



# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

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# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas (2023)

## Notes on Optional Instruments

Sleigh Bells: A choir member (or percussionist) can play quarter notes on sleigh bells during the blues choruses (noted in the score). Sleigh bells should rest during other sections, and mm. 237-238.

String Bass and Drum Set: Optional string bass and drum set parts are included. Both parts rest during the opening section. Drum set enters in m. 91 and string bass enters in m. 99. Drum set should play with brushes throughout.

## Program Note

*'Twas the Night Before Christmas* was commissioned in 2023 by Fond du Lac High School (WI) in Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of their holiday prism concert, "Night of Silence." As I was thinking about possible themes and texts for the commission, I thought of the classic Clement C. Moore poem that we know as *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* (his title for the poem was actually *A Visit from St. Nicholas*).

Once I settled on this text and began spending more time with it, I began to feel like the poem had two parts. First, there is the quiet and dreamy opening that depicts a peaceful Christmas eve, with everyone tucked into bed, drifting off to sleep. Then, once the narrator peers out the window and sees St. Nicholas on the lawn, it feels to me like the poem enters a new section. So, I tried to write music to accompany these two sections that would help bring out the character of each. The music for the beginning section is gentle and lilting, like a lullaby. For the second section, when we encounter St. Nicholas and his reindeer, I wanted to create music that captures the magic, mystery, and playfulness of Santa Claus.

# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Clement C. Moore

Steve Danyew

Gently & Peacefully ♩ = 108-116

**Piano**

*mp legato*

**Pno.**

**S**  
**A**

*SA unison mp*

**10** *a tempo*

'Twas the night be - fore Christ - mas when all through the

**T**  
**B**

**Pno.**

*a tempo*

**S**  
**A**

house not a crea - ture was stir - ring not e - ven a

**T**  
**B**

**Pno.**

*poco rit.* **18** *a tempo*

S  
A  
T  
B

mouse; The stock - ings were hung by the chim - ney with \_\_\_\_

Pno.

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

*mf* *rit.*

S  
A  
T  
B

care, in hopes that Saint Nich - o las soon would be \_\_\_\_

Pno.

*mf* *rit.*

**27** *a tempo*

S  
A  
T  
B

there; Oo \_\_\_\_

*mp*

*mp* *a tempo*

TB unison

The child - ren were nest - led all

Pno.

29 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *unis. p*

S A (Oo) \_\_\_\_\_ Oo \_\_\_\_\_

T B snug in their \_\_\_\_\_ beds, while vi - sions of \_\_\_\_\_ su - gar - plums

Pno. *poco rit.* *a tempo*

33 *poco rit.* **35** *a tempo*

S A \_\_\_\_\_

T B danced in their \_\_\_\_\_ heads; And mam - ma in her ker - chief and

Pno. *poco rit.* *a tempo*

37 *mf*

S A (Oo) \_\_\_\_\_ *mf*

T B I in my \_\_\_\_\_ cap, had just set - tled in for a \_\_\_\_\_ *mf*

Pno. *mf*

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*poco rit.*

44

$\text{♩} = 120$  *Faster, with growing excitement*

41

S A (Oo) \_\_\_\_\_ When out on the

T B \_\_\_\_\_ When out on the

long win - ter's nap, When out

Pno. *poco rit.* *mp* *Faster, with growing excitement*  $\text{♩} = 120$

45

S A lawn there a - rose such a clat - ter, I

T B lawn there a - rose such a clat - ter, I

Pno. *gva* I

49

S A sprang from the bed to see what was the mat - ter. \_\_\_\_\_

T B sprang from the bed to see what was the mat - ter. \_\_\_\_\_

Pno. *mf* *mf* *mf*

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54

53 *mp* *unis.*

S A A - way to the win - dow I flew like a

T B A - way to the win - dow I flew like a

Pno. *mp*

57 *mf*

S A flash, tore o - pen the shut - ters and threw up the

T B flash, tore o - pen the shut - ters and threw up the

Pno. *mf* *unis.*

64

61 *f* *rit.* *mf* Slower, dreamy (♩ = 96)

S A sash The moon on the

T B sash.

Pno. *f* *mf* *rit.* *mp* *mf* Slower, dreamy (♩ = 96)

And.

Tempo I (♩ = 108-116)

65

S  
A

crown of the new - fall - en snow gave a lus - tre of \_\_\_\_\_

T  
B

Pno.

Tempo I (♩ = 108-116)

69

S  
A

mid - day to ob - jects be - low. When what to my

T  
B

*p*  
Oo \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

*poco rit.* **72** *a tempo*

*poco rit.* *a tempo*

73

S  
A

won - d'ring eyes should ap - pear, but a min - ia - ture

T  
B

Pno.

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77 *poco rit.* *mp*  
S A *unis.* With a  
sleigh and eight tin - y rein - deer,  
T B (Oo) With a  
Pno. *mf* *mp* *poco rit.*

81 ♩ = 120 *Faster, with anticipation* *f*  
S A lit - tle old driv - er so live - ly and quick, I  
T B lit - tle old driv - er so live - ly and quick, I  
Pno. ♩ = 120 *Faster, with anticipation* *f*

85 *mf*  
S A *unis.* knew in a mo - ment it must be  
T B knew in a mo - ment it must be  
Pno.

Swing! ♩ = ♩<sup>3</sup>

91 ♩ = 138 - 144

*rit.* -----

S  
A  
T  
B

Saint Nick. Saint Nick.

*Snap* *Snap*

Pno.

*mp rit.*

*Swing!* ♩ = ♩<sup>3</sup>  
♩ = 138 - 144

\*\*Opt. drum set (with brushes) starts here

S  
A  
T  
B

Pno.

97 *unis. mf* 99

S  
A  
T  
B

More rap - id than ea - gles — his rein - deer they came, — and he

Pno.

*mp*

\*\*Opt. string bass starts here

101

S  
A

whis-tled and shout-ed — and called them by name: —

T  
B

*mf*  
*unis.*

Now Dash-er! now Danc-er! now Pranc-er and Vix - en! On

Pno.

105

S  
A

To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall! — now

T  
B

*mf*

Com-et! on Cu-pid! on Don-der and Blitz - en. —

Pno.

107

109

S  
A

dash a-way! dash a-way! dash a-way all! — As leaves that be-fore the hur-ri-cane fly, — when they

T  
B

*f*  
*unis.*

As leaves that be-fore the hur-ri-cane fly, — when they

Pno.

109

113

S  
A

meet with an ob-sta-cle, mount to the sky. — *f* So

T  
B

meet with an ob-sta-cle, mount to the sky. — *f* So

Pno.

117

S  
A

up to the house-top the rein-deer they flew, with a sleigh full of toys, and Saint Nich-o-las too. And *unis.*

T  
B

up to the house-top the rein-deer they flew, with a sleigh full of toys, and Saint Nich-o-las too. And *unis.*

Pno.

121

S  
A

then, in a twink-ling, I heard on the roof *unis.*

then  
then, in a twink-ling, I heard on the roof the pranc-ing and paw-ing of each lit-tle hoof. —

T  
B

then \_\_\_\_\_ the pranc-ing and paw-ing of each lit-tle hoof. — *unis.*

Pno.

125

S A *unis.* *f*  
As I

T B *unis.* *f*  
As I

Pno. *mf*

S A *unis.*  
drew in my head and was turn-ing a - round, down the chim-ney Saint Nich-o-las came with a bound. 'Twas the

T B *unis.*  
drew in my head and was turn-ing a - round, down the chim-ney Saint Nich-o-las came with a bound. —

Pno. *f*

S A *unis.* *f*  
night! 'Twas the night! 'Twas the night be-fore

T B *unis.* *f*  
'Twas the night! 'Twas the night! 'Twas the night be-fore

Pno.

137 \*\*Add opt. sleigh bells

S  
A

Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ 'Twas the night be - fore \_\_\_\_\_ Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ 'Twas the night be - fore \_\_\_\_\_

T  
B

Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ 'Twas the night be - fore \_\_\_\_\_ Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ 'Twas the night be - fore \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

137

S  
A

Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ 'Twas the night be - fore \_\_\_\_\_ Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ not a crea - ture was \_\_\_\_\_

T  
B

Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ 'Twas the night be - fore \_\_\_\_\_ Christ - mas \_\_\_\_\_ not a crea - ture was \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

141

S  
A

stir - ring \_\_\_\_\_ but Saint \_\_\_\_\_ Nick! \_\_\_\_\_

T  
B

stir - ring \_\_\_\_\_ but Saint \_\_\_\_\_ Nick! \_\_\_\_\_ He was \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.

145

\*\*END sleigh bells

145