

# A Babe Is Born in Bethlehem

*arranged for SATB Choir and Chamber Orchestra*  
by Douglas Mears

## Instrumentation

Flute  
2 Clarinets in B<sup>b</sup>  
English Horn  
Bassoon  
2 Horns in F  
Timpani  
Percussion 1  
Suspended Cymbal, Bass Drum, Doumbek, Chimes  
Percussion 2  
Crotales, Triangle  
Celesta  
Harp  
SATB Choir  
Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Cello  
Contrabass

## Program Notes

This new setting of “A Babe is Born in Bethlehem” for SATB choir and chamber orchestra is based on the medieval Latin Christmas text, “Puer natus in Bethlehem.” The hymn dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is based on the opening lines of the Christmas Introit from the *Graduale Romanum*. This ancient text, found in many different redactions ranging from four to twelve stanzas, has likely been written by several authors. The English translation used in this arrangement is by Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883), a pastor, theologian, and educator of the Lutheran church. The tune is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century anonymous folk song from Yorkshire, England, entitled “Spurn Point.”

## Text

A babe is born in Bethlehem,  
Therefore, rejoice Jerusalem;  
A lowly virgin gave him birth:  
Who rules the heav'ns and reigns o'er all the earth.

He in a simple manger lay,  
Whom angels praise with joy alway;  
And wise men from the East did bring  
Their gold, myrrh, and incense to the newborn king.

Now all our fears have passed away.  
Our Savior Christ was born this day;  
God's blessed children we became,  
And shall in heaven praise his holy name.

There like the angels we shall be,  
And shall the Lord in glory see;  
With gladsome praises we adore  
Our Lord and Savior now and evermore.

Alleluia!