

JCB1004

Josh Bauder

Bethlehem Down

SATB chorus & piano



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*“When He is King we will give Him the King’s gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
Beautiful robes,” said the young girl to Joseph,
Fair with her firstborn on Bethlehem Down.*

*Bethlehem Down is full of the starlight,
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.*

*When He is King, they will clothe Him in gravesheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary,
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.*

*Here He has peace and a short while for dreaming,
Close huddled oxen to keep Him from cold,
Mary for love, and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.*

Bruce Blunt (1899-1957)

The haunting imagery of Bruce Blunt’s 1927 poem “Bethlehem Down” revolves around Christ’s gifts at His birth. First we hear Mary’s voice, longing for the gifts that are fitting for a newborn king (myrrh, gold, beautiful robes). Then, in the anguished third verse, we are reminded of the gifts that He will someday receive at His passion (myrrh, wood, grave-sheets). The poem ends with a reflection on the short-lived gifts that the Child has in the manger: not gold and robes, nor cross and thorns, but peace for dreaming, the warmth of oxen, and the love of Mary. The spell of the shepherds’ lullabies momentarily relieves the world from the heartbreaking knowledge that tomorrow the Child must face the cross.

This setting, composed on Christmas Day 2010, was premiered by the St. Thomas Alumni Choir at its inaugural 2012 concert “How Great Our Joy” under the direction of Casey Johnson.



Josh Bauder (b. 1987) is a Minneapolis-based composer, arranger, typesetter, and educator. His choral music has been performed by church, university, and community choirs across the United States and abroad. He has composed two oratorios, *Abraham* (2014) and *Tyndale* (2017)—the latter serving as his PhD dissertation at the University of Minnesota. Winner of the 2010 Jerome Grant for New Music and the 2015 VocalEssence Carol Contest, Josh currently teaches music theory at the University of St. Thomas and the University of Northwestern – St. Paul. In his free time, Josh pursues interests in fiction, history, and architecture. He lives in St. Michael, Minnesota.

Bethlehem Down

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Bruce Blunt (1899-1957)

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Peacefully, $\text{♩} = 88$

p

poco rit. *a tempo*

Piano

with pedal

The piano introduction is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a *p* dynamic. The right hand features a melody of eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a *poco rit.* and *a tempo* marking, ending on a sustained chord.

A

8 *all women mp*

"When He is King we will give Him the King's gifts, Myrrh for its

p

This system contains the first line of the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts at measure 8 with a *mp* dynamic. The piano accompaniment is marked *p*. The lyrics are: "When He is King we will give Him the King's gifts, Myrrh for its".

15 *mf* *p*

sweet - ness, and gold for a crown, Beau - ti - ful robes," said the young girl to Jo-seph,

p

said the young girl to Jo-seph,

15

This system contains the second line of the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts at measure 15 with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a *p* dynamic. The piano accompaniment is marked *p*. The lyrics are: "sweet - ness, and gold for a crown, Beau - ti - ful robes," said the young girl to Jo-seph, said the young girl to Jo-seph,".

B

22 *mp* Fair with her first-born on Beth - le-hem Down. *p* Oo.

mp Fair with her first-born on Beth - le-hem Down. *p* Oo.

8 *mp* Fair with her first-born on Beth - le-hem Down. *mp* Beth - le hem Down is

mp Fair with her first-born on Beth - le-hem Down. *p* Oo.

22 Fair with her first-born on Beth - le-hem Down. Oo.

mp *p*

29 full of the star - light, Winds for the spi - ces, and stars for the gold,

29

35 *mf* *p* *mp*

Songs of a shep-herd by Beth - le -

mf *p* *mp*

Songs of a shep-herd by Beth - le -

f *mp* *mf*

8 Ma - ry for sleep, and for lul - la-by mu - sic Songs of a shep-herd by Beth - le -

mf *p* *mp*

35 Songs of a shep-herd by Beth - le -

rit.

42 hem fold. hem fold. hem fold. hem fold. Oo.

p no vib.

42 *mf* *rit.* *pp*

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63 *rit.* *no vib.*

Beth - le - hem, Beth - le - hem, Oo.

Beth - le - hem Down, on Beth - le - hem Down, on Beth - le - hem Down.

8 Beth, on Beth - le - hem Down, on Beth - le - hem Down, on Beth - le - hem Down.

Beth - le - hem, Beth - le - hem, Oo.

63 *rit.*

D

71 *p a tempo*

mp

Here He has peace and a short while for dream - ing, Close hud - dled o - xen to

8 *p*

Here He has peace and a short while for dream - ing, Close hud - dled o - xen to

p

Here He has peace and a short while for dream - ing, Close hud - dled o - xen to

71 *p a tempo* *mp*

77

f *mp* *rit.* *p*

Ma - ry for love, and for lul - la - by mu - sic

keep Him from cold, Ma - ry for love, and for lul - la - by mu - sic

8 keep Him from cold, Ma - ry for love, and for lul - la - by mu - sic

keep Him from cold, Ma - ry for love, and for lul - la - by mu - sic

77

f *mp* *rit.*

83

a tempo *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *rit.*

E

88 *p* *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo* *rit.* *pp*

Songs of a shep-herd by Beth - le - hem fold. Oo.

Songs of a shep-herd by Beth - le - hem fold. Oo.

88 *a tempo* *rit.* *p* *a tempo* *rit.* *pp*