

**PRELUDE: HODIE**  
**PROLOGUE: IN THE BEGINNING**  
(Christmas Day 2nd Vespers Magnificat Antiphon)  
for Solo Cantor

TONY BARR

Preludue: Hodie Christus natus est

Hodie Christus natus est:  
hodie Salvator apparuit:  
hodie in terra canunt Angeli,  
laetantur Archangeli:  
hodie exsultant justi, dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia.

On this day, Christ is born for us  
on this day, the Savior appears to us  
on this day, hear the Angels sing across the earth,  
and see Archangels rejoice:  
on this day the just exult, in singing  
Glory to the highest, Alleluia!

Prologue: In The Beginning

Extended Version

In the beginning:  
in the beginning was the Word;  
the Word was with God,  
the Word was God,  
and was with God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Wisdom, she was with God,  
with God in the beginning.

All things came to be through her,  
without her, nothing could ever be.

All that came to be through her,  
through her, was life,  
and that life was light,  
a light that shines through the darkness,  
and the darkness could not overpower it.  
Alleluia!

Basic Version

In the beginning:  
in the beginning was the Word;  
the Word was with God,  
the Word was God.

He was with God,  
in the beginning.

All things came to be through him,  
without him nothing could ever be.

All that came to be through him,  
through him was life,  
and that life was light,  
the light of all people,  
a light that shines through the darkness,  
and the darkness could not overpower it.  
Alleluia!

- see commentary on p. 6

# Prelude: Hodie

*Hodie Christus Natus Est*

The image shows a musical score for a prelude. It consists of six staves of music in a single system, all written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. A large, bold, black 'SAMPLE' watermark is oriented diagonally across the page, from the bottom left towards the top right, partially obscuring the musical notation and lyrics. The lyrics are: 'Ho - di - e Chri - stus na - tus est. ho - di - e Sal - va - tor pa - tris: ho - di - e in - ter - mit - unt An - ge - li, lae - tan - tur Arch - an - ge - li: ho - di - e ex - cel - sis De - o, di - cen - tes: Glo - ri - a ex - cel - sis De - o, al - le - lu - ia.'

# Prelude: On This Day

*Christ Is Born for us*

transcription & translation by Tony Barr

13 On this day, Christ is born for us.

15 on this day, the Sa - vior pe - a - ce for us:

17 on this day, hear the An - gels sing a - cross the earth,

19 and see Arch - an - gels in the sky:

20 on this day, ex - ult, in sing - ing:

23 Glo - ry to God in the high - est, al - le - lu - ia.

**SAMPLE**

# In the Beginning Is the Word

Christmas Proclamation from the John Prologue & the Book of Proverbs  
Extended Version

transcription & translation Tony Barr

25 In the be - gin - ning: in the be - gin - ning is the

27 the Word is with God, the Word is with God.

29 He is with God in the be - gin - ning. Light, and life, and truth, and

32 with God in the be - gin - ning. Light, and life, and truth, and

34 through her, is LIGHT and life it - self,

36 LIGHT and truth, and life, and truth, and life, and truth, and

38 a LIGHT shines through the dark - ness

39 and the dark - ness can not ov - er - pow'r it. Al - le - lu - ia!

41 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

42 Al - le - lu - ia! *ral. e dim.*

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

# In the Beginning Is the Word

*Christmas Proclamation from the John Prologue  
Abridged Version*

Librettist: Tony Ferr

45 Cantor

In the be - gin - ning: in the be - gin - ning was

47 the Word was with God, the Word was with God.

49 He was with God, in the be - gin - ning. All things came to be through him,

51 with - out him. No - thing could ev - er be.

53 All that came to be through him, through him was life,

55 and that life was the light of all peo - ple,

57 a light shines through the dark - ness,

58 and the darkness could not ov - er - pow'r it. Al - le - lu - ia!

**Hodie** (*hoc die*) means **today**, or more precisely **this very day**, or **on this day**. The same consistency and contained excitement by its repetitive use of **on this day** four times. The same consistency bonds the moment of Incarnation with that of Exodus, ‘**This Day** shall be a day of remembrance for you and you must celebrate it as feast in my honor.’ (Ex 13:3) It echoes the excitement of the Prophets in the past, the Day which is happening right now, and the Day which is yet to come. The watchword of Psalm 118, ‘**THIS** is the Day I have made, so be glad and rejoice!’

I have adapted fragments of the Prologue of St John's Gospel interwoven with elements from Wisdom literature (Proverbs 8:22-31). I chose the Latin chant *melodius hodie* because of its association with Christmas, **Hodie** being the Magnificat antiphon for the Second Vespers of Christmas Day. It was popularized when Benjamin Britten incorporated it in his 1942 Ceremony of Carols, opus 28 as processional and recessional to a libretto from an English translation of *Shorter Catechism* edited by Gerald Bullett and written in Middle English. Ralph Vaughan Williams used his final choral piece on the word too, using massive orchestral and choral forces at the 1954 Worcester Cathedral Festival in Worcester Cathedral (a former Benedictine Abbey church with the second largest nave in Christendom, next only to St Peter's in Rome)

Notice how I set the text not in the past but in the present. The beginning, rather than being a point in time past, is an on-going process, an evolution undergoing a personal spiritual and psychological journey. Creation didn't just happen without us. We are part of the process. Thanks to the mandate from Genesis 1:28-31, which gives us co-responsibility for governing the earth and maintaining harmony and balance throughout the eco-sphere as well as the atmosphere. The very elements which began to crystalize after the Big Bang are the minerals which are at the base of all physical being, while the vestigial memory of the primal light from which we came is called back into that realm of light, through imaginations and discovery, through loving relationships and bring us to completion.

The Logos, the Word which created us, is present to us at every level of the electromagnetic spectrum, especially in the discernible ranges of the visual (beauty unfolding before us) and audio (music, speech, laughter) frequencies. At sub-atomic levels, the chemical and electromagnetic impulses which are responsible for our existence reach beyond physical structures and bond with a similar activity in all that is external. These words such as *attraction*, *bonding* to explain this experience. Bonding is a term from Science where chemicals and electrons attach themselves to other molecules and particles. These words as analogies show how we bond fully with the Word within the physical and spiritual evolution of the Universe.

- Tony Barr

SAMPLE