

While shepherds watched their flocks

George F. Handel, 1728

Christmas
86.866

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The music features a series of chords and moving lines in both hands, with some notes beamed together.

The second system of musical notation continues from the first. It starts with a measure number '5' above the treble clef. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks, such as slurs and accents.

The third system of musical notation concludes the piece. It begins with a measure number '10' above the treble clef. The final measure ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around,
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
To you and all mankind.

“To you, in David’s town, this day
Is born of David’s line
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign,
And this shall be the sign.

“The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid,
And in a manger laid.”

Thus spake the seraph and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God on high,
Who thus addressed their song,
Who thus addressed their song:

“All glory be to God on high,
And to the Earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from Heaven to men
Begin and never cease,
Begin and never cease!”

Nahum Tate