



Preview Script



a one act modern musical nativity

by

Peter White

Angel Squadron

by Peter White

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NOTE : This is a preview version, and does not contain the full script.

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Based on ISBN 1 904458 91 2

Characters : 11m, 4f, 13m/f

SEE 'GENDER ROLES' BELOW

Principals (6m, 4f, 2m/f)

Cadet Astra :	a young Cadet Angel, a superb flyer with a 'gung-ho' attitude to match, (think 'Top Gun')
Cadet Celeste :	a young Cadet Angel with a voice like an angel, has her heart set on a solo career
Cadet Stratus :	Celeste's 'best mate' (m/f)
Wing Commander Gabriel :	has a commanding presence
Chief Of Staff :	Gabriel's personal assistant (m/f)
Squadron Ldr Nimbus :	an experienced campaigner, the 'Old Man' who the squadron look up to
Flt Lieutenant Aurora :	the dream specialist (f)
Elizabeth :	non-speaking role, but needs to be good singer, preferably with dancing abilities
Mary :	non-speaking role, but needs to be good singer
Wise Men 1, 2 & 3 :	all need a good sense of comic timing

Support (5m, 11m/f)

Flight Controller :	an offstage voice, a typical 1940's BBC announcer (m)
Narrators 1, 2 & 3 :	need good reading voices and a good sense of rhythm (m/f)
Shepherds 1, 2 & 3 :	all need a good sense of comic timing (m/f)
Air Vice Marshall Michael :	delivers lines with the spoken authority of Sir Lawrence Olivier (m)
Flt Lieutenant Solar :	a flying ace with a good sense of humour and an awfully posh accent. Astra's immediate superior (m/f)
Choir Master :	a one scene cameo, but should command the stage (m/f)
Navigation Officer :	cameo role (m/f)
Intelligence Officer :	cameo role (m/f)
Cockney Angel :	cameo role, chirpy, short, from East London, insufferably optimistic (m)
Met Officer :	cameo role, but crucial to the plot (m/f)
Zachariah :	non-speaking role (m)
Joseph :	non-speaking role, but needs to be to display pathos (m)
Extras :	Angels, Shepherds, Traders etc. The song 'Born In A Stable' offers opportunities for a number of non-speaking, non-singing cameo roles.

Synopsis

'Angel Squadron' is a very modern Nativity and tells the Christmas story from the point of view of the angels, who feature prominently throughout the story. Angels are found in Christian, Jewish and Muslim beliefs, and are described as supernatural beings, intermediate between God and humans.

The author wanted to produce something that boys in particular could enjoy, and the style is something of a homage to the 'Battle of Britain' type films prevalent in the 1960s. It's a lot of fun but also very thought-provoking, covering as it does parts of the Christmas story that are often neglected in traditional 'tea-towel' Nativity plays.

The premise of this marvellous musical is that the 'angel squadrons' are carrying out 'secret missions' briefed by the 'Supreme Commander'. It takes place at the angels 'airfield' and on earth, in and around Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.

On the 'airfield', after the introductory song 'Angel Squadron March', Cadet Astra is berated for showing off and not being a proper part of the White Angels display team, but is seen as being 'cool' by the rest of the angels as they sing about their 'number one top gun' in the 'Astra Groove'. Cadet Celeste is offered a place in the 'Angel Fame Academy' by the Choir Master and the angels likewise sing about their 'angel singing star' in 'Celestial Rap'.

Wing Commander Gabriel has been tasked by the 'Supreme Commander' with a sensitive intelligence mission to visit a childless couple on earth (Zachariah and Elizabeth). They have been chosen to have a son to be called John who will be one of God's 'Special Agents' on earth to prepare the people there for the birth of Jesus. On his return to the 'airfield', Air Vice Marshall Michael gathers all the angels together for a briefing on this new plan for the people on earth – the rescue of the human race.

After this Gabriel returns to visit Mary, telling her that she too would soon become pregnant with Jesus, who will, through his ministry, set his people free. Understandably, Mary is surprised that she has been chosen and in quiet contemplation with the younger village children, she sings 'Who Am I?'. Mary then visits Elizabeth and they share their amazement in the song, 'Never Too Old'. Lieutenant Aurora is then tasked with re-assuring Mary's fiancé through a dream that all will be well in 'Dawn Of A Brand New Day' as the rest of the angels get ready for their finest mission to date, flying in with the "biggest formation since creation, in a precision operation, with full support from massed heavenly choirs ...".

In Bethlehem, immediately before the birth, 'Born In A Stable', a superbly crafted rat-pack swing number, reveals that it wasn't necessary for Jesus to be born in high-powered glitzy surroundings, but in a humble stable. The shepherds share a comedy scene before they are visited by a group of angels, and a re-worked salsa-style combination of 'While Shepherds Watched' and 'In Excelsis Deo' is sung to them in 'Gloria'. The angels then get orders to protect a group of visiting Magi who sing the traditional words of 'We Three Kings' to a jazzed-up version of the well-known music. When they fall asleep, the angels warn them in a dream to 'Go Back' by a different way, for fear of them being interrogated by King Herod's men wanting to know where the baby Jesus is to be found. Aurora tells Mary and Joseph in another dream to flee to Egypt in Part 2 of 'Brand New Day'.

Time passes and the angels are briefed on the next phase of the plan (Operation Salvation) in which the then mature Jesus will be put to death on earth in order to save mankind. Gabriel tells the cadet angels that they are both being promoted in order to deliver the high-profile, "full-on angel glow", message to the human race at the resurrection and the musical closes to the rock-style "let's have a party" song, 'Ten Thousand Angels'.

The musical clearly represents the Christian understanding of Christmas and also has an evangelical element. It was first performed at Christmas in 2005 at Billericay Baptist Church in Essex. The show is about 1 hour 15 minutes in length, features 14 songs and can be performed if required with a cast as large as 80 members between the ages of five and sixteen.

Gender Roles

Angels are of spiritual beings and therefore have no gender, however the lead roles of Astra and Celeste have been written as male and female respectively, and other roles have, for convenience, been assigned a gender. Creative Directors should though not be restricted by this convention. All the angel parts are completely interchangeable with only the 'human' roles (which figure less prominently) presenting more of a challenge. With a little alteration, the script could easily be adapted for an all male or all female cast.

Musical Items

- 1) Angel Squadron March (Angels)
- 2) Astra Groove (Astra / Astra Dance Team and Chorus)
- 3) Celestial Rap (Celeste / Celeste Band and Chorus)
- 4) God's Secret Agents (Four Angels)
- 5) Angel Squadron [Reprise] (Angels)
- 6) Who Am I? (Mary)
- 7) Never Too Old (Elizabeth and Mary)
- 8) Brand New Day, Part 1 (Aurora and Chorus)
- 9) Born In A Stable (Soloist(s) and Chorus)
- 10) Gloria (Michael, Gabriel and Chorus)
- 11) We Three Kings (Wise Men 1, 2 and 3) *segue into*
Go Back (Aurora and Chorus)
- 12) Brand New Day, Part 2 (Aurora and Chorus)
- 13) Astra & Celeste Rap [Reprise] (Instrumental)
- 14) Ten Thousand Angels (Company)

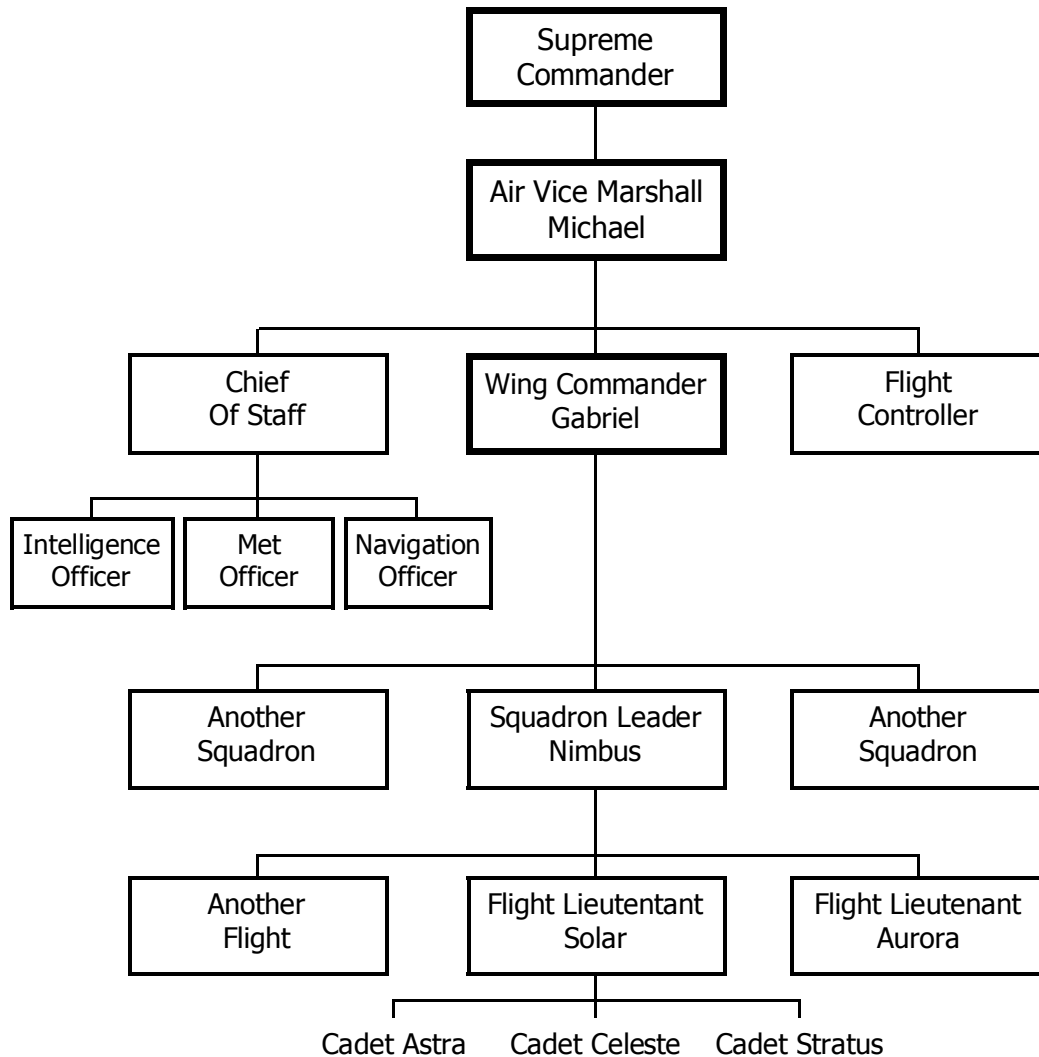
The Squadron

Angels are found in Christian, Jewish and Muslim belief. They are described as supernatural beings, intermediate between God and humans. The word comes from the Greek 'angelos', meaning 'messenger'.

In traditional Christian hierarchy, there are nine orders;

- Seraphim
- Cherubim
- Thrones (who contemplate God and reflect His glory)
- Dominations
- Virtues
- Powers (who regulate the stars and the Universe)
- Principalities
- Archangels
- Angels (who minister to humanity)

This traditional hierarchy is hinted at in 'Angel Squadron'. As a piece of fun (and possibly as some practical help to the cast), the 'chain of command' of the Angel Squadron, based loosely on Royal Air Force ranks is laid out below.



Angel Squadron

Scene 1

The stage is empty. Suddenly, we hear the dramatic opening string section of the 'Angel Squadron March'. The Flight Controller makes an announcement via the PA system over the opening rhythm. The angels enter from all points of the stage and auditorium and take up their positions during the instrumental in time for the actual song. The Navigation Officer, Intelligence Officer and 'Met' Officer take up their positions in the Control Tower where they will remain for the duration of the play.

MUSIC #1: "ANGEL SQUADRON MARCH"

Military march in style of 1960s RAF movie. (With the deepest of respect to Ron Goodwin!). Chorus 2 is an optional 'echo', composed of younger actors.

Controller *(Spoken offstage under the opening bars)* This is Royal Angel Force Sky Base Control Tower to White Angel leader. Runway is clear, you are 'go' for landing. Repeat: you are 'go' for landing!

Angels *We're the Angel Squadron
It's the team to be on
Every Flying Angel knows their place.
We patrol creation
Flying in formation
Exploring all the depths of outer space.*

*It's completely cosmic
Flying hypersonic
On a trip to Jupiter or Mars.
We're all on a mission
Flying with precision
On a long-range flight to distant stars.*

Chorus 1 *We're the Angels*

The Flying Angels

Chorus 2 *We're the Angels*

The Flying Angels

All *We're always ready for take off
Available on demand
And our orders come direct from High Command.*

Angels *Flying from our stations
To distant constellations
We're disciplined and agile in the air.
It looks so dramatic
When we're aerobatic
Pulling off manoeuvres with such flair.*

*Space goes on forever
Are we bored? No, never!
Patrolling through infinity is fun.
'Cause when you reach its ending
(This thought is so mind-bending)
You find the universe has just begun.*

Chorus 1 *We're the Angels*

The Flying Angels

Chorus 2 *We're the Angels*

The Flying Angels

All *We're always ready for take off
Available on demand
And our orders come direct from High Command.*

Instrumental. Astra's Squadron perform 'Red Arrows' type manoeuvres, forming 'diamond nines', 'delta Vs', etc. Astra's moves are more flamboyant than the others

Angels *We're the Angel Squadron
It's the team to be on
Every Flying Angel knows their place.
We patrol creation
Flying in formation
Exploring all the depths of outer space.*

*It goes on forever
But are we bored? No, never!
Patrolling through infinity is fun.
'Cause when you reach its ending
(This thought is so mind-bending)
You find the universe has just begun.*

Chorus 1 *We're the Angels*

Chorus 2 *We're the Angels*

The Flying Angels

The Flying Angels

All *We're always ready for take off
Available on demand
And our orders come direct from High Command.*

Chorus 1 *We're the Angels*

Chorus 2 *We're the Angels*

The Flying Angels

The Flying Angels

All *We're always ready for take off
Available on demand
And our orders come ...
Direct from High Command.*

Scene 2

The Angel Squadron lines up in a neat row for inspection by Squadron Leader Nimbus, who enters.

Nimbus *Well done Squadron. A splendid flight and a nice tight formation ... (his tone of voice changes dramatically) ... apart from one. (He walks menacingly along the line). Cadet Astra, one pace forward.*

Astra *(Stepping forward) Yes Sir?*

Nimbus *What do you think you were doing?*

Astra *I was flying, Sir.*

Nimbus *Yes, but not in the right place. You're not here to practice your private stunt routine! You're part of the White Angels Display Team and they're all relying on you.*

Astra *Yes, Sir.*

Nimbus *Good. Flight Lieutenant Solar, I suggest you talk to your wing man.*

Solar *Yes, Sir.*

Nimbus *Squadron dismissed!*

Nimbus exits upstage right. The rest of the squadron take up positions in the 'Heavenly Host', leaving Flight Lieutenant Solar and Cadet Astra on stage.

Solar *In trouble again, Astra?*

Astra *(Sheepishly) I ... I guess so, Sir.*

Solar *Look old chap, let me give you a piece of advice. I love flying as much as you do, but we must maintain the Supreme Commander's street cred.*

Astra *I don't understand, Sir.*

Solar *Say, for example, your orders were to declare a prophecy from the Book.*

Astra *Which book, Sir?*

Solar *The Book Astra. You know ... Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, etc.*

Astra Oh, that Book!
Solar The Book says the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, right?
Astra (*Attentively*) Yes, Sir ...
Solar So ... how would it look if you suddenly declared He was going to be born in Milton Keynes?
(*Substitute any town guaranteed to cause amusement*).
Astra (*After a pause for thought*) I see the point, Sir.

Exit Solar. Enter the 'Astra Dance Team' (four dancers) from positions in the 'Heavenly Host' who flank Astra stage centre.

MUSIC #2: "ASTRA GROOVE"

Cool groove. The Dance Team looks cool and has really got 'the attitude'. Although Astra is centre stage, the verses are sung by his cool dance team, or gang.

Dance Team *There's a new young angel who's on the scene
He's a real high flyer if you know what I mean
He's number one
He's the top gun
And what's his name?*

Chorus *His name is Astra
There's no one faster.
He looks danger in the face
He's an angel flying ace
His name is Astra.
There's no one faster.
He looks danger in the face
He's an angel flying ace
His name is Astra.*

Dance Team *There's a kid on the block with attitude
A fly-boy angel and a real cool dude
He's the new face
He's on the pace
And what's his name?*

Chorus *His name is Astra
There's no one faster.
He looks danger in the face
He's an angel flying ace
His name is Astra.
There's no one faster.
He looks danger in the face
He's an angel flying ace
His name is Astra.*

Dance Team *He's on the edge of outer space
Takes it to the limit. He's a flying ace
He's on the move
He's in the groove
And what's his name?*

The Choir Master enters and conducts the mass ranks of angels for the remainder of the song.

Chorus *His name is Astra
There's no one faster.
He looks danger in the face
He's an angel flying ace
His name is Astra.
There's no one faster.
He looks danger in the face
He's an angel flying ace
His name is Astra.*

Astra exits upstage right and the Dance Team go back to positions in 'Heavenly Host'. Choir Master moves stage centre. Choir Master needs to be heavily into music, bordering on the eccentric

Choir Master Excellent my little cherubs, well sung everyone. It's coming together nicely. In fact, for the next lesson, I think we're ready to move on to seven-part harmony. (*Excited reactions*). However, we will need to work on the Super Mega Soprano Section, won't we? ("*Yes Sir/Ma'am*" etc). And the harps were a touch flat in places. Now, Angel Celeste, I need a word with you ...

Celeste Yes, Sir/Ma'am. (*She looks a little worried but stands to attention*).

Choir Master You really enjoy your singing, don't you Celeste?

Celeste Oh yes, Sir/Ma'am.

Choir Master I've been listening to you and you're doing rather well.

Celeste Thank you, Sir/Ma'am

Choir Master So well in fact, that I'd like to run an idea past you. We've got 'Angel Fame Academy' coming up next week ... How do you fancy some solo work?

Celeste Oh ... COOL! (*Huge reaction. The other angels share the excitement with Celeste, high fives and hugs etc*).

Choir Master I'll take that as a 'yes' then. Well, we'd better start practising!

Celeste and the 'Celeste Dance Team' (four different dancers) move from the 'Heavenly Host' and take up positions centre stage.

MUSIC #3: "CELESTIAL RAP"

Cool vibe pop sound. Celeste is centre stage, but the song is sung by her band or by a backing vocal group ... although she certainly joins in.

Group *There's a brand new sound that's on the street
It's a real cool vibe. You can feel the beat
She's looking neat
She's sounding sweet
And what's her name?*

Chorus *Her name's Celeste.
And she's the best.
She's an angel singing star
And you know that she'll go far,
Her name's Celeste ...
And she's the best.
She's an angel singing star
And you know that she'll go far,
Her name's Celeste ...*

Group *She sings with soul. She sings with heart
She's going to the top of the Angel Chart
She is the voice
She's the top choice
And what's her name?*

Chorus 1 *Her name's Celeste*

Chorus 2 *Ooh-ah.*

And she's the best

Ooh-ah.

*She's an angel singing star
And you know that she'll go far
Her name's Celeste*

Chorus 2 *Ooh-ah.*

And she's the best

Ooh-ah.

All *She's an angel singing star
And you know that she'll go far
Her name's Celeste*

Group *She's got the heavenly voice and it sounds the 'biz'*
She sings like an angel 'cause that's what she is
She's in the groove
She's on the move
And what's her name?

Chorus 1 *Her name's Celeste*

Chorus 2 *Ooh-ah.*

And she's the best

Ooh-ah.

She's an angel singing star
And you know that she'll go far
Her name's Celeste

Chorus 2 *Ooh-ah.*

And she's the best

Ooh-ah.

All *She's an angel singing star*
And you know that she'll go far
Her name's Celeste.

Celeste exits upstage right and the Dance Team resumes their positions in the 'Heavenly Host'. Astra enters and moves to centre stage. He is studying an atlas of the stars. Celeste re-enters upstage right with Stratus.

Celeste Hi Astra

Astra Celeste! Stratus! Hi dudes. Give me some wing!

The angels rotate in opposite directions so they can slap their wings together, a sort of 'high five' for angels.

Stratus How was your test flight today?

Astra It was well wicked. We had so much fun!

Celeste 'We' Astra? Don't you mean 'you'?

Astra *(Defensively)* It's all part of the training ...

Stratus Come on Astra, we know you better than that. Time to 'fess' up.

Astra Well ... *(giving in)*. I couldn't help it. We flew past Saturn's rings and, well, you know, I just had to go for it.

Celeste Oh, Astra. There's more to being an Angel than just flying. You need to work on your singing too.

Astra Nah. Singing is minging.

Stratus No way! Hey, Guess what happened today?

Astra Err, you broke a string on your harp?

Celeste No. I've been made a lead singer! It's the start of my solo career!

Astra Is that good?

Celeste Eat your heart out Rachel Stevens. *(Or contemporary pop star)*.

Controller *(Offstage)* This is Sky Base Control Tower. Clear the runway for Wing Commander Gabriel's personal flight.

Astra Wow! I wonder what that's all about?

Stratus Haven't you heard? There's a rumour going around that Gabriel himself has made an important trip to Earth.

Astra News to me ...

Stratus Astra, what planet are you on?

Astra Well, this morning it was Saturn, actually.

Celeste You are so not with it.

Astra Must be really important. Gabriel's our top agent. Any news from Intelligence?

Celeste Absolutely nothing. Security's been at the highest level.

Stratus All very 'hush-hush'.

Exit Astra, Celeste and Stratus, upstage right.

Scene 3

MUSIC #4: “GOD’S SECRET AGENTS”

In the style of a Cold War spy movie theme. Stage hands bring two tables onto the stage. The tables represent market stalls and are covered with baskets, fruit, etc. Enter two ‘traders’ wearing first century clothes and aprons. They stand behind tables. Enter four ‘humans’ (they can be anyone from the cast who isn’t an angel) who start ‘shopping’ at the market stalls. Throughout the song, angels dressed in trilbies, trench coats and dark glasses are ‘hiding in the shadows’ around corners of the set or behind newspapers.

Agents *We’re always there, but you’d never know
Doing God’s mission wherever we go
Be nice to a stranger for you never know
We’re God’s secret agents on earth.*

*We melt in the shadows. We blend with the scene
Always around you but rarely are seen
You’ve probably met us in places you’ve been
We’re God’s secret agents on earth.*

Instrumental. Angels sneak about the stage ‘spying’.

Agents *We work undercover. Could be on your street
We might be one of the people you meet
We get the job done but we’re very discrete
We’re God’s secret agents on earth.
We’re God’s secret agents on earth.*

Exit Traders and ‘Humans’. Angels return to the ‘Heavenly Host’ and remove their disguises. Stage hands remove tables.

Scene 4

The next scene may be purely narrated, or children portraying Zachariah and Elizabeth, together with Gabriel, could act out the words during the narration. Enter Elizabeth and Zachariah. They stand stage right. Zachariah says ‘goodbye’ to Elizabeth and walks to stage left (the ‘temple’) where he kneels to pray. Enter Gabriel upstage left who appears to Zachariah. Gabriel indicates the impending birth of John by cradling his arms. Gabriel exits upstage left. It is important that the narration is read rhythmically.

Narrator 1 *A priest called Zachariah and Elizabeth his wife
Both followed the commandments and had led an honest life.
But they couldn’t have a baby and this tinged their lives with tears
It was looking more unlikely - they were getting on in years.*

Narrator 2 *Now Zach was in the temple when an angel did appear
Then Gabriel said “Hi” and he was paralysed with fear.
The angel said, “You’ll have a son - he’ll be a little odd
You’ll call him John and he’ll prepare the people for their God”.*

Narrator 3 *Now, Zachariah said, “Do you expect me to believe?
I’m heading for my pension and my Missus can’t conceive”.
The angel said, “Each word I’ve spoken will come true in time
You’ll speak no word ’til John is born. You’ll have to talk in Sign”.*

Exit Gabriel upstage left. Exit Zachariah and Elizabeth downstage right.

Scene 5

Enter Air Vice Marshal Michael upstage right who then moves centre stage. Enter Wing Commander Gabriel and his Chief of Staff upstage left. They walk over to Michael. The Chief of Staff salutes whilst Michael and Gabriel shake hands.

Michael *Welcome home, Gabriel. Good flight?*

Gabriel *Yes, thank you, Sir. The Archangel Michael himself on the reception committee, eh? I am
honoured.*

Michael Well the Supreme Commander said it was time to reveal His plan after you returned, so I thought we'd better get on with it. Chief, could you notify the Flight Controller that all Squadrons are requested in the Briefing Room immediately.

Chief of Staff Right away, Sir/M'am. *(He/she salutes and exits upstage right).*

Michael and Gabriel stroll over to the Control Tower as they talk.

Michael Everything go to plan?

Gabriel Absolutely. As expected, Zachariah was quite shocked to see me. Mind you, he was completely speechless afterwards.

Michael Ah yes, What did you say to him?

Gabriel Exactly as ordered. Unfortunately, he chose not to believe.

Michael I must admit, I feel a little sorry for him not being able to speak.

Gabriel Oh, it's not that bad. It's only nine months and he rarely gets a word in edgeways anyway.

Michael That's right. It'll probably be a couple of weeks before Elizabeth even notices. *(He pauses, then laughs).*

Controller *(Offstage)* Attention all Angel Squadrons. Attention all Angel Squadrons. Report to the Briefing Room immediately.

MUSIC #5: "ANGEL SQUADRON REPRISE"

Gabriel and Michael move into the Control Tower. All the angels move from their positions as the introduction starts and form a neat block, standing to attention. They face the audience as they sing the one chorus.

Angels *We're the Angels,
The Flying Angel.s
We're always ready for take off
Available on demand
And our orders come direct from High Command.*

At the end of the song, the angels salute on the last word ('Command') and hold that position. The Chief of Staff enters and stands dutifully to the right of, but slightly behind, Gabriel.

Chief of Staff Attention! *(The Squadron comes to attention).* Left ... turn! *(The Squadron turns left to face the Control Tower)* Stand at ... ease! *(The Squadron stands at ease).*

Michael and Gabriel are already in position on the briefing platform. The Navigation Officer, Intelligence Officer and 'Met' Officer are in position by the maps.

Author's Note: *'The Briefing' is an important but particularly wordy section of the play and could be quite daunting for young actors. The suggestion is therefore, that the four characters involved are positioned at a lectern equipped with a microphone where they will be able to read the lines rather than learn them. This shouldn't look unnatural, as the scenario is a very formal briefing. This set-up would also help ensure that the 'plan' is heard clearly by the audience. A 'roving' radio mic might also be useful.*

Michael Good morning everyone. I know there have been some rumours going around Heaven so it's time to put you in the picture. We've called you all together today to brief you on a mission. It's going to be no ordinary mission. In fact, it's going to be the biggest mission since Creation itself. We've called it ... *(dramatic pause)* 'Operation Salvation'. Wing Commander Gabriel ... *(He steps aside so that Gabriel can take the microphone).*

Gabriel The objective is simple: the rescue of the Human Race. *(Gasps and chatter from the Angels).* To be honest, they've got themselves in a bit of a mess down there. They're having one or two problems with sin, and the Forces of Darkness are having a field day. To combat this, the Supreme Commander has come up with a daring and very unconventional plan ... His own Son is going undercover. *(More buzz from Angels).*

Michael Gabriel has already established contact with human allies on earth. They're going to give birth to a Special Agent called John who'll be doing a lot of the groundwork when he's old enough. Gabriel will then contact a young girl, personally selected by the Supreme Commander. In nine month's time, she will give birth to His Son, codename: Messiah. I'd now like to hand you over to our Navigation Officer ...

Nav'n Officer The target is here. *(He indicates on the map).* Bethlehem. A small town in the province of Judaea. The operation will involve identifying the target with a special star and providing navigational

aids to foreign visitors. This is going to mean a lot of work for our Astrophysical Teams.
Intelligence ... *(Handing over)*.

Intel Officer Intelligence reports indicate that there's going to be a lot of resistance. King Herod certainly won't like the idea of having another King around and, as you know, the Romans occupy Judaea. So you will all need to be on your toes.

Gabriel Operation Salvation is huge. We will need to be alert at all times. We will be delivering messages, dreams and visions. We will be flying on patrol. We will be on guardian angel duties. And when Messiah is born, we will celebrate by flying a massive formation of angel squadrons to Earth, ending with the biggest outdoor concert mankind has ever seen. And all of you will have a part to play.

Michael Squadron ... dismiss!

The 'Heavenly Hosts' clear the stage, taking up their starting positions. Exit Michael upstage right. Exit Gabriel and Chief of Staff upstage left (runway).

Scene 6

Again, the narration here could work on its own, or Mary and Gabriel could act out the story. Stage hands move a chair stage centre. Enter Mary. She is carrying a broom and starts to sweep the floor. Enter Gabriel stage left. Gabriel acts out the cradled baby once more.

Narrator 1 So Gabriel flew down to earth for that momentous meeting
A young girl they called Mary heard the unexpected greeting.
"God says that you are beautiful, both inside and the out"
But Mary was surprised and wondered, "What's this all about?"

Narrator 2 The angel reassured her, "Mary, you must not be scared
For you will soon be pregnant - this is what your God declared.
And you will call Him, Jesus; He will set His people free".
But Mary answered, "I'm not married yet. How can this be?"

Narrator 3 The angel answered, "Holy Spirit pow'r will come on you.
You'll have a Holy Son, for there is nothing God can't do.
And just to prove the point, your cousin Liz - who people say,
Could never have a child - now has a baby on the way."

Exit Gabriel upstage left (the 'runway').

MUSIC #6: "WHO AM I?"

Gently. A chance for younger children to take centre stage. Mary sits on chair. Younger children enter downstage right, dressed as villagers. They sit around the chair at Mary's feet making sure they face the audience. The second verse includes a group of harmony singers.

Mary *Who am I? What am I?
That the Lord should favour me?
I will praise. I will sing
He has blessed His servant girl.*

*Oh what joy. Baby boy.
I will call Him Jesus.
Holy One. Mighty God.
He has done great things to me.*

Instrumental.

Mary *Who am I? What am I?
That the Lord should favour me?
I will serve. Let it be.
As the angel said to me.*

*Who am I? What am I?
That the Lord should favour me?*

Mary and village children exit downstage right. Stage hand removes chair.

Scene 7

Enter Astra, Celeste and Stratus upstage right. They take centre stage.

Controller (Offstage) This is Sky Base Control. Clear runway one. Wing Commander Gabriel's flight is returning to base. Clear Runway One!

Stratus That was amazing.

Celeste What was?

Stratus (Admiringly) The way Gabriel delivered that message to Mary. What a professional!

Astra (Dismissively) It was OK.

Celeste (Indignantly) What do you mean it was, 'OK'?

Astra Well ... It was alright. It did the job. But it lacked style.

Celeste I suppose you think you could have done better

Astra I could do it with more flair. Watch this!

Astra walks back a few paces and prepares to make a really cool entrance. Backlight spot behind Astra.

Stratus Hang on Astra. Let's get this right ...

Astra What?

Stratus You can't appear to humans looking like that. You'll frighten them to death before you've even started. Turn down your glow.

The backlight is dimmed somewhat.

Astra OK, OK. Right. Here goes. (Astra makes a really cool entrance wearing shades and makes his announcement). Hi Baby. You're going to have a Mary!

At this point the Angel Gabriel and his ever-attentive Chief of Staff enter upstage left from the 'runway'.

Gabriel And just what do you think you're doing, Cadet Astra?

Astra Er ... nothing, your Archangelness.

Gabriel Well, get in line. (All the Angels form an orderly line). Now, that completes Phase Two of the operation. Any questions? (Celeste puts up her hand). Yes, Cadet Celeste?

Celeste (Nervously) Well ... I did wonder why the Supreme Commander chose that young girl Mary to be the mother?

Gabriel Why do you ask?

Celeste Well ... It's just ... She doesn't seem very important. Shouldn't the mother of the Supreme Commander's son be someone special, like Cleopatra or something?

Gabriel I can assure you that Mary is very special to the Supreme Commander. You'll understand in good time. Now, I suggest you get back to your squadron immediately. You're going to be in action soon.

Stratus What's the mission, Sir?

Chief of Staff Mary is on the move. She's going to visit her cousin Elizabeth. And until the birth, where Mary goes, the Messiah goes with her. Your Squadron will be providing the escort.

Astra, Celeste, Stratus, Gabriel and Chief of Staff exit upstage right.

Scene 8

Stage hands set up the market stalls in the same positions as before. Enter two market traders, 'shoppers', Elizabeth and Zachariah, downstage right. During narration, Mary enters downstage right and greets Elizabeth stage centre. Lots of hugs and dancing.

Narrator 1 So Mary packed her bags and to the country she did walk
To see her cousin Lizzie where they'd share some baby talk
The women danced for joy and both looked forward to having sons
And praise to God flowed from the hearts of two expectant mums.

MUSIC #7: "NEVER TOO OLD"

Reggae/Calypso style.

Elizabeth They said I'd have no baby
"You'll live with your disgrace"

*But the angel told us diff'rent
Now there's a smile upon my face.*

*They said it couldn't happen
"You're past your sell-by date"
But the angel told us diff'rent
And now we're feeling great.*

E & Chorus *And you're never too old.
And you're never too grey.
And it's never too late,
To be a part of God's amazing plan.*

Elizabeth *They said, "You can't have children
When you've lived so many years!"
But the angel told us diff'rent
Now God's wiped away my tears.*

*And now there's no disguising (She shows off her 'bump')
We're going to have a son!
I may be old and wrinkly
But I feel I'm twenty-one!*

E & Chorus *And you're never too old.
And you're never too grey.
And it's never too late,
To be a part of God's amazing plan.*

Elizabeth *As soon as you arrived here
My baby leapt for joy
'Cause he knows the child within you
Is a very special boy*

E & Chorus *And you're never too young.
And you're never too small.
And you're only a teen.
But still a part of God's amazing plan.*

Mary (To Elizabeth) *And you're never too old.
And you're never too grey.
And it's never too late,
To be a part of God's amazing plan*

E & M	<i>No, you're never too old. And you're never too young. And we're feeling great, To be a part, Of God's amazing plan. Of God's amazing plan. Of God's amazing plan.</i>	Chorus	<i>... never too old. ... never too young. ... feeling great To be a part.</i>
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Exit Mary, Elizabeth, Zachariah, market traders and shoppers. Stage hands remove market stalls. Gabriel and the Chief of Staff enter upstage right and enter the Control Tower.

Scene 9

Enter Flight Lieutenant Aurora upstage right, who goes up to the Control Room and knocks on the 'door'.

Gabriel Come in.

Aurora (Entering room) You wanted to see me, Sir?

Gabriel Ah, Flight Lieutenant Aurora. How ready is your Team?

Aurora We can go at a moment's notice.

Gabriel Good. In that case, we've got a little mission for you.

Aurora Of course, Sir.

Gabriel Mary's fiancé is going to be a bit confused when Mary tells him my announcement. I'd like you and your team to take personal responsibility for Joseph.

Aurora Thank you sir. It will be a privilege.

Gabriel Well, I know that dreams are something of a speciality for you Aurora, and I think this requires your special touch.

Aurora We'll get straight onto it, Sir.

Chief of Staff *(Handing over a 'Top Secret' folder)* Here are your orders ... the detailed timing, the co-ordinates of Joseph's house and the Top Secret message.

Gabriel Don't forget the 'TLC', Lieutenant. We've got one very confused boyfriend down there.

Aurora exits upstage left having gone to the runway for 'take-off'.

Scene 10

Stage hands place a bed downstage with a bedside table, a candle or light and a photograph. Joseph enters and sits on the bed. He looks sadly at the picture then turns it around, away from him. The audience sees the photo is of Mary. Joseph lies down and goes to sleep.

Music #8: "Brand New Day – Part One"

Enter Aurora upstage left. The 'Dream Team' dancers appear from the 'Heavenly Host' and sing to the sleeping Joseph.

Aurora *Joseph, we know you're a bit confused
We understand if you're not amused.
You must be feeling just a little bruised
But it's the dawn of a brand new day.*

*You must be thinking that it's all gone bad
The strangest news that you've ever had
She says the child has no earthly dad
But it's the dawn of a brand new day.*

Chorus *It's the start of a diff'rent life.
Don't be afraid - take Mary as your wife.
Things worked out an unexpected way.
But it's the dawn of a brand new day*

Aurora *It didn't happen in the way you planned.
It must be difficult to understand.
Don't be afraid: God has got your hand,
And it's the dawn of a brand new day.*

Chorus *It's the start of a diff'rent life.
Don't be afraid - take Mary as your wife.
Things worked out an unexpected way.
But it's the dawn of a brand new day*

[Guitar instrumental break]

Aurora *Joseph, God has got a job for you.
Jesus needs a daddy and God's chosen you.
Don't be afraid - it's time to say, "I do"
And it's the dawn of a brand new day.*

Chorus *It's the start of a diff'rent life.
Don't be afraid - take Mary as your wife.
Things worked out an unexpected way.
But it's the dawn of a brand new day*

*It's the start of a diff'rent life.
Don't be afraid - take Mary as your wife.
Things worked out an unexpected way.
But it's the dawn of a brand new day*

During the last chorus, Aurora exits upstage left and the 'Dream Team' dancers return to the 'Heavenly Host'. Joseph wakes up and sits on the side of the bed. He looks a little confused at first then smiles, picks up the picture frame, turns it around and kisses the photo. Exit Joseph.

Scene 11

Astra, Solar, and the rest of their squadron, together with Celeste and Stratus, enter and sit around the stage. Some are reading books, others are listening to iPods or Walkmen and the rest just snoozing. The atmosphere is quiet

Astra (Breaking the silence) How much longer are we going to wait?
Stratus As long as it takes, Astra.
Astra What's the delay?
Celeste It's Mary. She's two weeks overdue.
Astra I can't stand the tension.
Stratus I know. The biggest armada of angels ever assembled, just waiting for the command to go.
Celeste I could always practice some more scales. My vocal chords need some exercise.
Astra Oh, no, please! If you exercise them any more you won't have any left!
Cockney Cheer up Astra! It might never happen!
Solar (Standing up) Stand by your beds everyone, it's the 'Old Man'. (Enter Squadron Leader Nimbus upstage right). Attention!

The Squadron stands to attention. All eyes are on Nimbus.

Nimbus I've just had the word. (Big dramatic pause). It's on. We go tonight. (Excited buzz from the squadron). The Messiah's being born this evening. You all know what to do. Any last questions?
Astra I do have one, Sir.
Nimbus Ah. Astra. I might have known. Well, what is it?
Astra Well, we're flying the biggest formation since creation in a precision operation with full support from massed heavenly choirs ...
Nimbus (Suspecting what's coming) Yes ...
Celeste And our target is a bunch of shepherds, on a hillside, by some remote country village ...
Nimbus You two still haven't got it, have you?
Astra No. I mean, Shouldn't the announcement be to someone important?
Nimbus (Sounding just a touch like a Jedi Knight) You have much to learn, young master. Those shepherds are very important to the Supreme Commander, and we're going to target them with pinpoint accuracy ...
Solar (To Astra) Wait 'til you see where He's going to be born ...

The squadron exits upstage left to the runway area.

Scene 12

MUSIC #9: "BORN IN A STABLE"

'Rat pack', swing style. This song could be sung by a soloist or a choir but there are plenty of opportunities to act it out with several small cameos. These could give less confident children a brief but dramatic non-speaking role. Another option is to dress up teachers and leaders. It can be hilarious! Suggestions for the action are shown in the song. These scenes allow plenty of scope for extra 'Roman citizens', 'photographers', 'football supporters', etc. but pulling it off will require good timing and careful stage direction! Stage hands place a manger downstage centre. Enter Mary, Joseph and 'baby' downstage right. They squat down by the manger whilst the action takes place behind them.

Vocalist	He wasn't born in a palace in Jerusalem But a one-horse town called Bethlehem. He wasn't born a Caesar in ancient Rome With all the power man could ever own.	[Actor in toga steps forward and gives 'thumbs down']
	He wasn't born a Pharaoh by the River Nile Building pyramids and living in style. He wasn't born in Persia where the sunlight shone On the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.	[Actor in Egyptian dress steps forward with architect's plan. An assistant holds fan over him] [Actor in Persian 'skirt' steps forward. An assistant 'waters' Hanging Gardens with watering can]

Voc & Chorus *But He was born in a stable.
Born in a stable.*

Vocalist *It was about as humble as a place could get,
He was the Son of God from heaven and yet*

Voc & Chorus *He was born in a stable.
Born in a stable* [The 'ancient' actors step to one side, allowing the 'modern' cameos to take their positions before the next verse. Keep the moves simple so they can be completed with time to spare]

Vocalist *And you ask me how this can be?
He did it all just for me.*

*He didn't live in Hollywood, a movie star. [Actor steps forward in dinner jacket (boy) or furs (girl), surrounded by photographers]
Was a billionaire, drove a big flash car.
He didn't play for United making lots of dosh, [Actor steps forward in football kit, surrounded by autograph hunters]
Appear on telly, get married to Posh.*

*He wasn't born in the White House in the USA, [Actor in suit steps forward. Assistant hands him red telephone to make 'important' call]
Making big decisions, ev'ry day.
He didn't live in Monte Carlo where the sun is hot, [Actor steps forward in shades and shorts, making a call on a mobile.
With His own casino and luxury yacht. An assistant fans out playing cards]*

Voc & Chorus *But He was born in a stable.
Born in a stable.*

Vocalist *It was about as humble as a place could get,
He was the Son of God from heaven and yet*

Voc & Chorus *He was born in a stable
Born in a stable*

Vocalist *And you ask me how this can be?
He did it all just for me.*

Vocalist *He was born in a stable by a cheap hotel.
Surrounded by donkeys and a nasty smell.
There were only candles, no electric power.
No Sky TV, or en suite shower.

There was no room service in easy reach.
No balcony view or private beach.
There was no Jacuzzi, or a comfy bed.
A feeding trough was where He lay His head.*

Voc & Chorus *But He was born in a stable.
Born in a stable.*

Vocalist *It was about as humble as a place could get,
He was the Son of God from heaven and yet*

Voc & Chorus *He was born in a stable
Born in a stable*

Vocalist *And you ask me how this can be?
He did it all just for me.
Yeah!*

All characters return to positions downstage right (the 'human zone'). The manger is moved to downstage left.

Scene 13

Stage hands place a 'camp fire' centrally and towards the front of the stage. Shepherds 2 and 3 (plus any extras) enter downstage right during the narration and sit by the fire.

Narrator 2 And so He came into the world in makeshift baby ward
In a stable 'cause His mum and dad could find no room and board
Yet so few understood the pow'r that tiny baby had
The Creator of the Universe was living in that lad

Narrator 3 Meanwhile on a hillside, lowly shepherds watched their sheep
Watching out for danger, trying not to fall asleep
But little did they realise what would happen on that day
The shepherds were about to see the world's first air display!

Shepherd 2 appears to be asleep and Shepherd 3 is warming his hands on the fire. Enter Shepherd 1 downstage right, who then stands between them behind the fire.

Shepherd 1 Are you two asleep?

Shepherd 2 *(Waking with a slight start)* No. I've just got a relaxed working style.

Shepherd 1 *(To Shepherd 3)* And you?

Shepherd 3 Of course not. How can I keep watch over our flocks by night if I'm asleep?

Shepherd 1 Fair enough. *(He sits with them by the fire).*

Shepherd 2 *(After a pause)* I've had this really random thought ...

Shepherd 1 What?

Shepherd 2 Have you ever noticed how similar the words 'sleep' and 'sheep' are?

Shepherd 1 S'pose they are now you come to mention it.

Shepherd 2 I mean, you could end up saying something like, for example, "I'm tired, I need by beauty sheep".

Shepherd 3 *(Suddenly interested in the turn of conversation)* Or, if you look at it the other way, "A wolf in sleep's clothing".

Shepherd 2 Exactly my point ...

Shepherd 1 *(Glancing at them in turn, in disbelief)* Have you two been drinking?

Shepherd 2 *(Carrying on his 'argument')* You could end up 'sheep walking'.

Shepherd 3 Or, wearing a sleep-skin jacket.

Shepherd 1 I think you both need a holiday

Suddenly, the opening chords of the Angel Squadron March are heard. Gabriel, Michael and any angels off stage enter and, with the Heavenly Host, form an arc around the shepherds. The shepherds are naturally frightened.

MUSIC #10: "GLORIA"

Singer(s) *While shepherds watched their flocks by night
All seated on the ground
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around

"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind".*

... in this Preview Script, the remainder of the play has been deleted from here ...

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