

COMFORT AND JOY

DECEMBER 11, 2023

EDITS TO FOLLOW

The center of stage is a blue-lit snow scene with a Nativity creche in the distance (stage right). A similar distant "north Pole" scene is at stage left. (Both are very distant)

On either side (short platforms) we find 2 rocking chairs

Entrance of the players

All: It's the most *wonderful time of the year*.

With the kids jingle belling,
and everyone telling you,
"Be of good cheer,"

It's the most wonderful time of the year.

It's the happiest season of all
With those holiday greetings and gay happy meetings
When friends come to call
It's the hap-happiest season of all
There'll be parties for hosting,
marshmallows for toasting and
caroling out in the snow.
there'll be scary ghost stories and
tales of the glories of Christmases
long, long ago.

It's the most wonderful time of the year.
There'll be much mistletoeing
and hearts will be glowing,
when loved ones are near.
It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Haul out the holly;
Put up the tree before my spirit falls again.
Fill up the stocking,
I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now.

For we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute,
Candles in the window,
Carols at the spinet.

Yes, we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute.
It hasn't snowed a single flurry,
But Santa, dear, were in a hurry;
So climb down the chimney;
Turn on the brightest string of lights I've ever seen.
Slice up the fruitcake;
It's time we hung some tinsel on that evergreen bough.
For we need a little Christmas right this very minute
Need a little Christmas now

After the cast leaves center stage, we see two gentlemen approaching the stage . A nurse sees them from stage right.

(Sides are dark.....Stage right: 2 red rockers with Mary and Joseph) Stage left 2 red rockers with Santa and Mrs Claus)

MARK: (a reporter.....with his notebook ready)This is the place, Bob! I hope they know we are coming. This could be a great story.

ROBERT: Retirement communities are always happy to have visitors.

FOTEINI: (greeting them) You must be the reporters from the Times. We are happy to welcome you.

MARK: It is not every day that the Christmas story can be told this way.

ROBERT: I speak several languagesjust in case you have residents who need translation.

FOTEINI: I'd like to think that at Christmas we all speak the same language....pure JOY!

ALIAH: (enters from stage left...approaches the group) It is good to welcome you, gentlemen. You are right on time to see the final rehearsal of the Christmas pageant. The children have practiced very hard and are excited to meet our residents.

FOTEINI: We should get everyone in place before it is show time. You know that the Clauses especially go to bed very early.

ROBERT: I find it hard to believe that Santa Claus and his wife are here in the same place as Mary and Joseph.

MARK: Nothing surprises me these days.

The group moves over as the curtain opens to reveal the snow scene.

(Foteini goes to get Mary and Joseph...A LITTLE LATER Aliah get Nick and Carol... and puts them in place as the dance ends)

DANCE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

FOTEINI: (easing Mary into her rocker) Come, dear. Just a few more steps.

GRACE: (sits as Foteini adjusts her shawl) Thank you, my dear. I'm glad I had that nap before the children arrive.

DAMIAN: (follow her, secures his cane) Well, my dear. I am so happy that we are well this Christmas and can celebrate our Son's birthday.

GRACE: This is actually a nice place to be.....great care, good food ,,,and the activities are terrific! Carol Claus and I were sharing memories after our physical therapy yesterday.

DAMIAN: Her husband, Nick, seems like a nice enough chap. I might be able to use some of carpentry skills the next time he is making toys.
(Nick and Carol make their way to the rockers.....quietly.....)

GRACE: You are retired, Joseph. Remember? You don't need to work. Sit back and enjoy the peace.

FOTEINI (enters from stage right) I'm glad to see that you are settled. We will be bringing your snack soon....but in a very special way.

DAMIAN: I sure hope it's something hot and creamy....like hot chocolate!

TAP HOT CHOCOLATE

(At the end of the dance, the two are given mugs of beverage as a small group of angels move into the scene. They surround the stage right platform)

ROBERT: One language I do not speak is ANGEL. Why do you suppose these cherubs are here?

MARK: I have no idea, but they look right at home.

FOTEINI: Joseph, I hope that you finished those little gifts you were whittling. The choir has arrived and I know that you like to give them little gifts.

(Lights up on center as Joyful Noise enters)

EMMANUEL
Emmanuel, a Child is born

Sing glory unto God on high
Joy to all the world this night
And to all people peace

Verse 1

Remember Him, oh little star
Remember Him and shine
Around the world in every heart

Verse 2

On this holy night, lead us to his light
Remember Him, the angels sing
And do not be afraid
Love has overcome
Behold the Son

(During the song, Joseph begins to nod off)

GRACE; Joseph, you really need to stay awake. The children have come to sing for us of our Son's birth!

MARK: I won't add that in my story.

ROBERT: Looking at the group, I honestly feel I may be needed to translate.

FOTEINI": Don't worry. Merry Christmas is the same in every language.

A MERRY MERRY CHRISTMAS

Merry, merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas to you
May each day be very very happy all the year through
Around the world you'll see the things
The Christmas spirit can do
Bells will be ringing with everyone singing
A merry Christmas to you
Joyeaux noel, buono natale Feliz Navidad
In every land there' a way
Of saying what we want to say
A merry Christmas a merry Christmas
a merry Christmas to you

(As the children leave, lights up on Mary and Joseph....and Carol and Nick. They wave to each other)

WESLEY enters.....energetically. (looks at Joseph) There's no time to rest, Joseph! Keeping those joints active is part of the program..

(looks at Nick) Glad you could join us, Nick. We missed you at morning work-out

EMMANUEL EXERCISE ROUTINE

At the end of the dance, lights dim slightly....curtain closes....spotlights on Mary and Joseph. A group of shepherds enter the scene))

GRACE: (in reverie) Just the other day, Carol Claus and I were thinking back on what makes Christmas so special. For her...it was always about the elves, gifts, reindeer... and that special man of hers! It was always about JOY.....red and green.....fun....children....JOY!

DAMIAN: Our Christmas story was always filled with joy as well! (He ponders) This year may be a little different in Bethlehem. I've been hearing some troubling reports that me sad,

GRACE: That's what I've been thinking, Joseph. This year, I really believe that we need to remember the word COMFORT.

FOTEINI: (overhearing) Did you call?

GRACE: No, dear...although your name is so appropriate for this place. I was just telling Joseph that we need to retell the Nativity story stressing COMFORT. Our Son was sent to comfort the poor, give hope to the world...ease suffering.
(Lights go down lower on them as the curtain opens....blue lights)

ALIAH: (from stage left where she is tending to the Claus couple)...to the reporter) This could be a very different look at Christmas...a time to comfort the hurting world... once again

DAMIAN: (to Grace) You were so young then, Mary....a teenager

GRACE: Yes, I was. (looks wistfully) . It was a quiet time and I was at prayer. (to Joseph). We were engaged at that time. What a fright when that angel came to my room! He said very simply: Hail, favored one! God is very pleased with you” The angel continued and said

“Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

FOTEINI: (wrapt in the moment) What did you say?

GRACE: I was terrified! But then the words just came “I am the Lord’s servant,” “May your word to me be fulfilled.” (pause) Then the angel left.

DAMIAN: What I remember best was

In those days, there went forth from Caesar Augustus a decree that the whole world should be taxed. Everyone went to register each to his own town. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth to Bethlehem along with Mary, his young wife, who was soon to have a child.

FOTEINI:

■ And while they were in Bethlehem, the time arrived for the Child to be born. She gave birth to her first born Son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

(Both Mary and Joseph appear to be dreaming. Foteini covers them with shawl))
(From the stage left area)

ROBERT: Those words could have been in Hebrew, Latin, Aramaic.....
(Mark keeps writing)

ALIAH: No translations needed if we just stay still....listen...and take comfort.

NATIVITY DANCE GABRIELS OBOE

PIANO INTERLUDE O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,

o come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold Him Born the King of angels;

□ come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,

o come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;

Glory to God, Glory in the highest;

o come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him

(After curtains close on Nativity, lights up on both sides.....two well-known couples)

(GERARD and JEREMY are sitting as if visiting Nick.)

GERARD: So, Nick, any time you want to take off, just tell me. The old sleigh isn't what she used to be, but I have a bright red Range Rover that might do the trick!

JOSEPH: Ho, ho, ho.....Did you really think we could pull off all those deliveries like we used to do?

JEREMY: You could do anything, Santa.....this is your time!

JOSEPH: But I am retired.....collecting pension...Social Security...

CAROL: And he is going nowhere this Christmas...except staying right where it is warm and safe. He can dream...and remember all those chimneys...all those cookies.....and happy kids.

GERARD: (whispers to Nick) Actually, Nick, we were hoping that you could help us with a little problem. It seems that there is a wide gap between the COMFORT that the Christmas story should bring...and the JOY that is what we see at the North Pole.

JEREMY: You see, Nick....the world is complicated.....so many people who simply don't get along.....who are afraid of each other.....arguing.....

CAROL: There are so many nationalities, beliefs, values.....People seem to be afraid to make something beautiful of their differences.

(Lights fade at the side and come up on center where a small group of street dancers perform_

DANCE JAZZ O COME EMMANUEL

(At end of dance, curtain closes briefly)

(Spot on Mary and Joseph....and across at Nick and Carol)

ALIAH: (To Mark and Robert) I really think that these two couples hold the secret to the real Christmas.

MARK: What do you mean?

NICK: Brotherhood, man! Sisterhood! Getting along! Listening to each other!

CAROL: The story of Mary and Joseph on Bethlehem was thousands of years ago far, far away

GRACE: The story that Nick and Carol created each year is JOY that can only be seen through the eyes of children...those who ask for nothing but love...peace...and safety.

DAMIAN: We need to unite in prayer before this happens.

(Curtain opens slowly to reveal several children dressed in white against the blue sky)

THE PRAYER

I pray you'll be our eyes
I pray we'll find your light
And hold it in our hearts
When stars go out each night
Let this be our prayer
When shadows fill our day
Lead us to a place
Guide us with your grace
Give us faith so we'll be safe

(We ask that life be kind
(And watch us from above)

BLACKOUT

Music starts immediately after blackout...as carolers enter

WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Haul out the holly;
Put up the tree before my spirit falls again.
Fill up the stocking,
I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now.

For we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute,
Candles in the window,
Carols at the spinet.
Yes, we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute.
It hasn't snowed a single flurry,
But Santa, dear, were in a hurry;
So climb down the chimney;
Turn on the brightest string of lights I've ever seen.
Slice up the fruitcake;
It's time we hung some tinsel on that evergreen bough.
For we need a little Christmas right this very minute
Need a little Christmas now

There'll be much mistletoeing
and hearts will be glowing,
when loved ones are near.
It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Sleigh bells ring
Are you listening
In the lane
Snow is glistening
A beautiful sight
We're happy tonight
Walking in a winter wonderland
Gone away is the bluebird
Here to stay is a new bird
He sings a love song
As we go along
Walking in a winter wonderland
In the meadow we can build a snowman
Then pretend that he is Parson Brown
He'll say: are you married?
We'll say: no man
But you can do the job
When you're in town
Later o we'll conspire as we dream by the fire
To face unafraid the plans that we've made
Walking in a winter wonderland.

(As the carolers depart, light up on the Claus set)

GERARD: I am so glad I found that old album, Nick. I knew you would get a kick of how you looked on those special nights.

JOSEPH (stroking his beard) I was a handsome devil then, wasn't I, Carol?

ZOEY: (looking at the pictures).....Red was always your color, dear! (She looks closely) Here is my favorite...when you got that new leather bag! (She sits back and muses)

JOSEPH; How special it was that Cement Moore wrote that special poem...all about me!

ZOEY: (reading from the book....looking lovingly at Nick))

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow; (she gets teary)

GERARD: He had a broad face and a little round belly,

That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

JOSEPH: Wait...wait..it is not all about me...It is for the children:
(FADE TO CENTER)

HAMPTONES:

Tonight our love comes wrapped in ribbons
The world is right and hopes are high
And from a dark and frosted window
A child appears to search the sky

Because it's Christmas, because it's Christmas
Tonight belongs to all the children, tonight their joy rings through the air
And so we send our tender blessings to all the children everywhere
To see the smiles and hear the laughter, a time to give, a time to share

Because it's Christmas for now and forever
For all of the children and for the children in us all
Tonight belongs to all the children, tonight their joy rings through the air
And so we send our tender blessings to all the children everywhere
To see the smiles and hear the laughter, a time to give, a time to share

Because it's Christmas for now and forever
For all of the children and for the children in us all

WE ARE SANTA'S ELVES

Ho ho ho
Ho ho ho
We are Santa's elves

We are Santa's elves
Filling Santa's shelves
With a toy for each girl and boy
Oh, we are Santa's elves

We work hard all day
But our work is play
Dolls we try out, see if they cry out
We are Santa's elves

We've a special job each year
We don't like to brag
Christmas Eve we always fill Santa's bag

Santa knows who's good
Do the things you should
And we bet you, he won't forget you
We are Santa's elves

We've a special job each year
We don't like to brag
Christmas Eve we always fill Santa's bag

Santa knows who's good
Do the things you should
And we bet you, he won't forget you
We are Santa's elves

Ho ho ho
Ho ho ho
We are Santa's elves, ho ho!

DANCE
SANTAS
ROCKETTES

At end of scene, entire cast assembles.
Mary, Joseph, angels stage right
Mr and Mrs Claus , elves stage right
International center

AS THE MUSIC ENDS....on Merry Christmas to you!.....everyone freezes
on stage.....lights dim as international kids ...Prayer chorus
and Nativity move into place.....
LIGHTS BACK UP ON MARY AND JOSEPH AND FOTEINI (Lucas and Mia
stand behind them)

GRACE (Foteini helps her get up.....Damian struggles to stand)....This has been quite an adventure, Comfort! I do think that the Christmas message is clear. Joseph and I know the COMFORT that the world needs is right here in this place.. The joy of Jesus' birth is just the beginning.

DAMIAN: Nick and Carol Claus feel the same way, Mary. They are sending sleighs full of toys and goodies to needy children everywhere.....

FOTEINI and ALIAH: (Move to the center) In the true spirit of COMFORT...AND JOY.....we remind you that bridge between the two can only be crossed if we all...each one of us....work hard to bring peace on earth

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be
With God as our father
Brothers all are we
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow
To take each moment
And live each moment
To take each moment
And live each moment
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

I pray you'll be our eyes I pray we'll find your light
And hold it in our hearts
When stars go out each night
Let this be our prayer
When shadows fill our day
Lead us to a place
Guide us with your grace
Give us faith so we'll be safe

