

'Twas the Year Before Christmas

A Christmas Musical for Unison Voices

*Written and Arranged by
Ruth Elaine Schram and Scott Schram*

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Foreword

Throughout the ages, God has made promises to His faithful people through His Word. Today, we can look back and see how God fulfilled these promises. But, long ago, God's people had only His Word, and the faith to believe that God would do it.

One of His great promises was the coming of the Messiah, who would bring salvation to the world. *'Twas the Year Before Christmas* gives us a chance to step back in time. As we travel through history, we can be among the first to hear the glad news. Listen! God's promise of a Messiah is about to be fulfilled.

Appropriate for church children's choirs, Christian schools or Sunday schools, *'Twas the Year Before Christmas* features simple narration and dialog, and speaking roles for 10–12 people. Directors are encouraged to add dialog and characters as necessary. The choir may perform all of the songs, or some of the songs may be assigned to soloists or a few voices.

This Singer's Edition includes melody, lyrics, narration, dialog, and costuming, prop and staging suggestions, and is available in handy 5-packs. The Director's Score also includes a fully supportive keyboard accompaniment. An optional fully-orchestrated accompaniment/performance compact disc (CD) recording is available separately.

Cast of Characters, Props and Costumes

- **NARRATOR:** An adult or older child, dressed casually; narrations may be divided among several speakers.
- **CLOCK:** A child with arms outstretched depicting the hands of a clock and the passage of time; and/or wearing a poster board "clock face" atop a poster board "calendar." **Optional:** Clock may be a large prop with movable hands and the characters/events depicted at the various hours as time progresses. A child may move the hands of the clock to the next event as Narrator speaks.
- **ISAIAH:** optional, dressed in robes as an Old Testament prophet
- **GABRIEL:** dressed as an angel
- **ZECHARIAH:** dressed in robes as an old man, preferably with a white beard
- **ELIZABETH:** dressed in robes as an old woman, preferably with a head covering
- **MARY:** dressed in robes as a young woman, preferably with a head covering
- **JOSEPH:** dressed in robes as a middle-aged man
- **ANGELS:** preferably younger children
- **CHILDREN:** dressed in robes as young children in the temple, and/or children from the choir; speaking parts for 2 children are included, but additional children's speaking roles may be added at the director's discretion
- **OPTIONAL:** shepherds, worshippers, children delivering newspapers: other miscellaneous Bible characters

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OVERTURE

KEYBOARD

After the Overture, a ticking clock sound is heard (optional: high octaves on the piano). Clock stands at Center Stage with arms outstretched, depicting the moving hands of a clock ticking forward (clockwise) in time. As Narrator begins, the ticks slow to a stop, then begin to move backwards (counter-clockwise).

NARRATOR: Welcome, dear friends; come one and come all,
as we turn back the clock here in this hall.
(Clock hands move backwards.)
Together we'll watch the events unfold;
see the promise fulfilled that the prophets foretold.
(Clock may join choir or move to side of stage.)

Our story begins many, many years ago. *(pause)*
'Twas centuries before the very first Christmas,
long before the world had ever heard the name "Jesus."

These were times of great hardship. Some people lost hope and turned away from God. But many faithful people served the Lord and prayed for salvation. *(pause)* The Lord revealed to the prophet Isaiah that a Savior would come. Isaiah said:

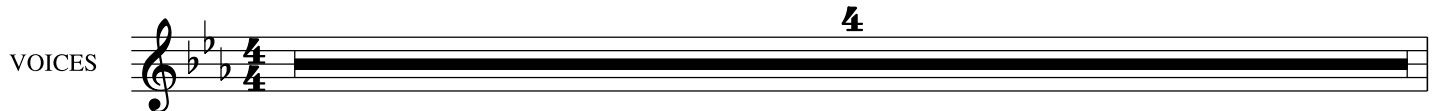
ISAIAH:
(OR NARRATOR) Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,
and shall call His name Emmanuel. *(Isaiah 7:14)*

I BELIEVE/HE WILL COME

ISAIAH/CHOIR

Words by **RUTH ELAINE SCHRAM**
and **SCOTT SCHRAM**

(♩ = ca. 88)



5 **I BELIEVE** (*Largo — Dvořák*)
mf ISAIAH (or Choir)

I be-lieve, I be-lieve God will send a Sav - ior; I be-lieve,

10 *poco rall.* 2

I be-lieve God will send His Son.

15 *a tempo* **17** HE IS BORN (18th c. French Carol)
CHOIR *mf*

He will come, our Em-man-u-el;

18

Till He comes, we are wait-ing faith-ful-ly. He will come, our Em-man-u-el;

20 **22**

We be-lieve He will come at last. Through long a-ges _ of the past,

23

proph-ets have fore-told His com-ing. Through long a-ges _ of the past,

25 **27**

We be-lieve He will come at last. He will come, our Em-man-u-el;

28

Till He comes, we are wait-ing faith-ful-ly. He will come, our Em-man-u-el;

30 *f*

We be-lieve He will come at last. We be-lieve He will come at last.