

In the Fullness of Time
by Sandi Zimmerman Rebert
Sample Scenes

(This is not a complete script. It may be copied for evaluation purposes only. No portion of this script may be performed without first purchasing the Director's Notebook. Thank you for understanding.)

Act I

(Lights come up on "town.")

Song: In the Fullness of Time *(Basses, tenors, and altos are on the stage. Sopranos are in front of the stage, on a separate level. The NARRATOR should be at center stage. During the tempo change, the altos move up to the raised platform so the choir ends up on different levels. During the last "Messiah," the choir raises their hands toward heaven. At the conclusion of the song, other cast members come on stage from various areas of the set-through the arch, from buildings, down the church aisles, etc. The town scenes take place before Mary and Joseph enter. Each new scene begins immediately as the one preceding it ends. People without speaking parts should pantomime activity so the town appears to be bustling.)*

Narrator: *(All narrations are from an offstage microphone or pre-taped.) (from Luke 2:1,3-5) "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child."*

SCENE 1 - Registration *(People are lined up to register. There should be a MAGISTRATE seated at the registration table. A CENTURION is standing near the beginning of the line.)*

Jewish Man 1: *(angrily, to the CENTURION) This registration has cost me two day's lost wages just in travel.*

Jewish Man 2: *(to his FRIEND)* Four. We have the journey back, don't forget. Not to mention the cost of lodging, the danger of thieves along the way, or the fact that they'll use this information to tax us.

Centurion: *(cutting him off)* You will be fortunate to live long enough to pay that tax if you continue to complain against the great Caesar Augustus!

Jewish Man 1: The great—someday God will replace your great Caesar Augustus with a King from Israel!

Centurion: A King! *(laughs disdainfully, as does the MAGISTRATE)* As if you stubborn Jews would be able to rule yourselves!

Jewish Man 2: *(boldly)* Any rule would be better than Roman tyranny.

Centurion: *(The CENTURION draws his sword and holds it menacingly at MAN 2's throat.)* I've heard enough! Perhaps we should make an example of you to the others *(motioning to the crowd of people)* so that all present may learn of the power of Rome!

Jewish Man 1: *(afraid)* Please sir, let him be. We meant no harm by our idle words.

Centurion: *(victoriously)* Ah! So you admit you are nothing short of fools!

Magistrate: *(to SOLDIER)* Release him; they are of no threat to anyone but themselves. *(He motions for the men to leave. Both MEN walk away quickly. The CENTURION puts his sword back in its sheath.)*

Jewish Man 1: *(to MAN 2 once they are out of the CENTURION'S hearing range, speaks in a stage whisper)* What were you trying to do—have us killed?

Jewish Man 2: Me?! You were the one who spoke so boldly at first. I was only following in your footsteps.

Jewish Man 1: Come on. Let's get a room at the inn before it becomes too crowded. Tomorrow we'll leave bright and early, *(looks back over his*

shoulder at the CENTURION) just in case he changes his mind.

Magistrate: *(looking after them and shaking his head, amused) King of Israel indeed!*

SCENE 2 - Marketplace (small hypothetical scene of what might have taken place in Bethlehem during the taxation – sets the stage for Mary and Joseph’s entrance.)

SCENE 3 – Relative’s Meeting *(center downstage, WOMAN from market scene passes by)*

Shanna: Miriam! *(enters from the house across from the archway, crosses to a MAN and WOMAN with three small CHILDREN who are standing near the well) Miriam, is that you?!*

Miriam: *(as if glad to see her, but dreading the long conversation ahead) Shanna. It's good to see you. (They embrace.)*

Shanna: And this must be little Benjamin! Look how big he's gotten! *(to BENJAMIN) Why, when I saw you last you were no bigger than this! (demonstrates)*

And Rhoda, what a little angel you are!

Abigail! *(pinches her cheek) What a darling you've turned out to be!*

(to MIRIAM) How have you been? I've so much to tell you! Why it's been three years since I last saw you. You won't recognize my Nathan. He's growing so fast! The rabbis say he's very intelligent. He's been studying with them faithfully for a year now.

(speaks to REUBEN as if suddenly noticing him) Oh, Reuben, you must go talk to Jabed! He'd be so happy to see you! He's visiting Abijah. (points toward house) They'd probably both enjoy your company!

Reuben: *(artificially polite, obviously wanting to get away from SHANNA’S babbling) I think I'd be happy to be in their company, too. (walks away quickly, enters house)*

(The two groups blend into the noise of the rest of the crowd as MARY and JOSEPH arrive on stage.)

Joseph: *(looks out of archway to stage area, speaks to MARY, who is not yet in the audience's view)* There's an Inn just to the right. The town is crowded. I'll tie the donkey up here for now, find some lodging, and get you settled in first. Then I'll come back for him and our supplies.

Mary: Do you think that's safe?

Joseph: Everyone is so busy about their own business, I doubt they'll bother with such a spindly animal. I think I will take the bundles, though. *(They walk through the arch, JOSEPH carrying two burlap sacks and helping MARY walk. They start toward the Inn.)*

Mary: *(looking around in awe)* Look at all the people! Where did they all come from?

Joseph: Everyone here must be some sort of relative; we're all from the lineage of David... *(notices a SOLDIER standing in the center of town, in front of the stone wall, nods politely to him, speaks to MARY in a stage whisper)* except him, of course.

Soldier: *(to JOSEPH)* You there! Go register with the magistrate!

Joseph: Were you speaking to us, sir?

Soldier: *(impatiently)* Yes, I was speaking to you. Hurry up! *(pushes JOSEPH toward the registration table)*

Joseph: Sir, my wife is due to have a child. Please, let me find lodging for her first.

Soldier: She must go with you.

Joseph: We've traveled far, sir, all the way from Nazareth.

Soldier: I don't care where you've come from. Everyone must register upon their arrival into the city.

Mary: *(to JOSEPH)* It's all right, Joseph. God has brought us safely here.

This baby is of special importance to Him. A few more minutes won't matter. *(They walk over to the registration table. Three people are ahead of them in line; these people ad lib lines with the MAGISTRATE.)*

Magistrate: *(to JOSEPH and MARY)* State your name.

Joseph: Joseph, sir, son of Jacob, son of Matthan.

Magistrate: *(searches through scrolls, writes information)* I assume this is your wife.

Joseph: Yes, sir.

Magistrate: Is she also of the house and lineage of David?

Joseph: Yes, sir.

Magistrate: *(to MARY)* Your name?

Mary: Mary, sir.

Magistrate: Your father's name?

Mary: Heli, son of Matthat.

Magistrate: That's all. You may leave. *(Sky begins to darken toward night; continues to darken during following conversation and song until it is dark and "stars" appear. Small white Christmas lights may be hung above the "town" to simulate "stars.")*

SCENE 4 - Inn/Stable

Joseph: *(to MARY, trying to protect her)* Mary, I must find you a place to rest. *(They walk over to the Inn. The INNKEEPER is just shutting the door; a despondent family, who has just been turned away, discusses what they will do to find lodging.)*

(to INNKEEPER) Excuse me, sir.

Innkeeper: *(impatiently, tiredly)* What do you want?

Joseph: We'd like a room.

Innkeeper: Didn't you see that family I just turned away? I'm filled up.
(begins to walk inside building)

Joseph: *(gently grabs the INNKEEPER'S arm)* But my wife is expecting, sir. She needs a place...

Innkeeper: Look. I've had an extremely busy day. My Inn is overflowing with people. I've already rented out part of my own family's living space. I have a headache—to put it simply, I have no room for you.

Song: I Have No Room for You *(During the transition melody the choir members turn slowly until they are all facing the audience. After the song, the choir fades into the scene again. People gradually exit into buildings, through the archway, etc. The INNKEEPER is sweeping the porch of the Inn. A couple of soldiers remain on the street.)*

Mary: *(MARY and JOSEPH begin to walk dejectedly away from the Inn. MARY puts her hand on her abdomen, as if in pain.)* Joseph, I think it's my time. What will we do?

Joseph: *(with confidence)* I don't know, but God will provide, I'm sure. He planned this birth. This baby means more to Him than...

Innkeeper: *(noticing MARY is in pain)* Just a minute! I have an idea. It's not much, certainly not a fit place for a baby to be born, but—there's a stable to the side of the Inn. It's really all I have to offer.

Joseph: We'll take it!

(The scene continues with Joseph and Mary in the stable, relating the angel's visits to Mary and Joseph, that the baby is God's Son, Emmanuel, etc. – includes a solo by Mary.)

SCENE 5 - Shepherds

(Light glows just above them as the angel appear; the shepherds react in awe and fear.)

Jacob: *(as introduction to “Angels’ Song” begins)* What's happening?

Samuel: Who is it?

Song: Angels’ Song *(Turn bright spots on shepherds, bluish glow about ANGEL. After the ANGEL OF THE LORD's speaking part, lights come up behind "sky" to reveal other angels. Use black lighting to create a glow for ANGELS’ wings. After the song, lights go down on the ANGELS, up on the SHEPHERDS.)*

Samuel: They're gone!

Jacob: A Savior is born!

Samuel: The Messiah has finally come!

Lucas: To think that God would send angels to us—simple, lowly shepherds.

Jacob: We must go to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass."

Samuel: What about the sheep?

Lucas: Don't worry, Samuel. They are safe in the fold.

Jacob: Besides, somehow I think God himself will watch over them tonight.

SCENE 6 - Stable *(The SHEPHERDS leave the hillside, exit down stairs, cross to the stable scene, ad lib conversation about the angels, the Messiah, etc. When they arrive, MARY is seated beside the manger, JOSEPH is standing, the BABY is in the manger. SHEPHERDS stand or kneel in awe. All is quiet except for night sounds; only dim spot and stars on the stable scene. A blue spot makes a nice effect.)*

Lucas: *(to other shepherds, softly, but with great feeling)* This is God's little Lamb!

Song: Only a Stable (*Choir ladies are behind the scene so they can be heard but not seen.*)

Intermission

Act II

SCENE 1 (in the temple – includes Simeon and Anna)

SCENE 2 - Wise Men

Narrator: (*introduction begins for “Wise Men From Afar”*) “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east.” (*Matthew 2:1a*)

(Lights come up on the center aisle as the WISE MEN enter from the back of the auditorium and walk slowly to Herod’s Palace. The LADIES in the CHOIR sing from behind the scenery.)

Song: Wise Men From Afar

SCENE 3 – Herod’s Palace – Scene with Herod, Wisemen, Scribes

SCENE 4 - House (Scene with wisemen, mary, Joseph, child Jesus)

SCENE 5 – Herod’s Palace (*Lights up again on HEROD, who is angrily pacing back and forth.*)

Herod: (*adapted from Matthew 2:16*) It has been too long. Those sages should have returned by now! (*paces more, wringing his hands in anger and frustration*) Defy me, mock me, will they?!

(to GUARDS, almost as if he is accusing them) Someone must have told them. Someone must have told them of my plans to do away with the Child! Well, my scheme will not be thwarted! Do you hear me!

(to himself) Let’s see, if they first saw the star... (*acts as if figuring out how old the child would be*) he would be no older than...

(turns abruptly, speaks to GUARD 2) Take this order to every soldier in Bethlehem—all male infants, age two and under, in the entire city,

(dramatic pause) are to be put to death!

Guard 2: *(Horried, the guard is taken back at first. He pauses, then salutes, speaking in a stage whisper.)* Yes, sir! *(exits down stairs to offstage)*

Herod: *(cocky, self-assured, aloud to himself)* We shall see if this “King of Israel” lives to take my throne! *(laughs wickedly as he exits)*

(Lights down. Narration is heard over sound system as the curtain is closed by GUARD 1. STAGE CREW removes furnishings, etc. and places the manger with BABY JESUS under the cross during the scene.)

Narrator: “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.’” *(Matthew 2:17,18)*

SCENE 6 - Streets of Bethlehem *(When the narration is finished, music for “Rachel’s Children” begins. SOPRANOS enter from behind the Temple, stand in front of the Temple. TENORS and BASES go up on the platform, make a straight line across. ALTOS enter from behind wall, take places far stage left in front of the Registration Building.*

Song: Rachel’s Children *(At the key change, the GUARDS and other PEOPLE go into street. The action must happen quickly, all at once. SOLDIERS chase after PEOPLE, grab CHILDREN from MOTHER’S arms, fight with MEN who are protecting their families, enter buildings, etc. WOMEN should react with screams, sobbing. At the end of the song ALL should freeze - total silence, then lights out. ALL exit except the CHOIR. The blue curtain is parted to reveal a cross with red curtains on either side of it, and the manger in front. Spot on the manger/cross scene.)*

Narrator: *(Adapted from Matthew 2:13-15)* But the Christ Child had escaped the wrath of Herod, for after the wise men departed from their visit with Jesus, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt; and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.” And Joseph had taken “the young child and his mother by

night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son.'”

Song: God Protected His Son/Reprise of Fullness of Time (*Lights up on the CHOIR as they spread out so they cover the length and depth of the lower stage. After the song ends, all lights abruptly off except for the spot on the cross and manger.*)

Invitation

