

Il-presepu tal-Milied (The Christmas Cradle)
SATB div. a cappella

Timothy C. Takach

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Il-presepu tal-Milied

for SATB div. a cappella choir

Commissioned by The Rose Ensemble, in tribute to the life's work of Monsignor Dun Gwann Azzopardi.



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IPA Transcription

Bambin tax-xama', fuq żewġ tibniet:
[ˈbɛmˈbɪn tɛʃːɐmə fuʔ zɛwɔɟ tɪbˈniɛt]
Madwaru siekta, erba' nagħġiet.
[ˈmɛdwaru ˈsiɛkte ˈɛrbe naːɟɟiɛt]

‘L hawn għarrkopptejha, Ommu Marija
[ˈlɛwn ɐːrːkɒpˈtɛj.ɐ ˈɔmːu mɐˈri.jɐ]
Thares titgħaxxaq, b’dik it-Tarbija.
[ˈθarɛs tɪˈtaːʃːɐ? ˈbɒɪk ɪtːɐˈbi.jɐ]

Ġużepi hiemed, kollu hosbien,
[ɟɜːpːi ˈhiɛmɛd ˈkɔlːu ˈhɔzˈbiɛn]
Mill-belt imkeċċi, x’aktarx għajjen.
[mɪlˈbɛlt ɪmˈkɛtʃːɪ ˈʃɛk.tɛrɟ aːjːˈiɛn]

Anglu tax-xama', f’idu l-kelmiet:
[ˈɛŋɟɜːl tɛʃːɐmə ˈfidu lˌkɛlˈmiɛt]
“Glorja lil Alla fl’ogħla smewwiet!”
[ˈglɔrja lɪl ˈɛlːɐ ˈflɔːla smɛwˈwiɛt]

Ftit ‘l hemm il-baqra, b’għajnejha kbar
[ˈftit lɛmː ɪlˈbɛʔrɐ ˈbaːjːnɛj.ɐː ˈkbar]
Donnha b’nifisha, se ssahhan lghar.
[ˈdɒnːaː bɒnˈfɪsaː ˈsɛ sːɐhːɛn ˈlaːr]

Lil hinn il-hmara, thares f’dagħbien.
[ˈlɪl ɪnː ɪlˈhmarɐ ˈθarɛz fdaːˈbiɛn]
Ma tistax tifhem, x’misteru kien:
[ˈmɛ tɪstɛʃ ˈtɪfɛm ˈʃmɪstɛru ˈkiɛn]

Kif l’Iben t’Alla, kbir u setgħan
[ˈkɪf lɪbɛn ˈtɛlːɐ ˈkbɪr u sɛtˈaːn]
Twieled f’ghar fqajjar mhux f’dejr sultan!
[ˈtwiɛlɛd fɛr ˈfʔɛjːɛr ˈmuːɟ fɛjɪr sulˈtɛn]

Lghar nofsu mdawwal, min-nar għajjen
[ˈlaːr nɔfsu ˈmdɛwːɛl ˈmɪnːar aːjːˈiɛn]
Issa jitqawwa, issa jickien.
[ˈɪsːɐ ʃɪtˈqɛwːɐ ˈɪsːɐ ʃɪtˈkiɛn]

Fl-isfond tal-qasam, xi ragħaj fil-bogħ’d
[ˈflɪsˌfɒnt tɛlˈʔɛsɛm ʃɪ ˈraːɛj fɪlˈbɔːɛt]
Jidher iqarreb, donnu jirtogħ’d!
[ʃɪɪ.dɛːr ɪʔˈɛrːɛb ˈdɒnːu ʃɪrˈtɔːɛt]

Meta Diċembru, jerga’ fil-qrib,
[ˈmɛtɐ dɪˈtʃɛmbɾu ˈjɛɾɟɛ fɪlˈʔɪɪp]
Dan il-Presepju, imkienu jsib.
[ˈdɛn ɪlprɛˈsɛpjʊ ɪmˈkiɛnu ˈʃsɪp]

U xhin id-dalma, terġa’ filgħaxija
[u ˈʃhɪn ɪdˈdɛlme ˈtɛɾɟɛ fɪlaːˈʃi.jɐ]
Dwaru ningabru, lkoll għalenija.
[ˈdwaru nɪnˈɟɛbrʊ ˈlɔl aːlɛˈni.jɐ]

Mgħaxxqin inharsu, lejn il-Bambin,
[mɛʃːʔɪn ɪnˈharsu ˈlɛjn ɪlbɛmˈbɪn]
Xi talba ingedwdu, ta’tfal ċkejknin.
[ʃɪ ˈtɛlbɐ ɪnˈɡɛdwɔ ˈtɛtfɛl ˈtʃkɛjˈkɪnɪn]

A wax’d Jesus lies on some straw:

Surrounded by four quiet lambs.

Nearby kneels Mary, his mother

Gazing at the Child with pride.

Joseph stands silent, deep in thought,

Thrown out of the city, probably tired.

A wax’d angel holds the words:

“Glory to God in the highest!”

Close by, the cow, with its large eyes

Stands warming the cave with its breath.

Close by, the donkey, staring and mute

Doesn’t understand the mystery:

How God’s own son, mighty and strong

Is born in a poor cave and not in a king’s palace!

The cave is dark, lit by a fire

First growing strong, then weakening.

Shepherds draw near, come from afar

Shaking in awe and wonder!

Each year as December approaches,

This crib will find its proper place.

And at dark, when night falls again

We will gather around him joyfully.

And joyously looking at Baby Jesus,

Murmur simple children’s prayers.

– *Alfred Cachia*
– *Sung in Maltese*

Guide to Maltese pronunciation in this poem

An audio recording of a native Maltese speaker reading the poem is available and provides an essential element in preparing the language of this piece.

Maltese is a Central Semitic language spoken by people on the Mediterranean islands of Malta, Gozo (Għawdex) and Comino (Kemmuna). The Maltese language developed from Sicilian Arabic, a form of Arabic that developed in Sicily and Malta between the 9th and 12th centuries. Maltese vocabulary is a mix of Sicilian and Italian (50%) and English (6-20%).

Vowels:

a [ə] short version falls between nut and net, or long [a] as in father

e [ɛ] as in bet

i [ɪ] short as in kit, or long [i] as in meet

j [j] as in yard

o [ɔ] as in got

u [ʊ] as in put

gh is silent but functions to elongate the vowel when it occurs before or after a [a:], e [ɛ:] or o [ɔ:]*

*note two occurrences of a slight schwa in the elongated o [ɔ:] in fil-bogh'd [fɪl'bo:ət] and jirtogh'd [jɪr'to:ət]

In some contexts, the elongation does not take place, for example f'ghar fqajjar [fer 'fʔej:ər] where f'ghar leads into the stronger first syllable of fqajjar...

Diphthongs:

ie [iɛ] as in yet

aj [ɛj] as in bite

aw [ɛw] as in house

ej [ɛj] as in weight

ew [ɛw] no English equivalent

Consonants:

ċ [tʃ] as in child

ġ [dʒ] as in judge

h [h] as in hot

h is silent

q [ʔ] is a glottal plosive sound, produced by closing and then suddenly separating the vocal cords

r [r] trilled or rolled

ż [z] as in zephyr

tt [t:], xx [ʃ:], etc. double consonants, represented with a colon should be lengthened, example nn [n:] as in unnatural or Donnha [ˈdɒn:a:].

Note that apostrophes and hyphens are written but not heard as pauses in spoken or sung language. Only gh and q will occasionally stop the sound.

Apostrophes in the IPA brackets precede the stressed syllable in a word, for example siekta [ˈsiekte], indicating the stress is on the first syllable.

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Il-presepju tal-Milied

(The Christmas Cradle)

Timothy C. Takach (2015)

Bass

Timothy C Takach.com

S
A
T
B

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The Soprano part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'L hawn gharr-kopp-tej - ha, Om - mu Ma - ri - ja'. The Alto part begins with a piano (p) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes, followed by the lyrics 'er - ba' nagh-giet. L hawn gharr-kopp-tej - ha, Om - mu Ma - ri - ja'. The Tenor part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'L hawn gharr-kopp-tej - ha, Om - mu Ma - ri - ja'. The Bass part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics 'Oh...'. A large diagonal watermark reading 'For perusal purposes only. No copy or distribute.' is overlaid on the score.

‘L hawn gharr-kopp-tej - ha, Om - mu Ma - ri - ja

p er - ba' nagh-giet. ‘L hawn gharr-kopp-tej - ha, Om - mu Ma - ri - ja

p Oh...

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9

S Thar-es ti-tghax-xaq, — b'dik it-Tar-bi-ja.

A Thar-es ti-tghax-xaq, — b'dik it-Tar-bi-ja.

T 8 Ġu-zep - pi hie-med, kol-lu hos-bien,

B Oh... Ġu-zep - pi hie-med, kol-lu hos-bien,

p *3* *mp*

13

S *mp* Glor - ja lil Al -

A *mp* Glor - ja lil Al-la! Glor -

T 8 Mill - belt im-keċ-ċi, x'ak-tarx ghaj-jien. *p* Glor - ja lil Al -

B (b) Mill - belt im-keċ-ċi, — x'ak-tarx ghaj-jien. *p* Glor - ja lil Al-la!

mp *mp* *mp* *mp* *p* *3*

17

S la! *mf* ja! Glor - ja! Glor - ja! Ah! Ah!

A Glor - ja! Glor - ja! An - ġlu tax-xa-ma', *mf*

T la! Glor - ja! An - ġlu tax-xa-ma', *mf*

B Glor - ja! An - ġlu tax-xa-ma',

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf*

22

mf *f*

S Ah! Ah! "Glor - ja lil Al - la fl'ogh - la smew - wiet!"

A fi - du l-kel-miet: "Glor - ja lil Al - la fl'ogh - la smew - wiet!" Ah!

T fi - du l-kel-miet: "Glor - ja lil Al - la fl'ogh - la smew - wiet!"

B fi - du l-kel-miet: "Glor - ja lil Al - la fl'ogh - la smew - wiet!"

25

pp *n.* *p* *pp*

S

A

T Fit 'hemmil - baq - ra, b'ghaj - nej - ha kbar Don - nha b'ni - lis - ha, se ssah - han lghar.

B Fit 'hemmil - baq - ra, b'ghaj - nej - ha kbar Ah! se ssah - han lghar.

29

pp *mp* *mf* *accel.*

S il - hma - ra, thar - es f'dagh - bien. Ma tif - hem,

A Lil hinn il - hma - ra, thar - es f'dagh - bien. Ma tis - tax tif - hem,

T Lil hinn il - hma - ra, thar - es f'dagh - bien. Ma tis - tax tif - hem,

B Lil hinn il - hma - ra, thar - es f'dagh - bien. Ma tis - tax tif - hem,

Glorious ♩ = 76

ff

32

S x'mis - te - ru kien: Ah! Ah!

A x'mis - te - ru kien: Ah! Ah!

T x'mis - te - ru kien: Ah! Ah!

B x'mis - te - ru kien: Ah! Ah!

36

S Kif l'I - ben t'Al - la, kbir u setgh - an Twie - led f'ghar fqaj - jar

A Kif l'I - ben t'Al - la, kbir u setgh - an Twie - led f'ghar fqaj - jar

T Kif l'I - ben t'Al - la, kbir u setgh - an Twie - led f'ghar fqaj - jar

B Kif l'I - ben t'Al - la, kbir u setgh - an Twie - led f'ghar fqaj - jar

39

S mhux f'dejr sul - tan! Glor - ja lil Al - la! Glor - ja! Glor -

A mhux f'dejr sul - tan! Glor - ja lil Al - la! Glor -

T mhux f'dejr sul - tan! Glor - ja lil Al - la! Glor -

B mhux f'dejr sul - tan! Glor - ja lil Al - la! Glor -

43 *non dim.* $\text{♩} = 63$

S *ja!* *non dim.*

A *ja!* *non dim.* *mp* Lghar nof - su mdaw - wal, min - nar għaj - kien.

T *ja!* *non dim.* *p* Mm... Mm... Mm...

B *ja!* *non dim.* *p* Mm... Mm... Mm... Oo... Oo...

46 *mp* *p*

S Is - sa jit - qaw - wa, is - sa jiċ - kien.

A Is - sa jit - qaw - wa, Oo... Fl-is - fond tal -

T Is - sa jit - qaw - wa, Oo... Mm... Oo... n.

B Is - sa jit - qaw - wa, Oo... Oo... Oo... Oo...

with rubato solo mf

50

S

A qa - sam, xi ragħ - aj - fil - bogħ'd Jid - her i - qar - reb, don - nu jir - togh'd!

T

B

Prayer ♩ = 60

54 *solo p* *mp* *p*

S Me - ta Di - ċem - bru, jer - ġa' fil - qrib, Dan il - Pre - se - pju, im -

A *solo p* *mp* *p*

A Me - ta Di - ċem - bru, jer - ġa' fil - qrib, Dan il - Pre - se - pju, im -

T *solo p* *mp* *p*

T Me - ta Di - ċem - bru, jer - ġa' fil - qrib, Dan il - Pre - se - pju, im -

B *solo p* *mp* *p*

B Me - ta Di - ċem - bru, jer - ġa' fil - qrib, Dan il - Pre - se - pju, im -

57 *p* *tutti mf*

S kien - u jsib. U xhin id - dal - ma, ter - ġa' filgh - a - xi - ja

A *p* *tutti mf*

A kien - u jsib. U xhin id - dal - ma, ter - ġa' filgh - a - xi - ja

T *p* *tutti mf*

T kien - u jsib. U xhin id - dal - ma, ter - ġa' filgh - a - xi - ja

B *p* *tutti mf*

B kien - u jsib. U xhin id - dal - ma, ter - ġa' filgh - a - xi - ja

60 *solo (S1 only)* *f* *tutti mf*

S Dwa - ru nin - ġa - bru, lkoll gha - le - ni - ja Ah!

A *f* *mf*

A Dwa ru nin - ġa - bru, lkoll gha - le - ni - ja Mghax - xqin in - har - su,

T *f* *mf*

T Dwa - ru nin - ġa - bru, lkoll gha - le - ni - ja Mghax - xqin in - har - su,

B *f* *mf*

B Dwa - ru nin - ġa - bru, lkoll gha - le - ni - ja Mghax - xqin in - har - su,

63 *mp*

S ta't - fal ċkejk - nin.

A lejn il - Bam - bin, Xi tal - ba in - god - wdu, ta't fal ċkejk - nin,

T lejn il - Bam - bin, Xi tal - ba in - god - wdu, ta't fal ċkejk - nin,

B lejn Bam - bin, Oo...

66 *p*

S

A ta't fal ċkejk - nin, ta't fal ċkejk - nin, ċkejk -

T ta't fal ċkejk - nin, ta't fal ċkejk - nin, ċkejk -

B ta't fal ċkejk - nin, ta't fal ċkejk - nin, ċkejk -

68 *ritard* *ppp*

S

A nin, ċkejk - nin, ċkejk - nin.

T nin, ċkejk - nin, ċkejk - nin.

B nin, ċkejk - nin, ċkejk - nin.

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Reviewed as “gorgeous” (Washington Post) and “stunning” (Lawrence Journal-World), the music of Timothy C. Takach has risen fast in the concert world. Applauded for his melodic lines and rich, intriguing harmonies, Takach has received commissions from the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Olaf Band, Cantus, Pavia Winds, Lorelei Ensemble, VocalEssence, the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, The Rose Ensemble, and numerous other organizations. His compositions have been performed on A Prairie Home Companion, The Boston Pops holiday tour, multiple All-State and festival programs and at venues such as the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center and Royal Opera House Muscat. He is a co-creator of the theatrical production of All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914, by Peter Rothstein.

Takach studied music composition at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, and has frequent national work as a composer-in-residence, presenter, clinician and lecturer. He is a full-time composer and lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons.

Selected vocal works by Timothy C. Takach:

Mixed Voices

A Depth We Cannot Sound		SATB, vibraphone, marimba, large tom
A Worshipper and a Man		SATB a cappella
And I Saw		SATB div. a cappella
As the Sunflower Turns on Her God		SSAATBB div, Sop. solo, SSATB soli, a cappella
The Darkling Thrush	(earthsongs)	SATB, SAT soli, a cappella
Fragile		SATB, hand drum
Listen to the Apples		SATB div. a cappella
Neither Angels, Nor Demons, Nor Powers	(Graphite Publishing)	SSATBB a cappella
Nubes Oriebatur: the eruption of Vesuvius		SSATBB a cappella
One Boy Told Me		SATB, piano
Ragnarök		SATB div. a cappella
Su Rahva Koda (The House of Your Kindred)		SSAATTBB a cappella
This Alien Landscape		SATB, crotales, suspended cymbal, bass drum
This Amazing Life		SA(T)B, piano

Treble Voices

And I Saw		SSAA div. a cappella
Bahihii Waaliidkay Dhaqay		2-part, piano
Cassiopeia		SSA a cappella
Queen of the Range	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano
The Streets of Laredo (arr. American Folk Song)	(Graphite Publishing)	Unison, TTB, piano
There is No Rose	(Lorelei Ensemble)	SSAA, SS soli, a cappella
Torn Map	(Graphite Publishing)	SA, piano
Twenty Questions		2-part treble, piano

Men's Voices

All Natures, Even Mine		TTTBB a cappella
Empty		TB (opt. div), piano, opt. djembe
Goodbye, Then		TBB choir, Bb clarinet, piano
I Will Howl		TBB choir, piano or cello
Kin		TB, piano
Luceat Eis		TTTBB a cappella
Mad		TB, piano
Original Harmony	(Colla Voce)	TTBB a cappella
Rough Beast		TTBB, percussion
Salve Regina	(Graphite Publishing)	TBB semi-chorus, TTBB a cappella
Things I Didn't Know I Loved	(Graphite Publishing)	TTBB a cappella

Large Works

The Longest Nights (ca. 21')		SATB, piano or string quartet
This is How You Love (ca. 35')		SATB div. a cappella
True North (ca. 16')		SATB, chamber orchestra
We, the Unknown (ca. 40')		TTBB, soloists, chamber orchestra
We Made a Grave For Him, And Her Smoke Rose Up Forever (ca. 10')		TTBB a cappella
Where Beauty Comes From (ca. 16')		TBB, 2-part, SSAA, SATB; piano