

HARK THE ANGEL SANG OFF KEY

by Ann W. Yeager



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Christian Publishers. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Christian Publishers. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Christian Publishers.

Hark the Angel Sang Off-Key

A Children's Musical for Christmas

by Ann W. Yeager

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HARK

A small angel

GABRIEL

The archangel

HARMONIOUS

Director of the angel choir (a bit pompous)

ANGEL 1

ANGEL 2

ANGEL 3

ANGEL 4

ANGEL 5

ANGEL EXTRAS

(The choir may be as large as you wish.

Optional parts are included for ANGELS 6-11.)

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play offers a good deal of freedom for the director in terms of number of players, size of stage area, use of hand props, etc. The part of Harmonious may be played by either a girl or boy; in the case of the former, "ma'am" should be substituted for "sir" in all conversations. Hark may also be played by either a boy or a girl

Props may vary, depending on whether option B is used in Scene 2. Props for option B include marbles, a ball, a teddy bear, and books. Paper copies of Harmonious' new anthem (some handwritten musical notes and words) will also be needed for that scene. A music stand and baton will be needed for Harmonious in Scenes 1 and 2. For Scene 3, a small box or crate can be covered with white poster board clouds for Hark to sit on, and a blanket-wrapped doll may be used for the baby Jesus.

If used, scenery can be very simple: a tri-fold backdrop (of cardboard, lattice work, or any other sturdy material) covered with dark blue paper is easiest. If the effect of stars is desired for the last scene, white miniature Christmas tree lights may be inserted through the paper in random patterns and then plugged in prior to the song "Glory to God." A manger is needed for the last scene.

Costumes for the angels are left to the discretion of the director.

Between scenes, the accompanist may play a verse or two of familiar Christmas carols.

When Hark sings off-key, the tune should be as close to the original as possible, but sung several pitches higher or lower than the rest of the singers.

SONGS
(in order of appearance)

- 1. Sing Praise to God**
- 2. What Shall We Bring?**
- 3. Glory to God**
- 4. I'm Out of Tune**
- 5. Glory to God (Reprise)**
- 6. Angel's Lullaby**

1 **SCENE 1**

2 **Angel choir rehearsal**

3

4 *(CHOIR files On-stage, takes places, and begins singing.*

5 *HARK runs in late, pushing his/her way into the choir.)*

6 **SONG: “Sing Praise to God”**

7 **ANGELS:** *(Singing)*

8 Sing praise to God and bless his holy name,

9 For great are his works in heaven and on earth.

10 Sing praise to God, alleluia.

11

12 **HARMONIOUS:** Stop! Stop! What is going on?

13 **ANGEL 1:** It’s just Hark again.

14 **HARMONIOUS:** All right, Hark, what do you have to say for
15 yourself *this* time?

16 **HARK:** *(Steps forward.)* I’m sorry sir. I just stopped to talk to
17 Gabriel for a minute, and I forgot the time.

18 **HARMONIOUS:** And what topic of conversation could
19 possibly be more important than this rehearsal?

20 **HARK:** Oh, sir, haven’t you heard the news? God is going to
21 send his Son down to earth!

22 **HARMONIOUS:** Now why in the universe would he do that?
23 The earth is full of selfish, mean-spirited, hard-headed
24 people — not the right sort of place for God’s Son.

25 **HARK:** That’s just it, sir. He is going to live right in the
26 middle of those people and teach them about God’s love.
27 He’s even going to be born on earth, just like a human!

28 **HARMONIOUS:** Well ... that *is* news. I guess I will excuse
29 your lateness this time, Hark. Just don’t let it happen
30 again. Now, get back to your place, and let’s try this
31 chorus again. *(“Sing Praise to God” begins again with one*
32 *voice noticeably off-key and, as HARMONIOUS visibly reacts,*
33 *GABRIEL enters.)*

34 **GABRIEL:** Sorry to interrupt, Harmonious, but I have some
35 important news for you.

1 HARMONIOUS: Hark already told me that God is sending his
2 Son to earth.

3 GABRIEL: Well, that's only part of the news. We are the ones
4 who will announce his coming to the people on earth,
5 and you must write a special song for your angel choir
6 to sing. We haven't much time.

7 HARMONIOUS: Me? I am to write the song? Oh, yes, yes, I'll
8 do it right away!

9 ANGEL 1: Who will hear the news first?

10 ANGEL 2: The kings and nobles of earth, of course.

11 ANGEL 3: No, I think it will be the priests.

12 GABRIEL: You're both wrong. You will carry the news to the
13 lowly people on earth, for God's Son will not be born in
14 a palace but in a stable in Bethlehem, for he will bring
15 God's love to all people.

16 HARMONIOUS: (*Excited*) I *must* start on our song. First
17 rehearsal will be tomorrow afternoon. And whoever was
18 singing out of tune had better put in extra practice. Choir
19 dismissed! (*All exit except HARK and ANGEL 1.*)

20 ANGEL 1: What is the matter with your voice? You weren't
21 anywhere *near* the right notes!

22 HARK: I don't know! I thought I was singing the same thing
23 as everyone else. I'll practice real hard tonight, and
24 maybe it'll be OK tomorrow.

25 ANGEL 1: I sure hope so! (*They exit.*)

26

27 SCENE 2

28 The next afternoon in the choir room

29

30 (*The ANGELS enter singly for option A or in small groups,*
31 *occupying themselves with various activities such as marbles,*
32 *tossing a ball, and reading books, as indicated in the spoken*
33 *lines for option B. When all have arrived, the conversation*
34 *begins.*)

35 ANGEL 2: His name is going to be Jesus.

1 ANGEL 3: Just think — he's going to be born in a stable. I
2 bet it will be cold.

3 ANGEL 4: And smelly, with all those animals.

4 ANGEL 5: Do you think we should give him some presents?
5 (*For a small group of children use option A, for a larger group,*
6 *option B.*)

7

8 * * * * *

9

10 OPTION A

11 ANGEL 2: What kind of presents could *we* give the Son of
12 God?

13 ANGEL 5: I don't know. It was just a thought.

14

15 * * * * *

16

17 OPTION B

18 ANGEL 6: Sure! How about some marbles like these?

19 ANGEL 7: Don't be silly! He might swallow them.

20 ANGEL 8: Maybe he'd like a ball.

21 ANGEL 9: He's just a baby. He can't play with things like
22 that.

23 ANGEL 10: I think he'd like a teddy bear.

24 ANGEL 11: Me, too. I really love mine!

25

26 * * * * *

27

28 *SONG: "What Shall We Bring?"*

29 ANGEL 2: (*Singing*)

30 What shall we bring for the newborn King?

31 What sort of gift would he treasure?

32 A book ...

33 ANGEL 8: Or a ball ...

34 ANGEL 10: Or a soft brown bear?

35 ANGEL 2: What gift would bring him most pleasure?

- 1 **ALL ANGELS:** Son of God, come to earth,
 2 We want to celebrate your holy birth.
 3 Big balloons and ribbons bright,
 4 Should we bring these on this special night?
 5 What shall we bring for the newborn King?
 6 What gift would please from the start?
- 7 **ANGEL 1:** I think the one that would give him most joy
 8 Is the gift that comes from the heart.
 9 *(ANGELS look at each other and shrug, questioning.)*
- 10 **ALL ANGELS:** Son of God, come to earth,
 11 We want to celebrate your holy birth.
 12 Big balloons and ribbons bright,
 13 Should we bring these on this special night?
 14 What shall we bring for the newborn King?
 15 What gift would please from the start?
 16 We know the one that would give him most joy
 17 Is the gift that comes from the heart.
 18 The gift that comes from the heart!
- 19
- 20 **ANGEL 1:** I have an idea. What if we sang a special lullaby
 21 just for him? I bet he would like that. Maybe Harmonious
 22 would help us write it, and we could practice tonight. *(All*
 23 *agree. HARMONIOUS enters carrying music. HARK ducks*
 24 *behind him/her.)*
- 25 **HARMONIOUS:** OK, places, choir. *(They scramble into position.)*
 26 Here's the music. *(Passes out copies.)* Now, we'll hear it
 27 once, and then we'll try it. *(The accompanist plays first eight*
 28 *bars without the introduction.)* Is everyone ready? *(The*
 29 *CHOIR sings the song. One voice is still out of tune.)*
- 30 **SONG:** "Glory to God"
- 31 **ANGELS:** *(Singing)*
 32 Glory to God, glory to God,
 33 Glory to God in the highest!
 34 Glory to God, glory to God,
 35 Glory to God in the highest!

1 And on earth peace to men of good will.

2 And on earth peace to men of good will.

3 Glory to God, glory to God,

4 Glory to God in the highest!

5 Glory to God, glory to God,

6 Glory to God in the highest!

7 **HARMONIOUS:** No, no, no! That's not the way I wrote it! Try

8 again. *(Repeat first ten bars of song only. As they sing,*

9 **HARMONIOUS** moves from angel to angel, listening, until he

10 comes to **HARK**.)

11 **ALL ANGELS:** *(Singing)*

12 Glory to God, glory to God,

13 Glory to God in the highest!

14 Glory to God, glory to God,

15 Glory to God in the highest!

16

17 **HARMONIOUS:** Stop! Stop! I might have known! No more

18 kidding around now. Sing this song properly.

19 **HARK:** I'm trying to, sir, really I am. The notes just won't

20 come out right.

21 **HARMONIOUS:** Well, you'd better find out what your

22 problem is and get it corrected, or you won't be able to

23 sing with us tomorrow night.

24 **HARK:** Yes, sir. *(Exits sadly. Lights dim. Clear stage.)*

25

26 **SCENE 3**

27 The next day in an empty street

28

29 *(HARK sits alone. He/she sings.)*

30 **SONG:** "I'm Out of Tune"

31 **HARK:** *(Singing)*

32 Here I sit, by myself, like a broken toy on the shelf.

33 Nothing seems to work right today.

34 When my friends ask, "Why?"

35 I just don't know what to say.

1 Why me? Why now?
 2 I would like to understand somehow.
 3 Can someone help me? Oh, please, make it soon.
 4 I'm out of sorts
 5 'Cause I'm out of tune!
 6
 7 All alone, feeling blue, wishing that I knew what to do.
 8 I want to join the heav'nly throng,
 9 And sing with all my heart the joyful welcoming song.
 10 Why me? Why now?
 11 I would like to understand somehow.
 12 Can someone help me? Oh, please, make it soon.
 13 I'm out of sorts, and I'm out of step,
 14 'Cause I'm out of tune.
 15 I'm out of tune!

16
 17 (*GABRIEL approaches.*)
 18 GABRIEL: Why are you looking so sad, Hark? This is
 19 supposed to be a joyful day.
 20 HARK: Oh, Gabriel, something terrible has happened! Every
 21 time I try to sing, it sounds off-key, and if it doesn't get
 22 better, Harmonious says I can't go with the choir tonight.
 23 I *can't* miss the big announcement! And I really do want
 24 to sing for the baby Jesus!
 25 GABRIEL: Has this ever happened before?
 26 HARK: No.
 27 GABRIEL: How does your throat feel?
 28 HARK: It feels the same as always.
 29 GABRIEL: Sing something for me. (*HARK stands and sings the*
 30 *first verse of "Angel's Lullaby," unaccompanied.*)
 31 HARK: (*Singing*)
 32 Stars are shining all around,
 33 Animals watch without a sound,
 34 And in the dark their vigil keep,
 35 For here in the stable it's time to sleep.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

GABRIEL: Sounds OK to me.

HARK: But when I sing with the choir, I'm out of tune.

GABRIEL: Maybe the problem is not what you're singing, but what you're hearing. When did this trouble start?

HARK: The day before yesterday.

GABRIEL: Tell me everything you did that day.

HARK: Well ... after breakfast, I cleaned my room and took my dirty robes to the laundry. Then I took a walk, and while I was walking I met some of my friends, and we played until lunchtime. After lunch, I went to the harp factory and watched them polish and tune the harps. Then I met you on the way to choir practice, and that's all.

GABRIEL: Hmmm. Was it very noisy at the harp factory?

HARK: Oh, yes. They were tuning hundreds of harps, and the air was so full of sounds that I had to put my hands over my ears.

GABRIEL: Then *that* must be the problem! All of those notes are still bouncing around in your head, and when the choir sings, you can't hear the melody properly with all that ringing in your ears.

HARK: How can I stop it?

GABRIEL: I'm not sure I have the answer to that. You know, Hark, it's easy for our heads to fill up with the wrong kind of things — not just sounds, but thoughts and fears and worries, too. And they can drown out the one thing we need to hear most: God's voice calling us to do his will. Maybe it's time for you to stop worrying, to be still, and ask for God's help, then listen for his answer. He is always near when we need help, you know. Think about it, Hark. I have to go and get my trumpeters ready for tonight.

HARK: Good-bye, Gabriel. And thank you. (*HARK paces back and forth several times, then stops and kneels Center Stage.*)

1 Dear Lord, you know what an important day this is for
 2 us, and especially for the people on earth. I want so
 3 much to sing with the other angels and to give our gift
 4 to the baby Jesus. But my head is full of the wrong kind
 5 of sounds, dear Lord. Please take those sounds away,
 6 and help me to be quiet and still and to listen so that I
 7 can hear clearly when you call me to do your work.
 8 Amen. (*HARK continues to kneel. The sound of the choir*
 9 *singing "Glory to God" can be heard from Off-stage. HARK*
 10 *gets up and begins to hum with the choir. He/she stops*
 11 *suddenly.) I can hear it clearly now! I can go! I can go!*
 12 Thank you, Father. (*He/she runs Off-stage.*)
 13

14 SCENE 4

15 A starry night

16
 17 (*If "stars" are used on backdrop, light at this time. The manger*
 18 *and baby are visible Downstage. The ANGELS position*
 19 *themselves On-stage and sing.*)

20 SONG: "Glory to God" (Reprise)

21 ANGELS: (*Singing*)

22 Glory to God, glory to God,
 23 Glory to God in the highest!
 24 Glory to God, glory to God,
 25 Glory to God in the highest!
 26 And on earth peace to men of good will.
 27 And on earth peace to men of good will.
 28 Glory to God, glory to God,
 29 Glory to God in the highest!
 30 Glory to God, glory to God,
 31 Glory to God in the highest!

32 (*ANGEL CHOIR continues softly with "Ahhhs" while*
 33 *GABRIEL speaks over the music.*)

34 GABRIEL: (*Speaking*) Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good
 35 tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

HARK THE ANGEL SANG OFF-KEY

by Ann W. Yeager.

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-844-841-6387 - Fax (319) 368-8011

customerservice@christianpub.com