

Performance Notes When Presented as a Mini Opera

These instructions are generalized so that they can be used with virtually any stage configuration. The most important thing to remember is that the characters need to be able to be seen. This can be done by presenting it at the front of the stage if the choir is large, at one side if the choir is smaller, or, if such technology is available, it could be recorded with a bit of scenery and presented on one or more screens at the front of the auditorium.

The action should occur in one general direction and can take place from left to right or vice versa, with the King appearing first at one side and exiting the opposite. The details of the costuming and props are left to the performing group, since you know what is available and convenient for you.

The first three characters may mouth the words to their part if the audience will be able to see that. Otherwise, they may simply move and motion at the appropriate times.

The stage directions are laid out with the lyric of the song first, in italics, followed by the corresponding suggested stage action. Only the key lyrics are given.

Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen, ...

The King is seen from one side looking out into the distance.

Brightly shone the moon...

The King shields his eyes with his hand as he gazes.

When a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel.

The Poor man appears at the opposite side of the stage, gathering (or appearing to gather) sticks to burn.

“Come, good page, and stand by me, ...

The King motions to the Page, standing just off stage behind him. The page enters and, after a short bow to the King, stands facing him to answer.

“Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain.

Page appears to answer King, pointing toward the opposite side of stage.

“Bring me flesh, and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither.

King motions to Page, indicating that he should bring those things. If an actual sack (or other such container) is used, it should be close at hand for the Page to grab and return quickly.

Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together,

The King and Page trudge together not too quickly across the stage.

“Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger...

At this time, they should be just beyond halfway across the stage. They shield their faces from the “stronger wind” and lean into it a bit. The Poor Man turns and searches off stage.

“Mark my footsteps, good my page. Tread thou in them boldly

The King points behind him at the footprints he has made.

In his master’s steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted.

The Page steps, exaggeratedly, in the footsteps of the King. The Poor Man appears again at the edge of the stage.

Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing...

The King and Page accompany the Poor Man off stage, the Page showing what’s in the sack while the Poor Man appears excited / appreciative of the gift.

These directions are not set in stone. Please feel free to elaborate in any way that would make the story more visible.

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soli Deo gloria

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