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30149013 (PDF)

How Far Is It to Bethlehem?
Two-part Choir, Descant, Keyboard,
Solo Instruments I & II in C, Assembly

Arranged by Christopher Walker

CHORAL EXCELLENCE FOR TREBLE CHOIRS

 **JUBILATE
DEO**

How Far Is It to Bethlehem?

STOWEY

Arranged by

Christopher Walker

Text by

Frances Chesterton

How Far Is It to Bethlehem?

Frances Chesterton, 1869–1938

STOWEY, 11 11 11 11
 Traditional English melody
 Arranged by Christopher Walker

INTRO *Peacefully* (♩ = ca. 96)

Keyboard

p

VERSE 1

5

All *mp*

1. How — far is it to Beth — le-hem?

mp

9

Solo All

1. Not ver — y far. Shall — we find the sta — ble room lit by a

p *mp*

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14

1. star? Can we see the lit - tle child, is he with - in? If _

19

1. we lift the wood - en latch may we go in? *rit.*

VERSE 2

24

Melody *a tempo*

2. May _ we stroke the crea - tures there, ox, ass, or

Harmony *a tempo*

Note: Harmony may be doubled by Solo Instrument II.

28 *p*

2. sheep? May we peep like them and see Je - sus a - sleep? If

p

p

33 *cresc.* *mf* *mp*

2. we touch his ti - ny hand will he a - wake? Will he know we've

cresc. *mf* *mp*

cresc. *mf* *mp*

38

2. come so far just for his sake?

cresc.

VERSE 3

43 Descant *mf* *mp*

3. Great kings have pre - cious gifts, and we have naught, lit - tle smiles and

Melody *mf* *mp*

3. Great kings have pre - cious gifts, and we have naught, lit - tle smiles and

mf *mp*

Harmony

48

3. lit - tle tears are all we brought. For all wea - ry chil - dren

3. lit - tle tears are all we brought. For all wea - ry chil - dren

Note: Descant and Harmony may be doubled by Solo Instrument I & II, respectively.

53 *p*

3. Ma - ry must weep. Here, on his bed of straw sleep, chil - dren, sleep.

3. Ma - ry must weep. Here, on his bed of straw sleep, chil - dren, sleep.

p

59 *mp*

3. God in his moth-er's arms, babes in the byre,

3. God in his moth-er's arms, babes in the byre,

mp

poco cresc. *mp*

65

3. sleep, as they sleep who find their heart's de - sire. Ah,

3. sleep, as they sleep who find their heart's de - sire. Sleep, as they

3. Ah,

pp

Solo mp

70

3. ah, ah, their heart's de - sire.

3. sleep who find their heart's de - sire, their heart's de - sire.

3. ah, ah, *p rit.*

All p rit.

p rit. e dim.

pp

How Far Is It to Bethlehem?

SOLO INSTRUMENT I & II in C

STOWEY
Traditional English melody
Arranged by Christopher Walker

INTRO *Peacefully* (♩ = ca. 96) VERSE 1

I
II

6 16 *rit.* *a tempo*

6 16 *rit.* *a tempo*
mp

VERSE 2

25 II

p

30

cresc. *mf*

36

mp 2

VERSE 3

43 I

I
II

mf *mp* *mf* *mp*

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Note: Solo Instrument II doubles vocal Harmony for Verses 2 and 3.
Solo Instrument I doubles vocal Descant for Verse 3.

48

Musical notation for measures 48-53. Treble and bass staves with notes and rests.

54

Musical notation for measures 54-60. Treble and bass staves with notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Includes a double bar line with a '2' above and below it.

61

Musical notation for measures 61-67. Treble and bass staves with notes and rests.

68

Musical notation for measures 68-73. Treble and bass staves with notes, rests, and dynamic markings including *pp*, *p*, *rit.*, and *dim.*

Preview

Composer Notes

Frances Chesterton was a writer, like her husband G. K. Chesterton. For many years she wrote the poems for their Christmas cards. She wrote this one before the end of the First World War in 1917. She also wrote the poem “Here Is the Little Door,” for which Herbert Howells wrote a poignant choral setting.

The hymn tune STOWEY is a folksong from Somerset, England. The original lyrics, “Sweet England,” told the story about a young girl who migrated to America; in each verse she gets more and more homesick for the country she left behind.

When performing this piece, the descant and harmony parts may be sung, played on instruments, or both. The arrangement also succeeds as a unison carol. Keep the accompaniment flowing gently, supporting the voices as they tell the story.

—*Christopher Walker*

Preview

Assembly Edition

HOW FAR IS IT TO BETHLEHEM?

STOWEY
Arr. by Christopher Walker

1. How far is it to Beth - le - hem?
2. May we stroke the crea - tures there,
3. Great kings have pre - cious gifts,

1. Not ver - y far. Shall we find the
2. ox, ass, or sheep? May we peep like
3. and we have naught; lit - tle smiles and

1. sta - ble room lit by a star? Can we see the
2. them and see Je - sus a - sleep? If we touch his
3. lit - tle tears are all we brought. For all wea - ry

1. lit - tle child, is he with - in? If we lift the
2. ti - ny hand, will he a - wake? Will he know we've
3. chil - dren Ma - ry must weep. Here, on his

1, 2

1. wood - en latch may we go in?
2. come so far just for his sake?
3. bed of straw, sleep, chil - dren,

3

2

3. sleep. God in his moth - er's arms, babes in the

3. byre, sleep, as they sleep who find their heart's de - sire.

Text: 11 11 11 11; Frances Chesterton, 1869-1938. Music: Trad. English melody.
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