A Very Puppet Christmas

Characters: ** cannot double up*

God
Jesus
Bouncing Angels
*Gabriel
*Mary
*Joseph
*Donkey
Rabbi
Eugene Sheep
Barbara Sheep
Pat Sheep
Rammy
Shepherds on sticks
Magi: Balthazar, Melchior, Caspar
King Herod
Newspaper Boy

Scene 1: Heaven *(top corner stage left: gold swathed material like a cloud, with black with stars underneath for puppeteers)*

Tiny coned golden angels bounce on elastic with a tiny light as halo

Angels *(with squeaky voices):* It's today!! It's today!!! Hurray, hurray, hurray!!

Alarm clock sound; yawn. God appears as old man with white hair

Angels *(with squeaky voices*): Yay! It's today!! It's today!!! Hurray hurray hurray!!

God: Yes, yes my angels. Calm yourselves. All in good time!

Angel Gabriel: ***(coming on)*** They are very excited my Lord. We have waited a long time for this moment.

God: No more than I have, Gabriel. Since the beginning of the world when they messed it all up in the Garden of Eden, I knew this moment would come. How is my Son?

Gabriel: He is ready, my Lord.

God: We must give my precious Boy a great send off! Let the Heavens rejoice!!

Angels bounce: Wheeeeeee!!! Hurray!!!

Song: Heaven Sing Out!

Angels: Heaven Sing out!
Heaven Ring out!
Sing that
Jesus is our Saviour!

Come and join us
Sing the Chorus
Sing that
Jesus is our Saviour!

Gabriel: For tis this Babe
Who is to come
Who brings love to our darkness.
He's God's Son!
For tis this Child
Who changes all
And brings Hope among the darkness.
He's God's Son!

Heaven Sing out!
Heaven Ring out!
Sing that
Jesus is our Saviour!

Come and join us;
Sing the Chorus!
Sing that
Jesus is our Saviour!

Gabriel: It is a good send-off, my Lord. The world will rejoice and celebrate.

God: At first yes. I can't help thinking about his death.

Pause

Gabriel: *(gently)* Is it worth it? Are they worth it, Lord?

God: *(perking up)* Oh Gabriel; Yes, my beloved Gabriel. Yes – they are worth it! They are worth it and more. They are my Creation and I love them dearly. I would give everything and more to save them from disaster. (PAUSE) Come on, I want to say goodbye to my Son before I lend him to the world. ***(God goes off)***

Music and party sounds from off.

OFF: God: Well my beloved Son, are you ready to play your part in Salvation?

Jesus' voice: Yes father. I am ready.

God: My dear beloved Son. I will be with you; I am always with you.

Jesus: I know Father. You are my Strength and my Guide. I will not let you down.

Gabriel: Yes, my Lord. It will not be an easy journey for Lord Jesus. ***(Gabriel goes off)***

Repeat of song and party noises getting louder with squeals from the tiny angels.

Scene 2: Mary's Home

Donkey: Hee-haw!! Heeeeeeehaaaaaaaaaaw!!

Mary comes on

Mary: What are you fussing about Donkey? Everyone has gone to bed. Joseph left hours ago.

Donkey: I can't sleep Mary. Tell me a story – pleeeease!

Mary: Oh naughty Donkey. I should just go back to bed and ignore you. I thought it was something important.

Donkey: Pleeeease Mary. You know I hate the dark! Down here all by myself.

Mary: Oh alright. But only one - and a short one!

Donkey settles comfortably

Mary: Once many years ago, the Israelites lived as slaves in Egypt. They were in bondage and desperately needed a saviour to free them. God heard their cry, and sent a special man called...

Donkey: I know this!! I know this!!! It's Moses isn't it?!

Mary: Yes Donkey, it is the story of Moses. God chose him to....

Noise off:

Mary: What's that?! I'd better go and see. ***(she goes off)***

Donkey: Hee-haw – don't leave me...

Gabriel comes in*, shining*

Donkey: Mareeeeeeeee!!!

Mary: I'm coming – ***(comes on)*** I couldn't see anything.... Oh!!!!

Donkey: Do y...y..y...you see what I see?

Mary: I don't know – what are you seeing?

Donkey: I ddddddon't know!!!!! Aaaargh! ***(he runs off)***

Gabriel: Don't be afraid dear Mary. The Lord God has sent me to bring you some special news. He has chosen you especially out of all women because of your goodness. You are going to become a mother. Not just any Mother – you will be mother to the Son of God. You will call him Jesus, Immanuel and he will be the saviour of the world.

Mary: I'm only a girl. How can this be possible?

Gabriel: Everything is possible with God. Even now your Cousin Elizabeth is pregnant with her own child, which everyone said was impossible.

Mary: My Lord, I will trust everything you have said to me.

Gabriel: That is why the Lord God chose you my child. Trust God and don't be afraid.

Gabriel leaves

Mary: Oh my Lord!

Donkey comes back on, cowering

Mary: Oh Donkey!! I can't believe it! It's incredible –the Angel said I'm going to be mother to the Son of God! I'm going to have a baby!! ***(Mary runs off)***

Donkey: Hmmmmm. I don't know what Joseph is going to say – but I don't think he's gonna like it!!

Mary appears with spotlight:

Baby of my Heart

My Lord your servant
Hears with wonder
The message that you bring.
I don't know what to do
But put my trust in you,
You're the Holy One so true.
So may it happen
As you've spoken.
May it all be true.
A babe I'm yet to see
Will shape my destiny
And my heart is full of love.
Halleluja! Halleluja!
God Almighty, Make me worthy!
So Lord, please teach me
All that I must
Do for this your child.
For I am still a girl
Your words I must unfurl
To be mother of your Child.
And God I praise you
Without ceasing;
Lord I love you so!
God gave this child to me
Oh let me care for thee-
Baby Jesus in my heart.

Scene 3: Joseph & Rabbi

Joseph: But Rabbi what should I do? I love Mary. I feel so let down – so broken. I trusted her.

Rabbi: By rights Joseph, as you are an engaged couple, the law says you can stone her to death –

Joseph: No! I can't let that happen.

Rabbi: Then my only suggestion is to divorce her.

Joseph: Yes, yes you are right. But I don't want anything to be known publically. I will go to her parents and end the betrothal quietly. I am so much older than her. I suppose I should have guessed she couldn't really love me in the way I love her.

Rabbi: Only God knows the heart, my son. Sometimes we don't even know ourselves. Who knows the mystery of Mary's actions. Oy ve - Troubles plague us from the first day to the last. We are just a single piece in His great plan. Only God sees the bigger picture.

Joseph and Rabbi go off

Scene 4

Mary comes on crying, with Donkey

Donkey: I'm sorry to say it Mary, but frankly I am surprised at Joseph. I thought he was a man of more faith than that. On the other hoof, I suppose it's hard to believe that an Angel came and told you that you were going to have a baby. On the other hoof, that's the truth! I saw it myself – But then, on the other hoof – how many girls have said they don't know how they got pregnant – it must have been the hand of God.. On the other hoof, he should have more faith in your character. On the other hoof, why would God do it this way and not in some more simple and obvious way; On the other hoof, God's ways are higher than ours and mysterious. On the other hoof...

Mary: Donkey!

Donkey: Yes Mary?

Mary: Nothing Donkey. My parents are sending me away to help Cousin Elisabeth until all the gossip has calmed down.

Donkey: Can I come? Can I come?

Mary: Of course you can Donkey – who else would I take? Certainly not Joseph. *(starts crying again)*

Donkey: ***(going off with Mary)*** Don't you worry your pretty little head about him my dear. These men... well!!

SCENE 5: Rabbi, Gabriel and Joseph

Joseph and Rabbi enter

Rabbi: Joseph, I know it has been a tough time for you. Try and get some rest and put Mary out of your mind. What will be, will be. Just let it go – Let it go, let it go....

(breaks into chorus of Frozen "let it go!.." in a deep voice then music breaks off with vinyl scratch sound)

Joseph: Thank you Rabbi. I will try to forget her and put it all behind me.

Rabbi: God bless you, my son.

Rabbi goes off humming "let it go"

Joseph: If only it was that easy. Oh well, bed time.

Joseph settles down to sleep.

Gabriel comes on *and watches Joseph toss and turn.*

Gabriel: Joseph; you are chosen for Mary. Your courage and honour is needed to protect her in adversity. She is bearing God's son, not one from man. This is God's will. Marry Mary. Take care of God's child.

Joseph jumps up

Joseph: I know!! Rabbi I know what to do now!! I saw God's plan. Praise God.

Joseph rushes off

Gabriel: And the plan moves on.

Lights off.

SCENE 6: Mary and Joseph reunite

Lights on Mary and Donkey walking

Donkey: Well that was kinda interesting, don't you think?

Mary: Aha.

Donkey: I have never seen a human being born before. Have you?

Mary: Naha.

Donkey: Elisabeth was sooooo happy, wasn't she?

Mary: Aha.

Donkey: And when Zachariah's voice came back and he shouted *(in a deep voice)* "Let his name be John" – I nearly wet myself!

Mary: Aha.

Donkey *(looking at Mary)*Streams of living waters... rushing down the hallway....

Mary: Naha.

Donkey: Now girl – what is wrong with you? – it's been 'aha' naha' all the way back to Nazareth. What's eating you up?

Mary: Oh – I'm so confused! It was all so beautiful seeing the baby being born and thinking – that will be me in a few months – and it was wonderful – so beautiful – but then I thought about Joseph and I thought – I can't do it by myself. What am I going to do Donkey? Why didn't he believe me? I feel so let down. *(starts to cry)*

Donkey: Now then dear Mary. Something will happen, I am sure of it. God didn't start this plan to be put on hold by one faithless man. Something will happen to make it all come right.

Mary: Oh Donkey I hope so. I trust God – but I just can't see the next step I have to take. How do I know what to do next?

Donkey: Well, talking of the faithless little egret – here is Joseph coming now.

Mary: Oh no. What mood does he look in?

Donkey: Well kinda of

Joseph ***(off)*** Mary!!! Mary beloved!!

Donkey: *(doubtfully)* Joyful?!!

Joseph runs on *from other end of stage*

Joseph: *(shouting)* Mary! Mary! I know the truth – God came to me in a dream! I will look after you Mary!! You are my life, my love!!! I love you!!

Mary: Oh Joseph!! Joseph!!

They run together arms outstretched in slow motion, with dramatic music.

Donkey: Ah! There's gotta be an Oscar in this somewhere!!

Joseph: I am so sorry I doubted you, Mary. I will look after you and God's baby, and protect you both from any harm.

Mary: Oh thank you Joseph! Thank you God!!

Mary and Joseph go off followed by Donkey

Donkey: ***(weeping)*** Oh it's all too much!! Too much!! Call me a big old romantic! *(Sighs happily)* ***OFF***

SCENE 7:

Flip mock front page over the front of stage

Newspaper Boy: Read all about it! Read all about it! Emperor Augustus Caesar calls a census. Everybody back to their town of birth for registration! Read all about it! The Galilee Gazette brought it to you first!

SCENE 8:

Travelling sequence with Mary, Joseph and Donkey packed with baggage

Donkey: Where are we going Mary?

Mary: We have to go to Bethlehem.

Donkey: But you are so close to having the baby. It's gonna be a tough journey!

Mary: It's the Emperor's command. We haven't got any choice.

Donkey: Well I still don't see why we have to go there.

Mary: It's where Joseph was born. Bethlehem – the city of David.

Donkey: 'David and Goliath' David??

Mary: Yes.

Donkey: Oooh – have they still got his sling? Is there a museum or something? Did they keep Goliath's skull with the hole in it??

Mary: That was a long time ago Donkey. King David is our ancestor you know. Both Joseph's and mine!

Donkey: Urgh!! Isn't that illegal?

Mary (laughing) That was hundreds of years ago!!

Joseph: Come on –let's get going. It's a good 70 miles or more and there'll be a lot of people out travelling.

SONG: Little Donkey: TRAVELLING OVER HILLS; day and night lighting. Gabriel watches from above

Gabriel: *(sighs)* Poor Mary; so close to giving birth. Prophesies are not easy to fulfil. Only a meagre stable awaits you at the end of this journey. The Lord God's most immense plans don't come without cost!

BREAK

SCENE 9:

Gabriel: Welcome to Earth little Lord Jesus! The Son of the God most High, born in a humble stable.

- ***BLACK LIGHT SEQUENCE: birth sequence (fireworks); HEAVENLY CELEBRATION; bouncing angels***

Gabriel: My Lord God – are you not proud of your son? Isn't he adorable?

God: Yes. My beautiful baby son. *(pause)* Jesus, Jesus. Remember all you have been; all you are; and all you must be. My heart swells with pride, my son. I am sorry the path will not be easy for you. I would give you a perfect life of love, ease and riches – but that is not the right way. That will not see others' safe. That will not save the world as you must do. My dearest son! I will be with you always. Always. Always. *(fading)*

"Mary, do you know?" Song under God; then fading out.

SCENE 10

Sheep outside Bethlehem. Shepherds on sticks at back with extra sheep on springs

Baa-rock Shepherds Song

Sheep: *Ba-aa. Ba-aa. Ba-aa. Ba-aa.*
Shepherds: *Freezing, sneezing, coughing, wheezing!*
Fine career choice we have made.
Shepherds! Shepherds!
Ostracised outside the village;
Too unclean to share their food.
Shepherds! Shepherds!
Sheep: *We like munching on the grass*
And feeding; we like to feed.
Shepherds: Oooo. Oooo.
We're just shepherds. We're just shepherds.
Sheep: *Our Lord God in Heaven above cares for*

All our needs. All our needs. All our needs. All our needs…

Shepherds: Ooo. Ooo.

We're about to freeze.

Oh God, help us please.

Repeat and fade with ad lib grumbling…

Oh my knees; I'm going to sneeze; Where's my bread and cheese? Hear that wheeze?…

Shepherd boy prayerfully: Oh God, help us please!

(*Shepherds go off)*

Barbara: Eugene! Eugene!

Eugene: I'm here Barbara – I'm here!

Barbara: How's grazing over there?

Eugene: I'm just trying to get .. this... grass ...over... here.

Rammy: *(wisely)* Yes. It's always greener on the other side.

Eugene: Hello Rammy. Yes. Shame. *(coming over)* Have you seen Pat anywhere?

Rammy: You mean young Patrick, eh?

Barbara: Sheep Pat?

Eugene: Yes, sheep Pat. It's hardly going to be cow Pat, is it?!

Barbara: No, I haven't seen him. I can never find him in the dark anyway. It all comes from the colouring.

Rammy: Aye. When I was a little lamb...

Eugene: Pat! Pat!

Rammy: My fleece was white as snow.

Barbara: Oh here we go again!

Rammy: And everywhere Mary went...

Pat:(*whizzing past)* I'm here Eugene! I'm here – and here – and here again!...Watch me...

Rammy: I was sure to..

Pat: (shooting past) Goooooo!!!

Rammy: Whatever's the matter with young Patrick?!

Pat: Wheeeeeeeee!

Eugene: He's been at that funny grass again. I have warned you about them Pat.

Pat: Wheeeeeeee! *(whizzing past again)*

Eugene: It's not good for your

Pat: Wheeeeeee!

Eugene: Digestion!

Rammy: When I was a little lamb –

Pat: Wheeeee *(bump)*

Rammy: Oi young 'un. Watch it!

Pat: But...

Rammy: There'll be no butting where I am concerned!

Pat: But look! Strange lights in the sky...

Eugene: Now Pat – I've warned you about eating that funny grass...

Barbara: I can see it too... above the Shepherds.

Pat: Angels!

Eugene: Heavens above!

Pat: Exactly!

Barbara: Have you ever seen anything like that in your life?!

Rammy: Well – when I was a little lamb...

Eugene, Pat, Barbara: Yes?!

Rammy: Well... er.... no I've never seen anything like that before in my life!

Pat: Listen – they are singing! ... They are singing aren't they?

Barbara: Yes they are, and it is the most beautiful thing I have ever heard.

Eugene: Look Jeremiah has his mouth open –

Pat: He's dribbling on his beard!

Barbara: Shhh. I want to hear them

Pat: I'm going nearer. (OFF, THEY FOLLOW OFF)

ANGELS SING:

Angels Announcement to Shepherds

Glory, Glory,
Glory, Glory
Glory, Glory
Glory to the Lord!

Solo: I bring good tidings to you
You need not fear at all.
There is in Bethlehem near
A baby born so small.
This babe is the Lord Jesus
He is the Son of God.
He will bring peace and justice;
You can trust his word.

Halleluja to God!
Halleluya to the King
Halleluja to the peace
He will bring!

Glory, Glory,

Glory, Glory
Glory, Glory
Glory to the Lord!
(FADES AWAY)

Rammy: (COMING ON) Well I never – I never – I never –

Eugene: Well put Rammy as ever! Look the Shepherds are leaving.

Barbara: Leaving? Leaving us?!

Pat: But what about the tigers and lions and bears

Eugene: Oh my!

Pat: I'm going too!

Barbara: You can't!

Pat: I want to see the baby in Bethlehem the angels talked about.

Rammy: When I was just a little lamb...

Pat: Come with me!

Eugene: I'm not sure... Hey Barbara wait! ***(THEY ALL GO OFF)***

Rammy: Everywhere the others went - aaaargh! ***(RUSHES OFF)***

SCENE 11:

Shepherds visit the Baby Jesus

SHEEP CAROL: **Miracle Baby**

Sheep: *Miracle Baby; sleeping so quietly*
Watched and worshipped near and far.
Beautiful Baby; how will you save us
Tiny and human as you are?

Pat (solo): *Jesus Saviour,*
O what joy your birthday brings.
How we love to praise your name.
Baby Jesus,
Love came down among us
How we praise your name!

Sheep: *Miracle Baby; how you touch me.*
All that I am is dirt and grime.
Beautiful Baby; I'll learn to serve you,
Live my life so you will shine.
Miracle Baby, come and save me.
Jesus, put your hand in mine.

SCENE 12:

Newspaper Boy: Read all about it! Read all about it! The Arabian Star newspaper reveals that scientists report strange sightings in the sky moving westwards towards

Jerusalem. Is it the end of the earth or birth of a new ruler? Scientists from several countries form an expedition to explore this further. Read all about it!

SCENE 13:

- ***BLACK LIGHT SEQUENCE*: Magi following the star: Magi Magic song in background.**

Magi: *We are wise men.*
We have travelled many miles across the world,
Following a star;
And now here we are!
We are scientists.
We have studied many things on earth and sky
Time to wonder why;
What for you and I?
And we travel fast, and we travel light,
So we're prepared and nothing can give us a fright.
We can hurry up,
We can travel slow;
But we always watch for certain where the star will go.
That's how we are here
Don't now disappear!
We will find a King
Above everything;
Powerful enough to guide a star to us;
We have brought him gifts
With a royal theme.
We have gold and frankincense
And even myrrh it would seem.
Presents we will bring.
Gifts fit for a King!
To the Palace!
Just the place a baby King should now be born.
Following a star;
And now here we are!
Herod's Palace;
What a place to find the greatest king on earth.
Celebrate his birth
Valuing his worth!
And we travel fast, and we travel light,
So we're prepared and nothing can give us a fright.
We can hurry up,
We can travel slow;
But we always watch for certain where the star will go.
That's how we are here

Don't now disappear!
We will find a King
Above everything;
Powerful enough to guide a star to us;
We have brought him gifts
With a royal theme.
We have gold and frankincense
And even myrrh it would seem.
Presents we will bring.
Gifts fit for a King!

SCENE 14:

Newspaper Boy: Read all about it! Read all about it! Jerusalem Times reports that mystery Visitors from the east visit King Herod to welcome the birth of a new king. You heard it here first!

Herod's Palace – on higher stage.

(Possibly don't show the puppets – just have lights inside the palace???)

Herod: *(cockney geezer)* What do you mean you are here to see the baby king? There's no baby here at all!

Balthazar: We followed the star, Sire. It led us here.

Melchior: But...er... we may have made a mistake.

Herod: I would be the first to know if there was a baby King in Israel.

Caspar: Sire. Maybe we mistook where the star led us. But we do believe the star heralds a Royal birth greater than any before him.

Herod: Greater than me?! Watch what you say in my palace, Arabian! People have been killed for less!

Melchior: Well my Lord; it seems we have been mistaken. We will leave you now.

Herod: Go then and find this Royal baby. But give me your word that you will come back to tell me of his whereabouts so I may also worship and welcome him too!

Balthazar: Er...

Herod: Your Word!!

Melchior: Of course Sire; we will do as you say and return here.

Herod: Good, good. Any King in my kingdom must be properly welcomed by me! Now, 'op it!

SCENE 15:

Magi visit Baby Jesus

SONG:

(Arriving at the stable)

See the stable;
Not a place a baby King should now be born; looking so forlorn

In the light of dawn.
Parents' love is worth a palace full of gold; marble is so cold;
Love cannot be sold.
We will celebrate
That we found the King;
Powerful enough to guide a star to us;
We have brought him gifts
With a royal theme.
We have gold and frankincense
And even myrrh it would seem.
Presents we will bring.
Gifts fit for a King.
Welcome to the King!
Lord of everything!

Caspar: Peace be on you.

Joseph: Welcome gentlemen. We welcome you humbly!

Balthazar: It is we who are humbled by meeting this King of Kings!

Melchior: We have travelled a very long way to meet this wonderful baby.

Joseph: May the Lord bless you. You must be hungry and thirsty.

Caspar: All will hunger and thirst for the Truth this little child will bring.

Balthazar: He is the Prince of Peace but he will bring trouble and the sword.

Melchior: His message of Love will be met by Hate.

Joseph: We will give our lives to protect him from every danger.

Melchior: Some things cannot be protected from.

Balthazar: But it will all be according to God's great plan.

Mary: How do you know all this?

Caspar: It is written in the stars!

Melchior: And the light you see has travelled for so many millennia that God planned all this long, long ago – thousands of years before you and I were born.

Mary: God is good.

All: God is good indeed.

Joseph: Come, let's go inside and rest.

Newspaper Boy: Read all about it! Read all about it! Bethlehem Times reports "Hater Herod Hunts Babies" as King Herod orders the slaughter of innocents under two in his bid to conquer the new king before he becomes a threat.

Gabriel's voice booming: Listen; instruments of God! Listen and hear in your dreams! Herod is a jealous and dangerous enemy. He plans to kill the baby. Do not return to Herod's palace; return to your countries via a different way.

Joseph! Joseph – take Mary and leave this place for it is no longer safe. Take the Lord Jesus and go to Egypt – the land that has saved Israel many times before from the time of Abraham, Joseph and Moses.

Don't worry – be at peace! God does not promise an easy life – but He promises He will be with you always. If you listen to His still quiet voice – he will guide you how to go. Peace be with you!

SCENE 16:

- ***BLACK LIGHT SEQUENCE angels rejoicing in heaven over the successful birth of Jesus. God and Gabriel talk about future plans.***

Gabriel: Well Lord God – that all seemed to work out as you planned. Only a few minor adjustments for the Magi going to the wrong place!

God: Gabriel – you alone should know there are no mistakes! Everything works together for good. Herod demonstrated the importance of a tiny baby in a small town. He brought notice to Jesus' birth. Not all is parties and presents. Blood is at the birth and blood will be at his death. It is the price, the cost of eternal peace.

Gabriel: As Moses was saved from the slaughter of babies; the first great saviour of God's people. Jesus was saved from the slaughter of babies and will be the once for all time saviour. Ah God – how wise you are!

God: Now the angels have waited long enough! Let's go and join the party Gabriel! Come along everyone!!

Gabriel: Yes Lord. Let's join the party! Let's remember the *real reason* for the season and bring good news, hope, and good cheer to your families and your neighbours! Jesus came to save us all. Christ's Joy and Peace be with you all! Ha[[y Christmas Everybody!!

CAROL for all: ALL PUPPETS COME AND DANCE!!

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