ta ta ta ta loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo

15

21 *mf* vs. 3 vs. 4

loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo loo

19

1st time, tubas only
2nd time, all
mf

3. We will play our tu - bas for the
4. We will play to - geth - er for the

Christ - mas mu - sic; We will play our best for _ all to hear.

23

6. Herr Gruber's Carol

(Herr Gruber)

Words by JOSEPH MOHR
Music by FRANZ GRUBER
Arranged by HAL HOPSON

13

32

*May be sung with piano accompaniment or optional guitar with Herr Gruber miming the playing of the guitar.
Very slowly, with a musing quality

Herr Gruber

Hum

Piano*

pp

C Am C Em Dm G C

PASTOR MOHR: That's a lovely melody, Franz.

SINGER #14: I agree, Pastor. *(other children concur)*

SINGER #15: Quiet gang, let him finish. Shhhh.

HERR GRUBER: Let's see now. An F major chord will be just right to begin the next phrase.

14

33

(Hum)

F C F C

5

HERR GRUBER: *(musing)* On "heavenly peace" I can soar up to a high "F," then descend to the final cadence.

15

34

(Sing words this time.)

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.

G C C G C

slow arpeggio

9

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HERR GRUBER: I think I've got it.

SILENT NIGHT

(Introduction begins immediately. During the solo the children should show their approval and excitement for the new tune.)

7. Silent Night, Holy Night

16 35 Solo
17 36 Choir

Solo/Choir

Words by JOSEPH MOHR
Music by FRANZ GRUBER
Arranged by HAL HOPSON

Slowly, with much feeling (♩ = ca. 112)

3 1st time, Solo (Herr Gruber)
2nd time, All

p

Piano*

C

Si - lent night, Ho - ly night

p

R.H.

Red.

sim.

All is calm, all is bright, Round yon vir - gin

G C F

moth - er and child. Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly

C F C G

peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.

C G C

*May be accompanied by guitar alone.

SINGER #16: Herr Gruber, I think that is the most beautiful music that I have ever heard.

SINGER #17: It sounds just like Christmas.

PASTOR MOHR: Franz, you are a genius. It's truly beautiful.

KARL: It will be perfect for the service tonight.

HERR GRUBER: Gather 'round; let's all join in singing. *(with excitement, the children gather around Herr Gruber while two children hold the copy of the words up high for all to see.)*

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT (Repeat #7)
(All sing)

KARL: Pastor, you and Franz have written a carol that I know will be sung from our little village, eventually to the whole world.

HILDA: I agree, Karl. It's a jewel.

SINGER #18: And to think it was written right here in Oberndorf; right here in our own little church.

PASTOR MOHR: Friends, we have all added our own special gifts in preparation for the service tonight, and that's the best part of it all.

HERR GRUBER: Children, we must be on our way home right away so that we can be here on time tonight for the service.

PASTOR MOHR: You must be careful. The snow is deep out there.

SINGER #19: Come on, let's sing the new carol as we walk along.

HERR GRUBER: All together now...

(Herr Gruber conducts the first phrase. If desired, he may gesture to the audience to join the singing at this point. Above the singing, goodbyes are exchanged.)

8. Silent Night, Holy Night

(Choir and Congregation)

Words by JOSEPH MOHR

Music by FRANZ GRUBER

Arranged by HAL HOPSON

18

37

Slightly faster than before (♩ = ca. 120)

Optional
Handbells

Piano

mp

Unis. *mp*

Si - lent night,

ho - ly night,

All is calm,

all is bright,

Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child,

Ho - ly in - fant so

ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, _____

Sleep _____ in heav - en - ly peace. _____

10

13

(During the carol, the children, Karl and Hilda leave. Herr Gruber and Pastor Mohr busy themselves in preparing for the service by bringing out a music stand, adjusting the furniture, opening the Bible, etc. On the last line of the carol, they stop, listen intently to the music for a moment, shake hands, and pat each other on the back. Pastor Gruber takes the carol from his pocket, looks at it briefly, and they leave as the church bells toll.)

9. Church Bells

(Handbells)

Music by
HAL HOPSON

19 38
Slowly, played from a distance (♩ = ca. 80)

pp

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