

# I SEE A STAR

by  
Ken Hornsby

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The Religious Drama Society of Great Britain  
Email: [sales@radiusdrama.org.uk](mailto:sales@radiusdrama.org.uk) web: [www.radiusdrama.org.uk](http://www.radiusdrama.org.uk)



## CAST (in order of appearance)

The Chorus

Mary

1<sup>st</sup> messenger

Joseph

The Magi      Kaeso (Melchior's assistant)  
                    Melchior  
                    Jairus  
                    Benyosef (Melchior's servant)

1<sup>st</sup> Angel

Shepherds    Misael  
                    Acheel  
                    Cyriacus  
                    Stephanos

Small flock of sheep

2<sup>nd</sup> Angel

More Magi    Hormizdah  
                    Caspar  
                    Gallio  
                    Perozadh  
                    Bazantor  
                    Balthazar  
                    Tiberius  
                    Lucan

7 villagers

A few Roman soldiers

Menci (a donkey)

Ephraim (a householder)

Salome (a midwife)

Herod

Tancred (a courtier, Herod's 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant)

Aristobolus (a courtier, Herod's senior assistant)

2<sup>nd</sup> messenger

Courtiers

## **NOTES ON PRODUCTION**

**The Play.** This is not intended to be a devotional play so much as a dramatic re-enactment of the Christmas story. It is more history than religion, giving background and reason and providing cause for thought about how and why the events developed. As such it suits a variety of school, church and youth groups.

**The Cast:** The play has been written to give a large number of children (36) small speaking parts rather than the other way round. (This number could be reduced if necessary – particularly with the Magi and the Villagers). It thus does not need “star” actors, though there is plenty of scope for character acting.

**Scenery:** The play can be performed on a completely clear stage or open arena, since the same space has to act as a mountain top, Herod's palace, Mary and Joseph's stable, etc. That said, any general painted scenery or cut-outs can be used if thought beneficial.

**Stage furniture:** The only requirement is a movable bench, which is used as a seat, a throne, a bed, and somewhere to rest the crib.

**The Chorus:** There are four chorus pieces, repeated, which can be performed either by those on the stage at the time or a separate chorus placed elsewhere. The pieces can either be spoken as verse, have music behind them or put to music and sung.

**Lighting:** Though not essential it would be advantageous if this can be variable. There are particular needs for early morning on a mountain top; bright lights for the shepherds' vision, nighttime in the stable.

**Costume:** These can be traditional or modern.

**The donkey:** Some ingenuity is required here; Menci, the donkey, could be played by two children (like a pantomime horse), or one – standing, or stooped. When Mary is required to sit on it, it could just stand in front of her, or she could simply lean on it.

**The sheep:** There is scope for a small flock of sheep, who can baa when the script requires and at other times when appropriate.

## Scene 1

*The stage is almost dark. The chorus is positioned at the front of the stage facing away from the audience and towards the backdrop.*

**1<sup>st</sup> voice:** I see a star...

*(Slowly, one after the other, actors shine torches on the backdrop; the effect is of stars in the sky. Some are brighter than others, particularly three. During this...)*

**Chorus** I see a star  
Star in the sky  
Where are you going? Where are you going?  
I see a star  
Star in the sky  
Where are you going? Where are you going?

*(The three brighter stars gradually start to move together until they overlap, producing the brightest star in the sky).*

**Chorus** I see a star  
Bright star in the sky  
Where are you going? Where are you going?  
Bright star in the sky.

*(As they speak, the holders of the bright stars stand up)*

**1<sup>st</sup> star holder:** Are you going to see Mary?

**2<sup>nd</sup> star holder:** Are you going to see the shepherds?

**3<sup>rd</sup> star holder:** Are you going to see the Wise Men?

**4<sup>th</sup> voice** *(Actor unseen, growling)* Are you going to see Herod...?

*(The lights slowly come up as the chorus stands and turns towards the audience. They switch their torches out.)*

**Chorus** Where are you going, bright star in the sky?  
Leading the way, shining so high  
Where are you going, bright star in the sky?  
Leading the way, telling us why  
Where are you going, bright star in the sky?  
Leading the way, helping us try.  
How did it happen, bright star in the sky...?

## Scene 2

*Mary is sitting alone. There is the sound of horse's hooves, followed by a knock at the door.*

**Mary:** Hallo. Come in.

*(A messenger enters carrying a small scroll)*

**Messenger:** Good day to you, madam. I bring a message for Mary, daughter of Anna and Joachim. *(Groans hopefully)* It's been a long journey...

**Mary:** I am Mary. Who is it from?

**Messenger:** From your cousin Elizabeth – all the way from Hebron. It's been a long journey...

**Mary:** From Hebron? That's nearly eighty miles away. Seven or eight days' travel.  
You must be very tired. *(Messenger nods energetically)* Let me offer you a drink for your thirst.

*(She gives him a drink)*

**Messenger:** *(takes long drink)* I thank you, madam. And here is your message from your cousin.

**Mary:** *(Speaking as she reads the scroll)* I cannot believe it. I cannot believe it. She is to have a baby! *(Reads from the scroll again)* My cousin Elizabeth. A baby! Oh how lucky she is. *(To the messenger)* I am to be married soon and I would like a baby - when the time is ready. A baby – and she is so old! She's over fifty. That's so old.

*(From offstage we hear Joseph calling "Mary...Mary...")*

**Mary:** That's my betrothed, Joseph. I must tell him. He will be amazed. Thank you.

**Messenger:** Yes. Right. Thank you for the drink madam. Yes. Right.

*(He turns to go and almost collides with Joseph who enters at speed. They dodge round each other for a moment before the messenger leaves.)*

**Joseph:** Who was that?

**Mary:** He brought a message from my cousin Elizabeth. Here.

*(She hands the scroll over to Joseph, who reads. Horse's hooves as messenger departs)*

**Joseph:** But she's so old.

**Mary:** It must be a miracle. And they thought they hadn't had a child because they had offended God and he was punishing them. I must go and see her.

**Joseph:** But it's so far away. Who would you travel with? It's dangerous on the roads today. So many bandits and wild animals about.

**Mary:** I'll find a way. Oh it's so exciting. Elizabeth with child. Come on, let's go and tell my parents.

*(They exit together. The light fades)*

### Scene 3

*As in the first scene three torch lights show on the backdrop. They slowly move towards each other as the scene progresses. A little light begins to come up on the stage as Melchior, the oldest of the Magi, shuffles on, followed by his friend Kaeso and, just behind, his old servant Benyosef who has a large chart in his hands and which he can't really manage. It gradually becomes lighter as the scene develops and morning comes on.*

**Kaeso:** *(to Melchior)* Come on old man. Nearly there. *(Turns back to Benyosef)*  
And you too Benyosef. It'll be light in a minute and then we won't see the stars.

Sit yourself down, master.

*(Melchior sits on a rock and Benyosef hands him the chart. Kaeso picks up a piece of wood and rests it on Melchior's lap and hands him a piece of charcoal to write with. Melchior stares at the stars and starts to make marks on the chart. The three stars are nearly together.)*

**Kaeso:** All right?

**Melchior:** You know it's all right.

**Kaeso:** You're sure this is it?

**Melchior:** The planets are nearly together. Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. As the prophets

have told us, when they are together this is a signal of a great man's birth.  
There will be one great light in the sky – and it won't be long now.

*(A great shouting comes from offstage. Jairus enters, calling out to Melchior. They clasp each other to themselves.)*

**Melchior:** Jairus!

**Jairus:** Melchior! And I've just seen Caspar arriving down the hill. Soon we'll all be together. And when do we set off - to greet the new king?

**Melchior:** Not so fast my friend. The star has many miles to travel. We won't be leaving for a month or two yet. And the rest of us have yet to come together – especially my old friend Balthazar – we can't go without him!

**Jairus:** But where exactly are we going? Where is the new king due to be born? Can't we set off now? I want to get going.

**Melchior:** I said - it's too soon; the star will travel slowly. If we go now we'll get there before the child is born. You're always so impatient. Wait till we're all together and we can plan our route and what to take with us.

*(They link arms and make their way off stage, followed by Kaeso and Benyosef, now holding the chart again and having trouble with its size.)*

**Benyosef:** *(Groaning to himself)* That's right; it's all great fun for you - trotting round the country, seeing all the kings. And now it's a baby. I don't know. Who's doing the work round here? Can see why you're called wise men.

*(He follows them off)*