

# LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING

S(S)A Voices *a cappella*, with Optional Piano

Traditional Christmas Hymn

Arranged by  
Laura Farnell

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**Part-by-Part** 

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Ranges:



Language: English (opt. German)

Use: General

Time: Approx. 1:20

\*Difficulty: Moderate

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## Notes

The Christmas hymn "Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming" ("Es ist ein Ros entsprungen") is one of Germany's most beloved carols. The familiar melody of this hymn was first published in the late 1500s. Then, in 1609 Michael Praetorius, a German composer, added harmonies to the melody and published it. To this day, his lovely harmonization remains the most well-known and commonly-performed version of the hymn and is an important part of choral music history.

While the original author of the text is unknown, the words can be traced back to a manuscript from a German monastery in the 1400s. The rose in the text symbolizes Mary, the mother of Jesus. The text also incorporates imagery from the Bible (Isaiah 11:1) that describes how "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse". In other words, the Biblical writer, Isaiah, foretold that the Messiah to come would be a descendant of Jesse.

The English translation of the text used in this version generally lines up with the meaning of the original German text. However, the last line "Welches uns selig macht" translates more accurately to "which makes us glad" (rather than the rhyming "when half spent was the night")

The harmonies used in this two (opt three part) version of the hymn are similar to the harmonies used by Praetorius in his lovely SATB work. In this setting, the optional piano part adds some of the harmony notes included in the composer's original version. However, like much choral music of that time period, this piece was originally composed to be sung *a cappella* (without accompaniment). Singing this piece in a large, resonant space may help provide an idea of how it might have sounded when performed in large, echoing cathedrals, just as it has been performed many times over the past several hundred years.

As is often the case with music from the Renaissance period, the rise and fall of the notes can help shape your phrases. Increase your dynamic intensity as you approach the highest notes of the phrase, then sing softer on the lower notes in each phrase. As you perform this piece, strive for a supported choral sound, very legato (connected) singing, and remember the many singers throughout history who have enjoyed the timeless beauty of this enduring Christmas hymn.

### About the Arranger

Laura Farnell is a choral composer, clinician, accompanist and adjudicator. A summa cum laude graduate of Baylor University, Laura taught Texas public school choral music for ten years at the elementary and middle school levels. She was honored by her school with Teacher of the Year awards two times and was awarded an Excellence in Education Award as her district's outstanding junior high teacher of the year. Laura presently serves as an invited clinician for district, region, and state honor choirs across the country. She also presents choral workshops at both the district and state level. A prolific composer, she is represented by several music publishers with more than sixty compositions in publication.

12 (♩ = ♩) *f* **poco rit.** **a tempo**  
*mf*

sung. It came, a flow' - ret bright, A - mid the cold of  
*Art* *Und hat ein Blüm - lein bracht,* *Mit - ten im kal - ten*

(♩ = ♩) *f* **poco rit.** **a tempo**  
*mf*

16 **rit.** **a tempo**  
*p*

win - ter when half spent was the night.  
*Win - ter, wohl zu der hal - ben Nacht.*

**rit.** **a tempo**  
*mp*

19 Omit measures of rests when performing *a cappella*.

22 *mf*

I - sai - ah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in mind,  
 Das Rös-lein das ich mei - ne, da - von I - sai - as sagt,

*mf* \*\*

*mf*

26 *mp*

With Ma - ry we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er  
 Ist Ma - ri - a die Rei - ne, die uns das Blüm - lein

*mp* \*\*

*mp*

29 (♩ = ♩) *f* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mf*

kind. To show God's love a - right. She  
 bracht. Aus Got - tes ew' - gem Rat Hat *mf*

(♩ = ♩) *f* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mf*

\*\* When performing SSA, altos should sing the cued notes at divisi in mm. 22-23, 26-27, and 32.  
 Upper note may be omitted since it duplicates the opt. S2 part in these places.

Ending for choirs performing accompanied or SSA *a cappella*.

32

*espressivo* **rit.**

bore to us a Sav - ior when half spent was the  
 sie ein Kind ge - bo - ren Wel - ches uns se - lig

**\*\***

*espressivo* **rit.**

*espressivo* **rit.**

35 **a tempo** ***p*\*\*\*** **rit. al fine**

night.  
 macht.

***p*\*\*\***

**a tempo** **rit. al fine**

***p***

\*\*\* Choirs performing *a cappella* should add a fermata to the final whole note.Optional alternate ending for choirs performing SA *a cappella*.

39 *espressivo* **rit.**

Sav - ior when half spent was the night.  
 bo - ren Wel - ches uns se - lig macht.

*espressivo* **rit.**

*espressivo* **rit.**

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