

SYNOPSIS

A chorister announces that Ludus Danielis was created by the young people of Beauvais. Immediately a processional chorus is heard, praising Daniel's fortitude and introducing the key events in the play. King Belshazzar comes to his throne.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST & THE WRITING ON THE WALL

The King commands that the sacred vessels plundered from the Jewish temple be brought for his Feast. His Nobles and Satraps celebrate Belshazzar's great deeds as the vessels are carried in. At the height of celebrations, a Right Hand appears and writes a mysterious text on the wall: *MANE TEHEL PHARES*

Belshazzar calls for his Soothsayers, Astrologers and Mathematicians. Three Wise Men come forward. The King promises honour and riches to whoever can decipher the message. But the doddering three retire in confusion.

The Queen enters to a chorus extolling her virtues. She counsels the King to summon the captive Prophet Daniel. Noble Messengers are sent to fetch him, and in a great procession, declaring Daniel's wisdom, virtue and vision, they bring him to the King.

The King again promises high honour for interpreting the mysterious Writing. At once Daniel declares, "Your downfall is at hand". Recounting the profanities committed by Nebuchadnezzar his father and Belshazzar himself, Daniel tells the King what the Writing portends:

And God says MANE:

Your reign is finished.

TEHEL signifies the scales:

You have been weighed and found wanting.

*PHARES: this is the division.
You kingdom is given over to another.*

Belshazzar, keeping his word, clothes Daniel in majestic purple, and orders the sacred vessels to be taken away.

The Queen departs, the vessels are carried away, and the people disperse in joyous celebration, for by deciphering the Writing Daniel has proved himself to be the Prophet of God. "*Gaudeamus...*": "*Let us rejoice...*"

BABYLON CONQUERED BY KING DARIUS

Suddenly, King Darius and his army are heard approaching. The procession recounts his mighty deeds. As it nears Belshazzar, two men run ahead to eject him from the throne.

King Darius mounts the throne. Immediately two Counsellors advise that Daniel be given his former status. The King complies, and Messengers are sent to fetch Daniel. A procession praising his virtues and rejoicing in the coming Nativity brings the Prophet to Darius, who grants him the highest place of honour.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

The envious Evil Counsellors, conspiring to have Daniel killed, urge the King to declare a foolish law, forbidding the worship of any god other than himself. The King is persuaded, making an Ass of himself.

Daniel returns to his place to worship the true God. When he is caught at his prayers by the spying Counsellors, Darius has no choice but to condemn him to death: the Satraps remind the reluctant King that the law admits no exception. Daniel entreats the King in a moving lament, but is cast into the Lions' Den. In answer to his prayer, a Guardian Angel appears.

DANIEL SAVED & PROPHECIES THE COMING MESSIAH

The Prophet Habakkuk, carrying a harvest supper to his reapers, is intercepted by an Angel, who orders him to take the food to Daniel. Habakkuk is reluctant. The Angel takes him by the hair and carries him to Daniel, who accepts the supper thankfully.

King Darius returns to the Lions' Den to find Daniel still alive. The holy man tells of his miraculous deliverance. The King joyously releases Daniel and the Evil Counsellors are thrown to the Lions.

Restored to high honour, Daniel foretells the end of the Old Order and the advent of the Messiah.

THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL

An Angel announces the birth of Jesus, bringing us back to the Christmas season.

Musical notation for the first line of the Christmas Angel song. The melody is written on a single treble clef staff. The lyrics are: *Rex, in e- ter- num vi- ve!* Below the staff, the phonetic transcription is: Rex, in aye tar rr nüm vee vay. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4.

Musical notation for the second line of the Christmas Angel song. The melody is written on a single treble clef staff. The lyrics are: *Gau- de- a- mus re- fe- ra- mus* Below the staff, the phonetic transcription is: Go day am müs ray feh ram müs. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4.

Musical notation for the third line of the Christmas Angel song. The melody is written on a single treble clef staff. The lyrics are: *In hoc na- ta- li- ti- o, Da- ni- el cum gau- di- o, Te lau- dat hec con- ti- o* Below the staff, the phonetic transcription is: In hock nah tah lee tzi ooh Dang ni el cüm go dee ooh Tay low dat hay kung tzi ooh. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4.