

# Christmas of the Animals

*A musical event for choir, narrator and 'animals'*

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Words and Music by Cenarth Fox  
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# Christmas of the Animals

Words and music by Cenarth Fox

## Reviews of this fun Christmas show

I am amazed how such small people are tackling the many words in the songs (especially Fido's Fable) and are enjoying the variety.

**Seymour College Junior School**

A sparkling musical, the story of Christmas as told by the animals.

**Kooweerup SC**

IF CHRISTMAS spirit was a school subject, this festive group of College students would get top marks. They are staging a yuletide performance that will help primary schools around the region get into the festive spirit.

“There’s the donkey who travelled to Bethlehem carrying Mary, the camels carrying the wise men, the cattle in the stable, the innkeeper’s super friendly dog and the timid mice who emerge from under the straw near the manger and sing and tap dance.”

**STAR News Group**

We performed from the back of a truck and the football ground was filled as we celebrated Christmas with this different but most enjoyable play.

**Griffith Combined Churches**



## Christmas of the Animals – 2

### Musical Items

1.	Overture [p.3]	Orchestra
2.	It Happens Every Day [p.7]	Choir
3.	The Donkey Who Was Chosen [p.18]	Soloist & Choir
4.	Sheepish Shepherds [p.25]	Choir & Dancing Sheep
5.	The Wheels of the Wise Men [p.32]	Choir
6.	Fido's Fable [p.44]	Choir
7.	Share the Hay [p.51]	Soloists & Choir
8.	Make Christmas a Part of You [p.58]	Choir & Dancing Mice
9.	Curtain Calls [p.67]	Choir
10.	Playout [p.74]	Orchestra

### Notes for the Musical Director

1. This is a choral piece. There are solo spots but most of the music features the choir. There is unison singing, harmony and counter-melodies. Divide your singers how you wish but aim for the sweetest sound.
2. *It Happens Every Year* starts quietly both in tempo and volume. You could even start with a duet and have the Company hum their line. If so, Company sing from bar 23. The word *Christmas* is drawn out over several bars from bar 122. This may need explaining to your performers.
3. First time through with *The Donkey Who Was Chosen* is for a soloist.
4. *Sheepish Shepherds* is lively. Don't drag. Feeling of one in a bar. It's meant to be a joyous song, moderately loud throughout and full of life and energy.
5. The tempo is halved for the next song with the camel. Legato singing especially in the chorus from bar 20. The balance of voices is important in the counter-melodies from bar 37. The camel gets slower and slower from bar 66. A weary walk to the end. End!!
6. The dog is full of life. Lots of energy. The words are always important but in this song there are many words delivered at a lively tempo. Diction, diction and diction. Watch the tempi at the end from bar 71. Slow, slower, *a tempo* then *accelerando*. Finish with a flourish. Bach it up!
7. *Share The Hay* is slow and this tempo requires lots of breath. Sing the phrase, sing the line. Legato, smooth and sincere. The three verses at the repeat sign [bar 5] are for soloists. Use three different singers if you like. There should be a warm and moving sound when the Company sings the chorus at bar 12. Tight harmony. Watch the subtle tempi changes. Watch the ending. Notes are low but timing is vital. It's almost a spiritual.
8. *Make Christmas A Part Of You* should swing. Not up tempo but in a singalong style. It's almost entirely in unison but the swing feel can be tricky. At the bridge [bar 21] the swing feel is accentuated. Triplets and dotted quavers need heart rather than mind. Feel the swing.
9. *Curtain Calls* begin while the Narrator is speaking. The first verse could be sung by a soloist rather than the Company who could hum the melody under the soloist/s. The Narrator stops speaking by bar 12 and the Company could sing at this point. The bows at bar 24 are for the soloists [vocal] and the actors playing the animals and humans. The singing should not be affected by performers taking their curtain calls. Have fun!

## Christmas of the Animals – 3

### Stage Directions

After the *Overture*, start *It Happens Every Year* almost immediately. Lighting is dim on the performing area. As soon as the music starts, the Company enter and move to their choral positions.

They start to sing at bar 4 and obviously will be singing as they move. It's a staggered entrance.

They could come from the body of the theatre as well as the wings. Keep the lighting dim.

Everyone should be in place, standing still, by bar 17. At bar 20, the music goes to a lively tempo. Instantly this happens, bring up bright lighting on the Company and have everyone sing with gusto.

If Gusto is unable to attend, sing with Fred.

### It Happens Every Year

*It happens every year, it's Christmas.*

*Every single year bells chime.*

*Always every year, it's Christmas.*

*Wonderful, worshipful time.*

*It happens every year, it's Christmas.*

*Every single year, a thrill.*

*Always every year, it's Christmas.*

*Season of peace and goodwill.*

*Time to pray, time to play,*

*Have the cousins in to stay.*

*And that's because it's Christmas.*

*Time to sing, carols swing, let the bells all loudly ring.*

*And that's because it's Christmas.*

*Time for peace, time for joy.*

*Time to celebrate the birthday of the holy, baby boy.*

*Time to wine, time to dine, every blessing to combine.*

*And that's because it's Christmas.*

*Christmas. Christmas.*

*Time we adore.*

*I tell you Christmas. Christmas.*

*Fun, food and more.*

*Time for peace, time for joy.*

*Time to celebrate the birthday of the holy, baby boy.*

*Christmas. Christmas.*

*Time we adore.*

*And that's because it's Christmas.*

## Christmas of the Animals – 4

### Stage Directions

Song ends. Dim lights on Company. Narrator steps to microphone/speaking area and is lit or steps into lit area.

**NARRATOR** “Christmas. It happens every year. And we all know the story with the shepherds, the wise men and the baby in the manger. But the bible doesn’t tell us a great deal about the story of Christmas. Matthew and Luke write about it but were these men there when the baby was born? We know about the shepherds and the wise men, and wouldn’t it be great to hear from someone who *was* there. Someone who actually saw the whole thing. An eye-witness account. Straight from the horses’ mouth. And speaking of horses, why not the donkey? Why not the faithful mule who carried Mary to Bethlehem and later stood in the corner of the stable where the very first Christmas began. So let’s begin our story with ... the donkey! *[Music begins]*

### Stage Directions

Music begins immediately Narrator finishes speaking. The Donkey could be a person standing upright with a horses head and a tail or could be two people inside a horse’s costume. A soloist sings first at bar 4. A follow-spot could concentrate on the soloist and/or the donkey who moves slowly towards DC. The Donkey doesn’t sing and needs to react to the words. The Donkey may enter through the theatre and take many bars to reach the stage. The lights could dim at bar 22 and fade up again at bar 38. The Donkey could perhaps dance a little during this final chorus and finish with a brief soft shoe in the last two bars.

### The Donkey Who Was Chosen

*Well I’m the donkey who was chosen to be a part of history  
I walked the desert sands and the rocky strands  
Near the Sea of Galilee.  
Into the tiny town of Bethlehem, upon its streets  
I safely trod.  
Oh I’m the donkey who helped Mary  
And her babe the Son of God.  
The nights were dark and cold  
The days were hot and windy  
The roads were rough and hard  
They made my legs feel spindly.  
And when at last we came, the innkeeper was shirty  
He sent us round the back to a stable dark and dirty.  
But Joseph did not mind, he found his wife some dinner  
And then he gave me food and drink  
And said I’d been a winner.  
And her babe the Son of God.  
Ee aw!*

## Christmas of the Animals – 5

### Stage Directions

Song ends. Donkey exits. Dim lights on Company. Narrator steps into lit area.

**NARRATOR** “The Christmas story often makes mention of the shepherds watching their flocks by night. Shepherds, yes. Sheep, no. The angels appeared and sang their triumphant news. The shepherds were nervous, even sheepish. They listened and watched in awe before making their way to Bethlehem. But what did their woolly charges make of this momentous occasion? What did the rams, lambs and ewes have to say about angelic choirs interrupting their peaceful slumbers? You see the sheep saw everything. They heard the angels. They watched their shepherds tremble and quake. But nowhere can we read of the sheeps’ reaction. So let’s change all that. Let’s give those mobile woolstores the chance to tell *their* story. Let’s away to the fields of Bethlehem and ... the sheep.”

### Stage Directions

Music begins immediately. Lights return to Company who sing. Two or more sheep enter at bar 29 once the chorus begins. The sheep are humans walking upright with perhaps a sheep’s head and a woolly body. They move around doing a variety of things e.g. pretend conducting of the singers, shaking hands, bowing, etc. At bar 84 a dance section begins and the sheep take centre-stage and waltz. At the end of the song, the sheep bow and make their exit.

### Sheepish Shepherds

*There are millions of sheep in the world today  
In Scotland and hot land and far Whangarei  
And each sheep like humans has gone astray  
Baa, baa, baa.*

*There are millions of sheep be they lamb, ram or ewe  
Their faces and graces have vanished from view  
But we’ll not pull wool over eyes on cue  
Baa, baa, baa.*

*We’re the sheep the angels entertained near Bethlehem last night  
Our shepherds thought the world would end  
Their knees they knocked with fright  
But all around was peace and joy, the singing a delight  
We’re the sheep the angels entertained near Bethlehem that night.  
It’s a boy! It’s a boy!  
I bring news of wondrous joy.  
Angels sing! Angels sing!  
Hallelujah! Christ the King!*

*We’re the sheep the angels entertained near Bethlehem that night.*

## Christmas of the Animals – 6

### Stage Directions

Song ends. Sheep exit. Dim lights on Company. Narrator steps into lit area.

**NARRATOR** “The three wise men in the story of Christmas have become quite famous. Millions of Christmas cards feature these camel-riding, gift-bearing chaps. They followed the star which led them to Bethlehem. But did any of these highly-educated men keep a diary? Did any of them write letters or send a postcard home to friends and family? If so, such jottings have not been found. More to the point, did anyone ask the camels what *they* thought of the momentous events? I mean, what was life like travelling those long and dusty roads? What was the atmosphere like in and around the stable? To get a ships-of-the-desert report, let’s hear from ... the camels.

### Stage Directions

Music begins immediately. Lights return to Company who sing. Camel enters at bar 20 as Chorus begins. Camel could enter through the audience taking some time to arrive DC. The Camel is two actors in a special suit. The front actor wearing the head could kneel at “on bended knee”. A wise man or three could follow the camel giving the beast a friendly pat even guiding the camel around the stage. Camel and wise man/men could begin their exit at the molto rall at bar 68.

### The Wheels of the Wise Men

*We’ve got the flies in our eyes  
The sand’s on our glands  
The wind, the rain, the sun.  
We travel many a road with many a load  
It’s not what some call fun.  
We’ve got a pack on our back  
A bump on our hump  
But legs we guarantee  
You see we’re part of the story  
Nativity glory, it’s quadrapedic history.*

*We’re the ships of the desert with a wise man of three  
From the east we came seeking  
The Messiah to see.  
In a Bethlehem stable on a bended knee  
Every camel and wise man, worship glad and free.  
Desert ships. Wise men three.  
From the east. King to see.  
Bethlehem. Bended knee.  
Every camel and wise man, worship glad and free.*

## Christmas of the Animals – 7

### Stage Directions

Song ends. Camel and wise man/men exit. Dim lights on Company. Narrator steps into lit area.



**NARRATOR** “The bible mentions several animals who were part of the first Christmas. The donkey, the sheep and the camels were all there or thereabouts. But were they the *only* animals? Let’s think about the inn at Bethlehem. Would it be asking too much to believe the inn-keeper kept animals? A cat maybe? Or a canary? Or how about a watch dog? Why not a friendly fido with a tail that spoke several languages. In fact if we could find that pooch and get *its* side of the Christmas story, I’m sure we’d learn even more about the travellers and their baby in the stable. So let’s do it. Let’s whistle in the woofers and bark back to the old days with ... the innkeeper’s dog.

### Stage Directions

Music begins immediately. Lights return to Company who sing. The Dog enters as soon as the singing starts. The Dog bounds in being one actor with a dog head and a tail. The Dog is super friendly and waves to the audience and plays up to the singers. During this song is the time to introduce other actors - humans playing humans in the Christmas story. At bar 20, Joseph enters and mimes knocking on a door. The Dog moves closer to watch. The Innkeeper appears at bar 33 or soon thereafter. Joseph mimes his predicament. Listen to the words being sung. Back to bar 5 and the Innkeeper mimes they have no room then points upstage which is “around the back”. At bar 20 the second time, Mary enters leading the Donkey. Joseph joins them, the Innkeeper drags a bale or two of hay DC. The Dog follows the visitors watching. Bring lights up on the stable which is the bale/s of hay. Joseph helps Mary into the stable. Poetic licence occurs here as Mary produces a bundle wrapped in swaddling clothes and at bar 40 the second time, places the bundle on the straw. The three wise men and the shepherds enter and form a worshipful group from bar 56. The Dog watches everything and the group freeze once the song ends.

## Christmas of the Animals – 8

### Fido's Fable

*I'm the Rin Tin Tin at a well-known inn  
In the town of Bethlehem  
I'm the dog not the mog in the catalogue  
Of the tale in Bethlehem  
How I bark in the dark for a laugh and a lark  
And to cause the odd mayhem  
I'm the Rin Tin Tin at a well-known inn  
In the town of Bethlehem.  
I'm the friendly hound lying on the ground  
When the man knocked on our door  
With a tap, tap, tap it was no more nap  
For the dog who loves to snore  
So I wandered by for to play "I Spy" and to see what was in store  
I'm the friendly hound lying on the ground  
When the man knocked on our door.  
"My name is Joseph" I heard him say.  
"My wife's expecting and we need a place to stay.  
We're very hungry and should retire  
A simple meal and room we do require."  
I'm the old bow-wow and can you now that we have no vacancy  
We are chock-a-block all around the clock, it's a shock but so it be.  
Yet around the back, you could there unpack, be a stable refugee  
I'm the old bow-wow and can tell you now that we have no vacancy.  
I'm a man's best friend and around the bend  
Went the travellers to their suite  
By the stable door and the piles of straw  
There's a fragrance you will greet.  
So with these and those in selected rows, do be careful with your feet.  
I'm a man's best friend and around the bend  
Went the travellers to their suite.  
The wife was Mary, I heard her say.  
She placed her tiny baby on the stable hay  
It wasn't five-star or very nice and watching were the cows,  
The cat and mice.  
Now a canine pooch never saw so mooch as I did that Christmas night  
When a babe was born in amongst the corn  
And a star shone big and bright.  
In the sky above there was joy and love and the angels sang in flight  
Now a canine pooch never saw so mooch as I did that Christmas night.*

## Christmas of the Animals – 9

### Stage Directions

Song ends and all actors remain on stage. Lights dim on stable. Narrator steps forward.

**NARRATOR** So here we are in the Bethlehem stable hearing the Christmas story from the donkey, the sheep, the camel and the dog. But these aren't the only Christmas animals. Standing quietly in the corner are the cattle. They were minding their own business when the stable door swung open and in came Mary, Joseph and many other humans and animals. What's going on? The baby needs a bed and the donkey needs a feed. This is the spirit of Christmas writ large. Let's hear from another first-hoof observer .... the cattle.

### Stage Directions

Music begins immediately. Joseph helps Mary settle. The Shepherds move a manger DC and place straw therein. Mary places the baby in the manger. The Wise Men gather round and the other animals line up upstage. The Innkeeper leads a Cow forward. The Cow could one actor with a cow's head or two actors in a cow suit. The Dog bounces around being happy and a nuisance at the same time. The chorus is repeated several times at bar 14. During the chorus, small amounts of straw could be passed forward and placed in the manger making it progressively more comfortable. The Donkey could be brought forward to one side and given small amounts of hay at the same time during the chorus. Don't rush the action. The song is slow in tempo and doesn't need busy business from the actors. Finish with everyone still and all business complete.

### Share The Hay

*Meet the cattle in the corner of the stable  
Where the landlord of the inn showed folk outside  
"Round the back is all I've got, use the manger for a cot  
With the cattle in the barn you must reside."*

*Share the hay, share the hay  
With the baby and the burro, share the hay  
Line the manger for the child,  
Serve the donkey; 's dinner mild  
Share the hay, share the hay.*

*Meet the cattle in the corner of the stable  
When the donkey, man and woman went inside  
They were weary it was true with a baby almost due  
But they found a welcome warm and dignified.*

*Meet the cattle in the corner of the stable where the tiny baby  
Jesus Christ, he cried  
As the infant gave a yell, how his mother wrapped him well  
Every bovine in that barn was filled with pride  
Share the hay.*

## **Christmas of the Animals – 10**

### **Stage Directions**

Song ends with entire Company frozen. Lights dim on Company. Narrator to lit area.

**NARRATOR** “Now Christmas means different things to different animals. Some were part of the Bethlehem stable and love telling their adventures. Others are not so talkative. Take our final guests. Every barn has its mice and underneath the Bethlehem straw were two of the cutest little rodents you could ever see. They were scared of the dog, naturally, and worried that one of the giant cows might step on them ... or worse. But the mice were there and saw the lot. They weren't loud and playful like the dog but Christmas to the mice was Christmas just the same. It was exciting, wonderful magic. And sometimes the wisest words can come from the most humble of creatures. Let's be very quiet and very careful as we hear about Christmas from ... the mice.

### **Stage Directions**

Music begins immediately and two Mice enter. They are actors walking upright with mice heads. A good example are those often seen in the ballet *Nutcracker*. The Mice are cheeky but not too lively.

The tempo of the song is not fast and in fact features a soft shoe shuffle. The Mice could shake paws with members of the audience if their entrance is via the audience. At bar 21, the Mice could enact a celebration. Eating, drinking, being merry. At bar 37 the Mice dance. This is a good opportunity to use talented dancers.

### **Make Christmas a Part Of You**

*You might be part of Christmas  
But is Christmas a part of you?  
It's fun to run with Santa  
With friends and family too.  
But the magic part of Christmas  
Can make your heart brand new  
So please be part of Christmas  
Make Christmas a part of you.*

*Have fun, go on and decorate your tree  
Eat, drink, be merry, generate some glee  
Then think just why you celebrate this day  
And join with us to say*

*The magic part of Christmas can make your heart brand new  
So please be part of Christmas, make Christmas a part of you.*

## Christmas of the Animals – 11

### Stage Directions

The Company are lined up on stage, the actors decorate the area in front of the singers. The Narrator steps forward for a final speech speaking over the music. Actors and soloists take their bows during the singing.

**NARRATOR** [*MUSIC BEGINS*] “And that, my fellow humans, is how some unknown creatures remember the very first Christmas. They were there. They saw and heard the story of the baby born in a stable. They watched as wise men and humble shepherds came to worship. They heard the baby cry, the angels sing and knew that this was truly special. And today, thousands of years later we hear the same story and think of the animals who tell us that the magic part of Christmas can make our hearts brand new. It can and should be a wonderful time. A time to celebrate, to remember and give thanks. So please be part of Christmas and make Christmas a part of you.

### Curtain Calls

*It happens every year, it's Christmas.  
Every single year bells chime.  
Always every year, it's Christmas.  
Wonderful, worshipful time.  
It happens every year, it's Christmas.  
Every single year, a thrill.  
Always every year, it's Christmas.  
Season of peace and goodwill.  
Time to pray, time to play, have the cousins in to stay.  
And that's because it's Christmas.  
Time to sing, carols swing, let the bells all loudly ring.  
And that's because it's Christmas.  
Time for peace, time for joy.  
Time to celebrate the birthday of the holy, baby boy.  
Time to wine, time to dine, every blessing to combine.  
And that's because it's Christmas.  
Christmas. Christmas. Time we adore.  
I tell you Christmas. Christmas.  
Fun, food and more.  
Time for peace, time for joy.  
Time to celebrate the birthday of the holy, baby boy.  
Christmas. Christmas.  
Time we adore.  
You might be part of Christmas but is Christmas a part of you?  
It's fun to run with Santa, with friends and family too  
But the magic part of Christmas can make your heart brand new  
So please be part of Christmas, make Christmas a part of you.*

## Ten More Christmas Musicals

Funny, tuneful, easy-to-stage, popular and successful 30 minute shows. Written for very young performers but other ages have found them delightful.

First there's **Santa Forgot A Reindeer**. Everyone's an elf. There are millions of them. The elves sing and are happy now that Santa has gone to deliver the toys. Then, horror of horrors. There's a reindeer outside. Santa's left one behind! The elves try vainly to contact the fleeting Father Christmas. But all is not lost. When the elves decide to act out their Christmas story, have a guess who stars as the donkey? Yep. It's that reindeer. Then there's **Christmas Pudding** where the characters are ingredients - Currant, Raisin, Custard, Cherry, etc. What a sight. Dancing Mixed Peel! But when they learn about mass-produced puddings, the ingredients revolt. Christmas is off! But of course it's a happy ending as we learn it's great fun to share and help one another. Next comes **Christmas Decorations** where, that's right, everyone's a decoration on the tree. Bauble, Candle, Fairy, Star, Card and more. Fairy doesn't like the top of the tree. She's scared of heights. The others argue about their place on the tree until they learn about the old lady next door who hasn't anyone to share her Christmas. The decorations decide to share Christmas with the old lady as they decorate her heart. Then it's off to outer space with **Christmas On Mars** where everyone's a Martian. Santa is blown off course and lands on Mars. The Martians know nothing about Christmas but they like the presents. Doll pops out and explains everything as Christmas comes to Mars. Finally meet **Christmas Presents** with Socks, Hanky, Soap, Chocolates, etc. Big problems in the shop on Christmas Eve. Will they be sold? Are they important? It's funny but serious as they perform their Nativity Play about the greatest present of all time. Happy Christmas.

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