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A Child Is Born in Bethlehem
SATB Choir, Descant, Organ, Assembly

Barney Walker



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A Child Is Born in Bethlehem

for Randall DeBruyn, friend and mentor

Based on *Puer natus in Bethlehem*;
translated by Owen Alstott

Barney Walker

INTRO With great freedom (♩ = ca. 108)

Organ *mp*

Ped.

The organ introduction consists of two staves. The right hand plays a series of chords and single notes in a descending sequence, while the left hand plays a similar pattern. The tempo is marked as 'ca. 108' and the dynamics as 'mp'. A pedal point is indicated at the bottom.

VERSE 1 Unison

Soprano *mp*

Alto

1. A child is born in Beth-le-hem, al-le-lu-ia! Re-joyce and sing, Je-ru-sa-lem,

Tenor

Bass *mp*

The verse begins with a unison vocal line for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are: "1. A child is born in Beth-le-hem, al-le-lu-ia! Re-joyce and sing, Je-ru-sa-lem,". The organ accompaniment is marked 'mp'.

1. al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia! Son of God and Prince of Peace.

1. O come, let us a-dore.

The second line of the verse continues the vocal line with the lyrics: "1. al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia! Son of God and Prince of Peace." The organ accompaniment continues with the same 'mp' dynamics. The third line of the score shows the organ accompaniment for the phrase "1. O come, let us a-dore." with a 'Ped.' marking.

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VERSE 2

mp

2. The vir - gin moth - er bore a son, al - le - lu - ia!

mp

2. A child di - vine yet with us one, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

2. Son of God and Prince of Peace.

2. O come, let us a - dore.

mp

Ped.

VERSE 3

mf

3. The an - gels sing to shep - herds near, al - le - lu - ia!

mf

3. The song that earth so longed to hear, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

3. Son of God and Prince of Peace. O come, let us a - dore.

mf

Ped.

VERSE 4

Descant *f*

4. Al - le, al - le - lu - ia.

f

4. Let trum - pet sound and cym - bals ring, al - le - lu - ia!

f

4. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

4. Let all on earth in glad - ness sing, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

4. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

4. Son of God and Prince of Peace. O come, let us a - dore.

NB

This system contains the first vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major with a key signature of one flat (F major) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line with a fermata over the final note of the first phrase. The piano accompaniment consists of block chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A large watermark 'PREVIEW' is overlaid on the score.

4. O come, let us a - dore.

Slower (♩ = ca. 72)
mp

rit. *mp*

This system contains the second vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Slower' with a quarter note equal to approximately 72 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked 'mp'. The piano accompaniment includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking and a crescendo hairpin. A large watermark 'PREVIEW' is overlaid on the score.

Composer Notes

This work, like its companion piece, “Behold, Before Our Wondering Eyes” (Edition 20062), is a mini-discourse on the history of chant. Verse 1 is an example of plain chant; verse 2 adds the interval of the fourth and the octave of parallel organum; verse 3 demonstrates triadic harmony with the addition of the third (*fauxbourdon*); and verse 4 is an example of free harmony, more prevalent in modern chant settings. The concluding few measures are an open fifth simplification of the contrary motion Renaissance fanfare used in the organ interludes of this piece.

Musicians approaching this piece should listen to the recording or other recordings of chant and attempt to duplicate the feel of the music. Chant is sung by phrase, not by meter; let the text be your guide.


—Barney Walker

Preview


Assembly Edition

A CHILD IS BORN IN BETHLEHEM


Barney Walker



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A child is born in Beth - le - hem, 2. The vir - gin moth - er bore a son, 3. The an - gels sing to shep - herds near, 4. Let trum - pet sound and cym - bals ring, 	}	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> al - le - lu - ia! 	}	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Re - joi - ce A child The song Let all
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. and sing Je - ru - sa - lem, 2. di - vine yet with us one, 3. that earth so longed to hear, 4. on earth in glad - ness sing, 	}	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
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1-4. Son of God and Prince of Peace. O come, let us a - dore.

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