



Noel: Upon the Midnight Clear

Traditional English Melody

Words by **EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS**

Arranged by **STEVE PARSONS**

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About the Arranger



Steve is an award-winning composer, orchestrator, and music director. His composing credits include: Evensong (for Choir and Orchestra,) Seascapes (RBC Publications,) Frankenstein: The Puppet Opera (Translations Art Gallery,) Visions (an oratorio based on the book of Revelation,) Rise City Silent, Sing!, College Slam (video game, Akklaim,) and numerous commissions for symphony orchestra, wind ensemble, and choral ensembles. An experienced arranger for marching bands and show choirs throughout the United States and Canada, many of his original works and arrangements have been featured in national championships, including several Outstanding Music awards at Bands of America finals.

Steve's musical adaptation of A Christmas Carol is published by Steele Spring Stage Rights in Los Angeles and has enjoyed performances at The Players Guild Theatre (14 seasons,) New York (Off-Off Broadway,) Los Angeles, and Vietnam (The International Choir and Orchestra of Ho Chi Minh City.) As an orchestrator, he has arranged the Grateful Dead musical Cumberland Blues (NYMF, NY,) Life Could Be A Dream (Additional vocal arrangements/orchestrations, LA,) It's A Wonderful Life (Regional,) and Footloose (Additional vocal arrangements/orchestrations, Rodgers & Hammerstein Library.) His other credits include: Nunsense and Nunsense A-Men! (music preparation, NY,) The Tick (member of the "Tickestra," FOX,) and Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz (consultant and contributor, Applause Books.)

Steve has both Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts degrees in composition from Kent State University.

Noel: Upon the Midnight Clear

I've always loved this familiar Christmas carol, but tend to prefer the somewhat more ethereal traditional melody used in the UK. Originally a folk tune, Sir Arthur Sullivan harmonized the version featured in hymn and carol books throughout the British Isles and combined it with the existing text. Something about the contour of the tune suggests the singing of angels frequently mentioned in the lyrics, so I felt it was the perfect basis for an SSA arrangement.

At some point throughout the piece everyone gets their chance to sing the melody, so identifying and balancing these sections will be extremely important in rehearsal. Similarly, the piano should stay flowing and supportive and at no point overwhelm the delicate three-part vocal texture. I've attempted to depict the imagery of the lyrics through tempo and dynamic shifts, so be sensitive to the "story" being told in each verse.

Most of all, set your singers free to soar through the holiday midnight sky!

Dedicated to Amanda, Rose and Allison Medley



Recordings are available on all major streaming services.

Noel: Upon the Midnight Clear

for SSA Voices with Piano Accompaniment

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH MELODY

Words by

EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS

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STEVE PARSONS

Ethereal (♩ = 120)

Piano

mp

4

Soprano I/II *mp*

It — came up — on the — mid — night clear, that

Alto *mp*

It came up — on the — mid — night clear, that

mp

7

glo - rious song of old, from

glo - rious song of old, from

10

an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of

an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of

mp

13

gold:

gold: "Peace on the earth, good -

p

16 *p cresc.* "All
"All gra - cious King!"

will to men from heav'n's all - gra - cious King!"

19 *mf* gra - cious King!"
The world in so - lemn still - ness lay to

mf
The world in so - lemn still - ness lay to

22
hear the an - gels sing.

hear the an - gels sing.

mp

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25

Alto

mp

Still_ through the clo - ven_

28

Soprano I/II

mp

Oo

Alto

skies they come, with peace - ful wings un - furled,

31

oo oh

ah

And_ still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er_

34 *mf* oh oo A - *mp*

mf all the wea - ry world.

mf *dim.*

37

bove its sad and lone - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring *mp*

On

mp

40 wing, on hov - 'ring wing, *mf*

wing, *cresc.* And *mf*

hov - 'ring wing, *cresc.* And

cresc.

42

ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bles - sed an - gels

ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bles - sed an - gels

mf *cresc.*

45

sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels

sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels

f *cresc.*

48

sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels

sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels sing, the an - gels

mf *cresc.*

51 *rit.* *p* *a tempo*

sing. And ye, be - neath life's

mf *p*

the an - gels sing. And ye, be - neath life's

rit. dim. *p a tempo*

54

crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,

crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing (are bend - ing

57 *mp* *mp*

who - toil a - long the climb - ing way with

low,) who - toil a - long the climb - ing way with

mp

60

pain - ful steps and slow, Look

pain - ful steps and slow, Look

63

now! for glad and gol - den hours come swift - ly on the

now! for glad and gol - den hours come swift - ly on the

66

rit. wing. Come

come swift - ly on the wing. Come

come swift - ly on the wing. Come

rit. mp

mp

a tempo
rest

68

be - side the road, and — hear the an - gels

rest be - side the — wea - ry road, and — hear — the an - gels

a tempo

71

sing, — and hear — the

the an - gels sing, the an - gels

the an - gels sing, the an - gels

75

rit.

sing! —

sing! —

p *rit.* *p*



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Steve Parsons

Steve's music is energetic and fun. Student's will be captivated by his heroic film-score like music. He has a wealth of experience composing outside of educational music that brings an exciting freshness to his pieces.

Noel: Upon the Midnight Clear

A sparkling setting of the traditional text, but with the alternate tune predominantly used in the British Isles, this beautiful SSA arrangement highlights the image of soaring angels "bending near the earth" to bring their wondrous Christmas message.

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