

# **SHEPHERD BOY**

A Christmas Musical

by

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SHEPHERD BOY

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## **SYNOPSIS**

High in the hills, a young Shepherd Boy is looking after his sheep. A caravan of weary travellers passes him on their way to Bethlehem. Trailing behind as night falls are Joseph and Mary who cannot keep up with the group. They persuade the Boy to show them to the village although he is afraid of the consequences of leaving his flock.

As he returns, he senses something magical in the air and tries to soothe his sheep by playing his recorder. His solitude is interrupted by the arrival of Wise Men and their Attendants. They tell the Boy of their mission and order him to show them the way to Jerusalem.

He obeys the Wise Men only to be reprimanded on his return by the Shepherds. His punishment is interrupted by the arrival of Gabriel and other Angels foretelling the birth of the Messiah. They instruct the Shepherds to go to Bethlehem., but initially only the Boy obeys.

In the stable in Bethlehem, Mary is trying to comfort the new-born Child but it is the arrival of the Boy playing his soothing music which finally makes the Baby sleep. The Angels lead the Shepherds to the stable and the tableau is completed with the arrival of the Wise Men and their Attendants.

**RUNNING TIME: 40 MINUTES**

## **CHARACTERS**

**Shepherd Boy**, aged 9 - 13

**Shepherd 1**

**Shepherd 2**

**Shepherd 3**

**Caspar** )

**Melchior** ) **Wise Men**

**Balthazar** )

**Attendants**

**Gabriel**

**Angels**

**Mary**

**Joseph**

**Sheep, Attendants, Travellers**

*NB There is no limit to the number of Sheep, Attendants, Angels, Travellers to be used and some productions have used the school choir to augment the singing. Conversely, where a small cast is used, the parts of the Sheep and Angels can be doubled as can the Travellers and Attendants.*

## **MUSICAL NUMBERS**

JOURNEY'S END	<b>Travellers, Mary, Joseph and Choir</b>
MAGIC IN THE AIR	<b>Shepherd Boy, Shepherds</b>
FOLLOW THE LIGHT	<b>Wise Men, Attendants</b>
WATCH THE WORLD PASS ME BY	<b>Shepherds</b>
YOU'RE THE FIRST TO KNOW	<b>Gabriel, Angels</b>
GO TO SLEEP LITTLE ONE	<b>Mary</b>
MAGIC IN THE AIR (Reprise)	<b>Instrumental</b>
PERFECT CHILD	<b>Shepherd Boy, Ensemble</b>
YOU'RE THE FIRST TO KNOW (REPRISE)	<b>Company</b>



## **SHEPHERD BOY**

**Book, Music and Lyrics by Terry Rogers**

**PROLOGUE: THE HILLSIDE: LATE AFTERNOON.**

*(As the Lights come up we see the SHEEP grazing aimlessly on Stage around the SHEPHERD BOY who is lying back thinking of nothing in particular. As the Music starts the BOY sits up on his elbows looking at the source of the singing. The TRAVELLERS Enter either from the side of the Stage or through the Audience).*

*MUSIC 1: "JOURNEY'S END"*

**Travellers:**     *When Caesar Augustus was Emperor of Rome.  
An order went to Palestine that all should go back home.  
Each person left the land he loved for towns he didn't know,  
For no-one was excluded everybody had to go.*

**Chorus:**        *Cross rivers and deserts  
Cross mountains and valleys  
We are approaching our journey's end.  
Because of the Romans  
Because of the Census  
We finish our journey at Bethlehem.*

*(Enter MARY and JOSEPH behind the rest of the TRAVELLERS).*

**Travellers:**    *All over the country from villages they came.  
Joseph came from Nazareth to prove his family name.  
With Mary by his side they slowly walked each weary mile..  
They knew the baby would be born within a little while.*

**Chorus:**        *Cross rivers and deserts etc....*

**Travellers:**    *At long last on the horizon the village was in sight.*

*Time was running out they had to find a place for the night,  
But darkness gathered round them and they soon lost their way.  
It seemed that on that lonely hill they would have to stay.*

**Chorus:** *Cross rivers and deserts etc....*

*(Hummed)*

*(During the above Chorus, The TRAVELLERS exit, leaving MARY and JOSEPH alone with the BOY and SHEEP, MARY sits).*

**Joseph:** Can you help us, Boy? We're heading for Bethlehem.

**Boy:** Bethlehem? That's miles away. Down in the valley.

**Joseph:** We have to get there tonight.

**Boy:** Hundreds of people are going there.

**Mary:** We know. But we MUST get there. Can you show us the way?

**Boy:** I'm not allowed to leave the sheep. I'll get into trouble again.

**Mary:** Please. *(BOY thinks about this and sees MARY'S condition as JOSEPH helps her to her feet).*

**Boy:** All right. I'll take you as far as the road. You can walk straight to the village from there.

**Joseph:** Thank you.

**Boy:** Come on then. *(BOY, MARY and JOSEPH exit singing with the CHORUS).*

**Chorus:** *Cross rivers and deserts,  
Cross mountains and valleys.  
We are approaching our journey's end.  
Because of the Romans  
Because of the Census  
We finish our journey at Bethlehem.*

*(Lights change to show the passage of time to evening. The SHEEP left to their own devices start to wander in all directions).*

SCENE 1

*(The Mountainside: Evening).*

MUSIC 2: "MAGIC IN THE AIR"

*(The Music begins as an instrumental on the recorder played by the BOY as he enters. The SHEEP gather around him).*

**Boy:**           *The night is cold, the sky is clear.  
There are no clouds tonight.  
There is no moon to comfort me.  
And yet the sky is bright.  
Each night alone I roam the hills  
The sheep my only friends.  
Each night is like the night before,  
When will this boredom end?* *(BOY moves away from the SHEEP and they nudge towards him. He stares from time to time at the sky).*

**Boy:** *(spoken).* Come on then, we'll keep warm together. *(SHEEP bleat warmly and snuggle down).*

**Boy:** *(sings).*   *And yet it's  
not the same tonight,  
There's something in the air.  
My sheep all seem to be on edge, There's something strange  
out there.  
What can it be? What can they see?  
They know things I don't know.* *(SHEEP bleat a warning as BOY gets up).*  
*I must find out. But I'm too scared to go.*

**Boy:** *(spoken).* Hello? Hello? Is anyone there? *(moves away).* Is anyone out there? *(Music can continue under dialogue or stop and start again when SHEPHERDS sing. Exit BOY. - SHEEP wander all over the Stage. Offstage we hear mumblings as SHEPHERDS enter).*

**Shepherd 1:** Was that a wolf?

**Shepherd 2:** Sounded like one.

**Shepherd 3:** The flock are all over the place. Again. *(They round up the SHEEP as they sing with some anger).*

**Shepherds:**   *Where is the boy? Where has he gone?  
He's wandered off again*

**Shepherd 1:**   *He disobeys the things we say,  
He needs a tighter rein.*

**Shepherd 3:**

*This time he'll learn when he returns  
His rump will feel my shoe.*

**Shepherd 2:** *That doesn't seem to worry him.*

**Shepherds:** *There must be something we can do. (Music stops - except for recorder Offstage).*

**Shepherd 1:** That sounds like him.

**Shepherd 3:** Caught him this time - red-handed! *(enter BOY playing the recorder. He stops abruptly when he sees them. He is nervous).*

**Shepherd 1:** Where have you been boy?

**Boy:** I thought I heard something.

**Shepherd 1:** *(mimicking).* I thought I heard something. You'll FEEL something in a minute.

**Shepherd 2:** You left the flock alone....

**Shepherd 3:** AGAIN!

**Shepherd 1:** And there's a wolf around.

**Boy;** Perhaps that's what I heard.

**Shepherd 2:** *(advancing on BOY).* You heard a wolf and left the sheep?

**Boy:** You don't understand.

**Shepherd 3:** *(menacingly).* All I understand is YOU left the sheep. You left the sheep knowing there was a wolf around. What do we keep you for?

**Shepherd 1:** *(advancing on BOY).* Don't wander off again.

**Shepherd 3:** Or it'll be the worse for you.

**Shepherd 2:** If you hear anything again, don't run off. Give us a shout. We'll be over by the fire. *(SHEPHERD 1 leads the others away).*

**Shepherd 3:** Keeping warm.

**Shepherd 2:** Any problem - give us a shout. *(Exit SHEPHERDS, SHEEP advance on BOY).*

**Boy:** Fat lot of good that will do. It's all right for them. Sitting by a nice warm fire, while I'm out here - alone. *(SHEEP bleat).* I know, I know, I've got you for company. *(WOLF howls Offstage).* And him.

*MUSIC 2: (REPRISE).*

**Boy:** *The night is cold, the sky is clear,  
There's something in the air  
Somehow tonight won't be the same  
There's something strange out there, (pointing).  
Look! look! Up there I see a star,  
A star that burns so bright.  
It moves, it moves, it comes this way*

*There's magic in the air tonight.  
There's magic in the air tonight.*

**Boy:** It's coming this way. It's coming straight towards me. (*rising and moving away*). Whatever is it? It's moving so slowly. But it's as bright as the sun. (*we hear jangling sounds Offstage getting nearer as Music starts*).

*MUSIC 3: "FOLLOW THE LIGHT"*

(*Enter THREE WISE MEN and ATTENDANTS*).

**Wise Men:** *Travellers from the East are we  
Bound to follow a star  
Left our palaces, left our families  
Not quite sure where we are.*

**Melchior:** (*spoken; confused*). Where are we?

**Wise Men:** *We have followed where the star has led.  
A moving star that burns so bright  
No-one understands why we can't stay overnight.  
We have to follow the light. (Music continues under dialogue).*

**Caspar:** Hello, boy. Can you direct us?

**Melchior:** Where are we - exactly?

**Boy:** Between Bethlehem and Jerusalem sir.

**Balthazar:** And where is the King?

**Boy:** In Jerusalem, sir.

**Balthazar:** And how far is that?

**Boy:** Not far.

**Melchior:** Then you must show us the way. We have come to see the King.

**Boy:** I am not allowed to, sir.

**Melchior:** Not allowed? **I** allow you. Come - show us the way.

**Caspar:** Come with us. And we shall tell you all about our long journey, And it's purpose.

**Boy:** But I have to look after my sheep.

**Balthazar:** They will be looked after. Have no fear. (*SHEEP bleat as if to say they are happy to be left*).

**Caspar:** We waste time. Show us the way to Jerusalem. (*WISE MEN, ATTENDANTS and BOY begin to "travel" around the Stage and SHEEP exit*)

*as song continues).*

- Caspar:** Since we are fellow travellers  
You should know who we are  
I am Caspar.
- Melchior:** I am Melchior.
- Balthazar:** I am the great Balthazar.
- Wise Men:** We have come to see the King of Kings,  
His coming has been long foretold  
We come to bring him presents and to worship.
- Caspar:** My present is bold. I brought him some gold.
- Melchior:** Gold is cold and lead is dreadful,  
Silver will dull with age.  
No offence - it's common sense,  
Frankincense is the rage.
- Balthazar:** For the best, you give the best.  
With Melchior I concur  
The King of Kings won't want trinkets and things  
That's why I had to bring him myrrh.
- Caspar/Melchior:** *(sneering).*  
That's why he had to bring him myrrh.
- Wise Men/  
Attendants:** Travellers from the East are we,  
Bound to follow a star.  
Left our palaces, left our families.  
Now we know where we are.
- Melchior:** *(still confused).*  
Where are we?
- Wise Men/Attendants/Boy:**  
We have followed where the star has led  
A moving star that burns so bright

Soon the world will come to know  
And know we were right....  
We have followed where the star has led.  
A moving star that burns so bright.  
Soon the world will come to know  
And know we were right to follow the light,  
And know we were right to follow the light.  
(Exit WISE MEN, ATTENDANTS and BOY. Music continues until exit complete. Lights fade to a BLACKOUT).

## SCENE 2

(Another part of the Hillside: A moment or two later. As the Lights come up we see the SHEPHERDS warming themselves around a fire and drinking wine).

**Shepherd 1:** Did you hear that noise?

**Shepherd 2:** S'only the boy talking to himself. I reckon he's gone a bit funny in the head.

**Shepherd 3:** (*rising*). I don't trust him. It's gone quiet out there. I think I'll go and see what he's up to.

**Shepherd 1:** Have some more wine - to keep you warm.

**Shepherd 3:** Later. (*Exit SHEPHERD 3*).

**Shepherd 2:** He's always on at that boy. Won't leave him alone.

**Shepherd 1:** The boy asks for it. More wine?

**Shepherd 2:** Why not. (*more Wine is poured and drunk. Enter SHEPHERD 3. He is not a happy man*).

**Shepherd 3:** What did I tell you? He's wandered off again.

**Shepherd 2:** I said he'd gone funny in the head.

**Shepherd 3:** I'll have him. I'll flog him within an inch of his life.

**Shepherd 2:** What's the point? You've done it before. Doesn't do any good.

**Shepherd 3:** Perhaps the wolves have got him.

**Shepherd 1:** What wolf would go for a scraggy boy when there are fat sheep around? He'll come back. More wine?

**Shepherd 2:** You're right. (*to SHEPHERD 3*). Have some wine.

**Shepherd 3:** (*still standing*). Oh all right. (*more wine is poured and drunk*).

**Shepherd 1:** Now sit down. Relax and enjoy the nice warm fire.

MUSIC 4: "WATCH THE WORLD PASS ME BY"

**Shepherds:**     *What's the point of hurrying?  
Harrying and hurrying?  
The greater the anxiety  
The sooner you die.  
Some things are uncomfortable,  
Some things are unbearable.  
Sit and relax and why not  
Let the world pass you by?*

*Nothing we can ever do  
Is guaranteed to help us through  
The hardship that we all endure,  
But still we are here.  
Though things were awful yesterday  
We've survived until today.  
Tomorrow is still far away  
And far too unclear.*

*Look at the sheep grazing lazily all around us  
What do they care?  
The stars in the sky will not fade, will not die,  
Tomorrow they will be there.  
They will be there.*

*What's the point of worrying?  
Harrying and hurrying?  
The greater the anxiety  
The sooner you die.  
Some things are uncomfortable  
Some things are inevitable,  
Sit and relax and why not  
Let the world pass you by,  
Watch the world pass you by.*

*(We hear "MAGIC IN THE AIR" played Offstage on the recorder).*

**Shepherd 1:** That sounds like him.

**Shepherd 3:** And you thought he'd been eaten. Typical!

**Shepherd 1:** This time he's really had it. *(Enter BOY playing the Recorder. He suddenly sees the SHEPHERD and stops. He is very nervous).*

**Boy:** Hello.

**Shepherd 1:** Huh!

**Shepherd 2:** Where have you been?

**Boy;** I HAD to go. I was told to. (*SHEPHERDS close in around him in a threatening manner. The BOY knows what is in store*).

**Shepherd 3:** You ignored us.

**Boy:** I had to.

**Shepherd 3:** You disobeyed us.

**Boy:** (*backing away*). But you don't understand. I didn't WANT to go (*hastily*). You won't believe this....

**Shepherd 2:** No, we won't.

**Shepherd 1:** But do tell us. We like a good laugh.

**Shepherd 3:** Before we thrash you.

**Boy:** There were these men. Kings they were.

**Shepherd 3:** This is going to be a good one, I can tell, Kings!

**Shepherd 1:** Herod I suppose.

**Boy:** It wasn't King Herod.

**Shepherd 2:** Not Herod eh?

**Boy:** They were going to see King Herod.

**Shepherd 2:** Why?

**Boy:** They were going to tell King Herod about a King.

**Shepherd 1:** Who were?

**Boy:** The Kings. (*This is too much for the SHEPHERDS who are both puzzled and angry*).

**Shepherd 1:** These Kings were going to see King Herod....

**Shepherd 2:** ....about a King?

**Boy:** That's right.

**Shepherd 1:** I'm fed up with this. Making fun of us.

**Shepherd 3:** This time you've gone too far with your stories.

**Shepherd 2:** Are you going to thrash him?

**Shepherd 3:** I certainly am. (*The BOY is held down by SHEPHERDS 2 and 3 as SHEPHERD 1 slowly undoes his belt to thrash the BOY*).

**Shepherd 2:** Won't do any good.

**Shepherd 1:** You don't do it hard enough.

**Shepherd 3:** We've had enough of your lies, boy. You have got to learn some discipline. You have got to realise you have a job to do. (*There is a blinding flash. Enter GABRIEL and other ANGELS. SHEPHERDS release the BOY. The SHEPHERDS are temporarily blinded*).

**Shepherd 3:** What was that?

**Shepherd 2:** I can't see a thing. What's going on?

**Boy:** Wow! Look at that!

MUSIC 5: "YOU'RE THE FIRST TO KNOW"

**Gabriel:** *Listen all you mortals  
While I tell you a story.  
Make yourselves comfortable  
And hear what I say.  
Almighty God has chosen you  
To witness His glory.  
Me and all the Angels  
Are here to show the way*

**Angels:** *Me and all the Angels  
Are here to show the way.*

**Gabriel:** *Do not look so frightened,  
Have you never seen an Angel?  
Don't let your mouth drop open,  
It's not polite to stare.  
In the town of Bethlehem  
Is born the Deliverer  
God's Son on Earth, the Chosen One,  
And we will lead you there.*

**Angels:** *God's Son on Earth, the Chosen One  
And we will lead you there.*

**Gabriel/  
Angels/Choir:** *Glory to God on high  
And peace on Earth below.  
The Son of God is here on Earth  
And you're the first to know,  
You're the first to know.*

**Gabriel:** *Leave your flock  
They'll not be harmed  
Do not waste a second,  
I've lots to do and I am not  
The type to hang around.  
Listen to instructions  
There's no need to repeat them.*

*Time is short, the hour arrives  
When I'll be heavenbound.*

**Angels:** *Time is short, the hour arrives  
When we'll be heavenbound.*

**Gabriel/Angels/  
Choir:** *Glory to God on High etc....*

**Gabriel:** *In a stable, in a town,  
There was no room to house them,  
You will see a new-born child  
The holy Infant King.  
No blankets, beds or comforts there  
He's lying in a manger.  
Don't let the humble setting  
Make you not believe he's King.*

**Angels:** *Don't let the humble setting  
Make you not believe he's King. (CHORUS repeats fortissimo,  
then repeats sung pianissimo. The CHORUS can be repeated as necessary  
with dance sequence).*

**Gabriel/Angels/  
Choir/ Boy:** *Glory to God on high  
And peace on Earth below  
The Son of God is here on Earth  
And you're the first to know.  
You're the first to know.*

**Gabriel:** Follow me! You shall see the Messiah! (*exit BOY, GABRIEL and  
ANGELS. The SHEPHERDS are transfixed*).

**Shepherd 2:** (*to SHEPHERD 1*). Close your mouth. You look like a stranded  
fish.

**Shepherd 1:** Did I really see that?

**Shepherd 3:** The wife will never believe this.

**Shepherd 2:** Is this the King you were talking about, boy?

**Shepherd 1:** (*looking around*). Boy? Where is he?

**Shepherd 3:** He's gone!

**Shepherd 1:** Oh no! Not again!

**Shepherd 2:** Was it a dream?

**Shepherd 3:** I'm not sure. Too much wine probably.

**Shepherd 2:** Did you see it too?

**Shepherd 3:** (*uncertainly*). Yes.

**Shepherd 1:** What should we do then?

**Shepherd 3:** Have some more wine.

**Shepherd 2:** Good idea. (*there is another blinding flash; enter GABRIEL and ANGELS. They are not pleased*).

**Gabriel:** Are you lot coming or do I have to find some other shepherds?

**Shepherds:** We're coming, We're coming.

**Shepherd 3:** Pinch me someone.

**Gabriel:** Anything to oblige. (*Does so*).

**Shepherd 3:** Ouch!!

**Gabriel:** Come on then, I haven't got all night you know.

*MUSIC 5: (REPRISE)*

**Ensemble:** *Glory to God on high etc....*

*(During this Chorus, which can be repeated as necessary, the SHEPHERDS, GABRIEL and ANGELS wander off and the Lights slowly fade to a Blackout).*

SCENE 3

*(A STABLE in BETHLEHEM: Some time later. As the Lights come up we see MARY rocking the Crib. JOSEPH is by her side. He is anxious as the BABY is crying fitfully).*

**Joseph:** Is he all right now?

**Mary:** I think so, Joseph. He should go to sleep soon.

*MUSIC 6: "GO TO SLEEP LITTLE ONE"*

**Mary:** *Go to sleep little one.  
You have travelled far upon your journey,  
Your life has now begun.  
Close your eyes, be in peace,  
Your mission will begin tomorrow  
To bring eternal peace*

*(B) Now you are my son  
You are my life, my hopes, my all.  
Tonight in peaceful sleep you'll fall.  
Soon, so soon I know,  
You'll have to go upon your way.  
From my arms I know that you will go some day.  
Leave today behind,  
And in your dreams forget tomorrow,  
The sorrow that is planned.  
Sleep peacefully, my son, you Son of man.*

*(Music continues from 'B' as MARY hums to the BABY and puts it in the Crib. Enter BOY cautiously. He is not sure if he is in the right place and looks around uncertainly. The BABY cries from time to time).*

**Boy:** Is this the right place?

**Mary:** *Leave today behind  
And in your dreams forget tomorrow  
The sorrow that is planned.  
Sleep peacefully my son, you Son of Man.*

**Boy:** The baby is beautiful. Is it a boy?

**Joseph:** Yes.

**Boy:** I thought so. Why is he crying? Is he unhappy?

**Joseph:** All babies cry.

**Boy:** When my sheep are unhappy, I play to them.

**MUSIC 7: "MAGIC IN THE AIR"(REPRISE)**

*(The BOY starts to play his Recorder. The BABY'S crying subsides and then stops altogether. JOSEPH puts a comforting arm around MARY).*

**Joseph:** Thank you, boy.

**Boy:** What's his name?

**Mary:** Jesus.

**Boy:** *(uncertainly)*. And is he a king?

**Mary:** Yes.

**Boy:** *(with growing confidence)*. I thought he would be. I was told about him. The Kings told me. And then there were all those angels. The shepherds didn't believe them. But I did. The angels told me and I knew it was true. *(there is a crashing and shushing noise Offstage. Enter GABRIEL and the SHEPHERDS).*

**Shepherd 1:** Are you sure this is the place?

**Gabriel:** Of course I'm sure.

**Shepherd 2:** Bit cold for a baby isn't it?

**Boy:** Be quiet! You'll wake him up. I've only just got him off to sleep.

**Shepherd 3:** YOU!

**Shepherd 1:** What are you doing here?

*MUSIC 8: "PERFECT CHILD"*

**Boy:** I got here first. I was the first to see him.

*I was the first,  
I was the first to see him.  
I was the first to see the baby.  
I knew the way.  
I knew the way to follow.  
The moving star showed me the way.  
Now I understand  
My feelings deep inside.  
Feelings I can't hide.  
Excitement grows.  
Inside my heart is all aglow.  
Tell all the world.  
Tell all the world about it.  
Tell all the world about the baby.  
Let the world know. Let the world know.  
The first to see the child was me.*

**Shepherds/**

**Boy:** 'B' *Now we understand,  
Now we all can see.  
The Angels and the stars  
They were clues to God's great mystery.  
On this cold night,  
In this unsuitable setting  
Is born the child whom we adore.  
We saw the child,  
We saw the light around him.  
A perfect stranger, a perfect child.  
Stranger no more.*

*(Music continues from 'B' under dialogue during which Enter ANGELS to form Tableau behind MARY and JOSEPH).*

**Shepherd 1:** Is this the King?

**Gabriel:** Yes.

**Shepherd 1:** He's beautiful.

**Gabriel:** Of course he's beautiful. What did you expect?

**Boy:** Shush! all of you. You'll wake him.

*(BOY, MARY, JOSEPH, SHEPHERDS, GABRIEL and ANGELS sing as Enter WISE MEN and ATTENDANTS. The WISE MEN present their gifts before taking their places in the tableau).*

**Ensemble:**     *On this cold night,  
In this unsuitable setting,  
Is born the child whom we adore.  
We saw the child,  
We saw the light around him.  
A perfect stranger, a perfect child  
Stranger no more.*

**All:**           *Now we understand  
Now we all can see.  
The Angels and the stars  
They were clues to God's great mystery.  
On this cold night,  
In this unsuitable setting  
Is born the child whom we adore.  
We saw the child.  
We saw the light around him.  
A perfect stranger, a perfect child.  
Stranger no more.*

*(Lights fade slowly down to a BLACKOUT. Lights come up for bows).*

*MUSIC 9:*

**"YOU'RE THE FIRST TO KNOW" (REPRISE)**

**All:**           *Glory to God on high  
And peace on Earth below.  
The Son of God is here on Earth  
And you're the first to know.  
You're the first to know.*

*REPEAT CHORUS*

END