

Feasts of Christmas

- I. Vox in Krishna*
- II. Star of Rohini*

**Shruthi
Rajasekar**

SATB div. a cappella

Program Note:

Celebrated over 12 days, the different Feasts of Christmas allow religious observers the opportunity to delve deeper into the origins and cherished beliefs of Christianity. In learning more about each of these occasions, I was struck by the fascinating parallels between the mythologies surrounding Jesus and the Hindu god Krishna; stories about the latter can be found in the major Sanskrit text called *Bhagavata Purana*. ***Vox in Krishna*** and ***Star of Rohini*** explore similarities in these two important figures, highlighting the interconnectedness of divinity and humanity across cultures, languages, and religions.

- Shruthi Rajasekar, 2021

Vox in Krishna

Holy Innocents

A voice is heard weeping
Rachel, Devaki's children
They are no more

Herod, Kamsa
Killed the children

But Rachel, Devaki:
Know that
Kamsa will be no more
He will be no more

- Adapted from Matthew 2:18 and
the *Bhagavata Purana*, Canto 10

Star of Rohini

Epiphany

They saw the star of
Rohini ascending
Vidimus stellam in oriens
et venimus adorare

We were stargazing
Gazing at stars
Ecce stella quam
viderant in oriente

gavisi sunt
gaudio magno valde

They rejoiced for the star was there
With tears of joy, they cried,
"Behold the star!"

The answers -
They lie in oriente

- Adapted from Matthew 2:2, 2:9-10, and the
Bhagavata Purana, Canto 10 with additions
from the composer

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Feasts of Christmas

Shruthi Rajasekar

1. Vox in Krishna
Holy Innocents

Program Note:

The title of this piece, “Vox in Krishna,” is as much a reference to the original Latin “Vox in Rama” as it is a nod to the *dasavatara* of Vishnu. The Latin text is connected to the Feast of Holy Innocents. Meanwhile, in Hinduism, Krishna is recognized as an avatar of the god Vishnu – another of His avatars is the deity Rama.

In “Vox in Rama,” Rachel’s voice is heard in the town of Ramah mourning the senseless death of her children which, in the Biblical Book of Matthew occurs at the hands of the jealous and fearful King Herod. The origin story of the Hindu god Krishna is uncannily similar: a voice prophesizes that the child of King Kamsa’s relative will one day vanquish him. Out of, again, jealousy and fear, the King imprisons his relative Devaki and her husband Vasudeva, and each time a child is born to them, he slaughters it. Their eighth child, Krishna, escapes and ultimately ends Kamsa’s reign of terror.

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♩ = 60 *mp*

Soprano
A voice is heard weep - ing_ voice is weep - ing_ Rach - el, De - va - ki's

Alto
mp
A voice is heard weep - ing_ A voice is weep - ing_ Rach - el, De - va - ki's

Tenor
mp
A voice is heard weep - ing_ is weep - ing_ Rach - el, De - va - ki's

Bass
mp
mm heard weep - ing_ mm weep - ing_ Rach - el, De - va - ki's

Piano
(rehearsal only)

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6

S. *mf* *dim.* *p*
 chil - - dren Rach - el, De - va - ki's chil - - dren they are no

A. *mf* *p*
 chil - dren Rach - el, Rach - el, De - va - ki's chil - dren they they they they are no

T. *mf* *dim.* *p*
 chil - - dren Rach - el, De - va - ki's chil - - dren they they are no

B. *mf* *p*
 chil - - dren Rach - el, De - va - ki's chil - dren they they they they are no

10

S. *pp ghostly* **B**
 more they are no more He - rod He - rod

A. *pp ghostly*
 more they are no more He - - rod He - - rod

T. *pp ghostly*
 more they are no more He - rod He - - rod

B. *pp ghostly*
 more they are no more He - - rod He - - rod

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15

S. He - He - rod He - He - He - rod, He - - rod, He - He - He - rod,

A. He - - rod, He - rod, Kam - sa He - - rod,

T. He - - - rod, He - rod, He - rod, He - Kam - sa He -

B. He - - rod, He - - rod, He - - rod, He - - rod,

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19

S. He - - - rod, He - - rod, Kam - sa He - rod killed the chil - dren *mp*

A. Kam - sa He - Kam - sa Kam - sa Kam - sa killed the chil - dren *mp*

T. He - rod, He - He - rod, Kam - sa Kam - sa killed chil - dren *mp*

B. Kam - sa Kam - sa Kam - He - rod killed the chil - dren *mp*

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24 **C** *cresc. poco a poco*

S. ng ng ng

A. *cresc. poco a poco*
A voice is heard weep - ing A voice is heard weep - ing weep - - ing

T. *cresc. poco a poco*
A voice is heard weep - ing A voice is weep - ing Rach - el De - va - ki

B. *cresc. poco a poco*
ng ng ng

shruthi
rajasekar
music

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29 **D** *f* *p*

S. aa Rach - el, Rach - el, De - va - ki:

A. *f* *p*
weep - - - ing Rach - el, Rach - el, De - va - ki:-

T. *f*
weep - ing

B. *f*
weep - ng

shruthi
rajasekar
music

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33

S. Rach - el, De - va - ki: Know that, that Kam - sa will be no more But

A. De - va - ki: Kam - sa will be no more

T. *p* ng no more

B. *p* But

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37

S. Rach - el, De - va - ki: Know that Kam - sa will be no more Kam - sa

A. Rach - el, De - va - ki: Know that Kam - sa will be no more that Kam - sa

T. *mm* will be no more that Kam -

B. *mm* Kam Kam

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2. Star of Rohini

Epiphany

Shruthi Rajasekar

Program Note:

In *Star of Rohini*, written for the Christian Feast of Epiphany and embracing its sense of wonder, awe, and mystery, the star of Bethlehem is reimagined as Rohini, Krishna's *nakshatra* (birth star) and guiding influence. Matthew 2:2 from the Bible says, "Vidimus enim stellam ejus in oriente" — "For we have seen His star in the East." Who is to say that this wasn't Krishna's star of Rohini?

with Wonder $\text{♩} = 92$
p

A

Soprano
Star of Ro - hi - ni _____ as - cend in Ro - hi -

Alto
Star of Ro - hi - ni _____ saw the star star of Ro - hi

Tenor
Star Ro They _____ star of Ro - hi

Bass
Star of Ro star saw _____ star _____ star _____

Piano
(rehearsal only)

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5

S. - ni Vi - di - mus the star_____

A. the star_____ Vi - di - mus the star as - cend

T. o star the star as - cend - - ing

B. stell - am in o - ri - ens star as - cend - - ing

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10 **B**

S. *cresc. poco a poco* in o - ri - ens in o - ri - ens *mf* stel - lam stel - lam we were

A. *cresc. poco a poco* mm Vi - di - mus the star of Ro - hi - ni *mf* we were

T. *cresc. poco a poco* mm oo ee *mf*

B. _____

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13

S. star - gaz - ing were star _____ the star Ro - hi - ni in o - ri -

A. _____ ng star - gaz - ing the star the star _____

T. star - gaz - ing were star - gaz - ing were gaz - ing at stars

B. _____ gaz - ing in

mp

mp

mp

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19

S. -en - te _____ *mp* ve - ni - mus et a - do -

A. _____ a - do - - ra - re _____ *p* ve - ni - mus et a - do -

T. _____ ra - re _____ *pp* mus _____

B. _____ a - - - do - - ra - re _____ *pp* mus _____

p

pp

pp

pp

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24

S. *p*
- ra - re _____ Ec - ce stel - la quam vi - de - rant ga - vi - si

A. *p*
- ra Ec - ce stell Ec - ce stel - la quam vi - de - rant vi - si

1
T. *p*
ra - re a stel - la quam vi - si

2
T. *p*
ra - re a stel - la quam vi - si

B. *p*
ra - re a - do - ra - re ec - ce _____

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27

S. *p*
sunt _____ They re - joiced for the star was there Ro - hi - ni mag - no val -

A. *p*
sunt _____ They re - joiced they re - joiced gau - di - o _____

(unis.)
T. *p*
sunt _____ They re - joiced star was Ro - hi - ni _____ gau -

B. *p*
sunt _____ They re - joiced there Ro - hi - ni

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31

S. *p* - de with tears of joy they cried, "Ec - ce, Ec - ce, Ec - ce Be -

A. *p* tears of joy they cried, "Ec - ce, Ec - ce Ec - ce Be -

T. *p* - di - o with tears of joy Ec - ce, Ec - ce, Ec - ce Be -

B. *p* with tears of joy cried, "Ec - ce, Ec - ce, Ec - - -

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36

S. *mp* **D** - hold, Be - hold the star!" Vi - de - rant the star in o - ri - ens *cresc. poco a poco* vi - de -

A. *mp* - hold, Be - hold the star!" Vi - de rant the star in o - ri - ens *cresc. poco a poco* vi -

T. *mp* - hold, the star!" Vi - - - de star *cresc. poco a poco*

B. *mp* - ce" o - - - ri - - ens *cresc. poco a poco* vi - de -

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40

S. - rant the star in o - ri - ens vi - de - rant the star in o - ri -

A. - de o - ri - ens vi - de Ro - hi - ni

T. star o - ri - en - te the star in o

B. - rant vi de - - - - rant

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43

S. - ens We were star - - gaz - ing *f* *mp* *p* Stel - lam o - ri -

A. We were star - - gaz - ing *f* *mp* *p* Stel - lam

T. Stell - am We were star - - gaz - ing *f* *mp* *p* Stel - lam

B. in Stars *f* *mp* *p* Stel - lam in

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46

S. - ens o - ri - ens Ro - hi - ni

A. star star star of Ro - hi - ni

T. star in star in the star Ro - hi - ni

B. star star star nn

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50

dim. rit..... *pp* ♩ = 76

S. the an - swers they lie in o - ri - en - te

A. the an - swers they lie in o - ri - en - te

T. the an - swers an - swers *pp* o - ri - en - te

B. *pp* o - ri - en - - - te

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"[Shruthi] Rajasekar has allowed boldness to be her guiding light in the journey through her dense and evocative creativity... Rajasekar will continue to sail forward, into a cartography of her own delineation."

– The Seattle Times

Composer and vocalist Shruthi Rajasekar (she/her) is a McKnight Fellow, Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, Associate of the Royal Northern College of Music (ARNCM), winner of the Global Women in Music Award from the United Nations, and a Marshall Scholarship recipient. Her creative work highlights identity, community, and joy. Shruthi's music reflects her deep roots in the Carnatic (South Indian classical) and Western classical idioms, her diasporic South Asian background, and her belief in the importance of communal gathering and civic engagement. Globally, her compositions have been featured at the Royal Albert Hall (London, UK), the Cannes Film Festival (France), the National Centre for Performing Arts (Mumbai, India), Victoria Concert Hall (Singapore), and the United Nations' COP 26 (Glasgow, UK).

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