

The Little Christmas Play

Advent 1938

Dedicated 'For my children and their mother'

Cast

MARY	}	These characters should be played by children
JOSEPH		
ANGEL		
ANGEL CHILD		
YOUNG KING		
OLD SHEPHERD		

ST ANNA	}	These characters should be played by adults
MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS		
LORD OF THE MINERALS		

General Indications

JOSEPH, MARY, *the* ANGEL *and the* ANGEL CHILD *wear the usual costumes.*

The OLD SHEPHERD *wears furs. The* YOUNG KING *wears a red garment and a golden crown. ST ANNA, Mary's mother, should be dressed in violet. The* MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS *has a blue robe, the* LORD OF THE MINERALS *a brown one (he can wear a crown of mountain crystal).*

Everything is to be acted in such a way that the pictorial character comes out strongly.

The cast is therefore presented in such a way that an adult can always accompany the children. The songs are those of the Oberufer Christmas Plays with music by Leo van der Pals. The stage has in centre background a crib with straw. Some Christmas trees stand at the sides. The PLAYERS enter through the audience. First comes the MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS, then the ANGEL, the ANGEL CHILD, ST ANNA, MARY, JOSEPH, the SHEPHERD, the KING, and finally the LORD OF THE MINERALS.

PLAYERS [*sing*]: Bless, O Lord, the way we tread ...

[*PLAYERS mount the stage and arrange themselves in a semicircle.*]

ANGEL [*then comes forward*]:

When from Heaven falls the snow,
The Christ Child comes to us below,
And we all sing our known refrain,
Our heart is brightened once again.
All shining stars bring joy and fun,
Deep in our heart awakes the Sun.
And with all distances in sight
Day is changing into night.
Ah, such gladness we are beaming
With the light towards us streaming.
God's holy song does now resound,
Christmastide has come around.

[*ANGEL goes back into the circle.*]

MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS [*comes forward*]:

Today everyone wants to hear
In stillness and gladness
The song of the world,
All human beings,
All animals,
All flowers,
All stones.
All the stars are looking towards the Earth
And waiting for the love
Joyfully brought by man
Towards the Christ Child.
Therefore hear and see and marvel
In pictures now turning to speech,
How everything once came to pass
Which makes us rejoice today.
Make your eyes into bright stars,
And your heart into a Sun.

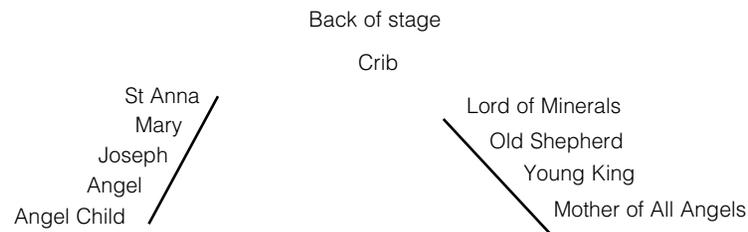
And your soul turns into Heaven
Where the lyre of our own Lord
Lets all the strings resound.

[*MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS goes back
into the circle of players.*]

PLAYERS [*form up, go around the stage and sing*]:

Great Caesar from his royal throne ...

[*The PLAYERS then stand in the
following manner.*]



[*ST ANNA comes forward with
JOSEPH and MARY.*]



ST ANNA [*to Mary*]: My dear child, Mary,
You go now to the distant town,
Caesar ordered you towards it,
My dear child, Mary.

[*to Joseph*]:

O good Joseph, guard her well,
The dear lady, your Mary,
And guide her over path and stone
With gentle care into Bethlehem.

[*ST ANNA draws back, JOSEPH
and MARY remain alone.*]

MARY: Dear Joseph, let us now set forth,
Take the staff into your hand,

That we journey with all others
Loyally to the distant land.
Take the ass too by its bridle,
That along with us it go.
All the hills are snowed with whiteness,
And the cold north wind does blow.

JOSEPH: Mary, dear lady,

The snow is falling thickly down.
I seek the path for you once more,
Mary, my dear lady.

[*They start walking.*]

The path leads on into the distance,
All the stars the sky do crown
And they point out to us the way
Which goes into the foreign town.

ANGEL CHILD [*steps forward*]:

Mary, give to me your hand.
I will lead you safely to the distant land.

[*The three of them walk once across
the stage and then remain standing
in the front right corner.*]

LORD OF THE MINERALS [*steps before them*]:

Here the path is closed,
Further you cannot go.
Yet remain undaunted!
Already you can see the town
Lying at your feet.

[*MARY, JOSEPH and the ANGEL CHILD
turn around in shock and go to the other
side of the stage.*]

LORD OF THE MINERALS [*follows them*]:

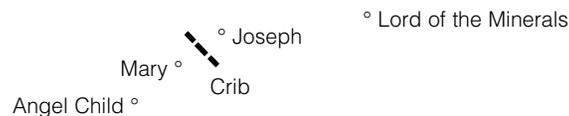
Now you are in the town,
But here there is no house
Having space and quietness.
You must go elsewhere.

MARY: Ah, dear lord, I am so tired!
 Give me just a little place,
 Where the world's most beautiful song
 May brighten in my heart.

JOSEPH: O dear lord, give us the space
 In which we now may rest,
 And in stillness dreaming
 Recover from our haste.

ANGEL CHILD: Help us, earthly lord so dear,
 For the path was truly hard!
*[The LORD OF THE MINERALS points her
 to the crib, leads her to it.]*

LORD OF THE MINERALS: Then go into this stall.
 It is the only space
 Wherein the Tree of Earth
 May reach into the All.
 The crib is fashioned from its wood.
 The floor from its roots,
 The roof from its leaves,
 And walls from its branches.
 And let there now appear its fruit!
*[The LORD OF THE MINERALS steps aside,
 behind Joseph. MARY sits down by the crib,
 on a stool. The ANGEL CHILD sits down
 beside Mary on the ground, arranged thus.]*



MARY: How lonely it is here!
 The world is all at rest.

JOSEPH: The clear stars in a dance
 Are opening the door.

MARY: I am no more than ear,
 Hearing the cosmic words.

JOSEPH: I feel myself in song,
 The light does now appear.

ANGEL CHILD: All the angels enter
 Here, into our stall.
*[ANGEL and MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS
 peacefully move into the centre of the stage.
 The MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS stands
 in such a way as to hide the crib, the
 ANGEL stands in front, beside Joseph.]*

ANGEL [sings]: From Heav'n above
 To Earth I bring ...
*[MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS
 goes behind the crib.]*

MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS [sings]:
 There is a flower springing,
 From tender roots it grows ...
*[Es ist ein' Ros entsprungen]
 [After a moment of quiet MARY
 lays the child into the crib.]*

MARY [sings]: Ah, Joseph mine,
 Why is this world so faithless grown ...

JOSEPH [sings]: O thou dearest Mario ...
*[MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS now goes to
 the OLD SHEPHERD and leads him into
 the centre of the stage.]*

MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS: My dear Gallus, now arise,
 And make your way to Bethlehem,
 To look upon the little child
 Bestowed on us by course of stars.

OLD SHEPHERD: Ah, dear Angel, come with me.
 Be my guide along the paths
 Leading to the little child.
 Upon me His blessing rests.
*[The MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS and the
 OLD SHEPHERD walk slowly round the stage]*

towards the crib. At the same time ST ANNA goes to the YOUNG KING and leads him to the middle of the stage.]

ST ANNA: The star is there!

Have you beheld it?

Bride and bridegroom are now changed.

The heavenly child is near!

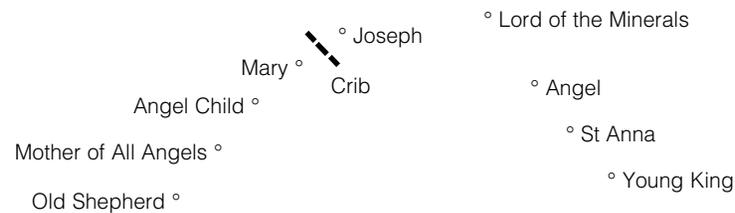
YOUNG KING: Blessed Anna, take now my hand

And lead me to that promised land.

I will journey with you

To the nourishment of all the world!

[The MOTHER OF ALL ANGELS with the OLD SHEPHERD, and ST ANNA with the YOUNG KING approach the crib from each side.]



ALL [kneeling before Mary and Joseph, sing]:

Before the crib we kneel

And Him we rock and swing ...

ANGEL [going to the centre]:

All who have received the Child

And have His carols sung

Are praised before God's throne.

Therefore we want again to sing

And in our heart there now shall ring

The sound of all the Christmas bells.

ALL PLAYERS [and where possible the audience, sing]:

A child is born in Bethlehem

This year ...

OLD SHEPHERD and YOUNG KING [go beside the Angel in the centre]:

We have greeted the little child

And now give thanks to our star.

OLD SHEPHERD: My heart is so clear in the light.

YOUNG KING: And my countenance shines so bright.

ANGEL: Now is the Earth redeemed.

ALL PLAYERS: [line up as at the beginning and pass through the midst of the audience, singing]:

Let all mankind rejoice this morn ...