



A Modern Nativity based around a Football Club

An inspiring new interpretation of the age-old nativity story of love, adversity and faith.

We developed the following script in workshops after being given the challenge of conceiving a modern slant on the age-old story. Particular emphasis was to be given to the fact that the drama was to be presented during a Carol Service at the Reebok Stadium.

After much thought and interplay, we made the following assumptions

What if

The year is 5773. God has been promising to send a Messiah since Isaiah's time and people are hoping one is due soon. The coalition Government is not fulfilling their promises as quickly as people were expecting, the Euro-zone is collapsing, hotspots in the Middle East continue to flare and America is not the power it once was. Prophecies have every young girl, especially the virgins, excited that they will be the one chosen to give birth to the new Immanuel.

What if

Joseph is a professional footballer

Mary, his fiancée, is a WAG

The people chosen to hear the good news first are football supporters

The three wise men are managers of successful football teams

Scene 1

A busy shopping centre, Mary and her sister Rebecca have been shopping for a while and are in need of sustenance.

Beccy : Fancy a coffee? I'm just about shopped out!

Mary: Oh yea. My feet are killing me.

Beccy : You get us a table and I'll go and get us one. Skinny Latte as usual?

Mary: Of course, got to get into these new clothes and look Fab-u –lous!

Beccy goes to counter and Mary sits at table gets magazine out of bag and reads or gets out phone and checks messages. Gabriel enters and joins Mary at table.

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Mary: I'm sorry I don't want to appear rude but that seat is taken, my sister will be back any moment.

Gabriel: Don't worry Mary I won't take too much of your time.

Mary: Excuse me? How do you know my name?

Gabriel: I know all about you Mary. I know that you are engaged to Joseph, who is a very talented footballer, and a man of good character from a good family. You are also a very sweet natured and level headed young woman. You are very special. You have been chosen.

Mary: Wait a minute, wait a minute. You are freaking me out here. Is this some kind of joke? This is like one of the Bourne films, who are you? I think you should leave before I call security.

Gabriel: Have no fear Mary for you have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son and you are to call him Jesus. This one will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and God will give him the throne of his father David and his kingdom will have no end.

Mary: This cannot be. You have mistaken me for someone else. I have never slept with anyone. I am still a virgin and I intend to stay one until I marry Joseph. There is no way on earth that I can be pregnant.

Gabriel: This is not the way of earth but God's way. The Holy Spirit will descend upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For that reason he that is born will be called Holy.

Mary: Although I am scared and very confused, you have a certain something about you. I believe in God and accept his will.

Gabriel : Mary you will be exalted above all women. Through God all things are possible.

Gabriel exits and Rebecca returns with the coffees. The Manager starts to clear tables in the background.

Beccy : Here we go! Are you OK! You look a little pale, looks like you've seen a ghost.

Mary: Not a ghost but an angel maybe. That man, that was just talking to me, unsettled me a little.

Beccy : What man? I've didn't see anyone talking to you.

Mary: *(to store manager)* You saw that man didn't you?

Manager: Sorry love. We've been very quiet this afternoon. I was just telling this young lady, you're the only two souls I've seen for some time.

Mary: Come on let's go home! I've some thinking to do. I need some time on my own.

Scene 2

Mary, Beccy and Mum and Dad meet at home.

Mary : I want to tell you all something. Mum, you'd better sit down, in fact you all should.

Dad : I'm alright love. Well go on, you know you can tell us anything.

Mary : Well a few weeks ago, when Rebecca and me were out shopping, I had a strange experience. A visitation, as it turned out. Well

Beccy : I knew it had shaken you up. You've not been the same since. Has he tried to contact you again? Have you been to the police?

Dad : Rebecca. Shut up, let your sister speak.

Mary : You have brought me up to believe in God and the scriptures and we've talked for hours about his promise to send a new Immanuel. Well I was visited by an Angel and he told me that the Messiah was ready to be born and he was going to be born to me.

Beccy : You! Why would he choose you?

Mum : Rebecca! This is amazing. I knew you were special. Oh I am so happy. So when you and Joseph are married you will have a son and he will be the expected Messiah. Oh, we're going to be famous, just think Dad.

Mary : No that's not how it's going to happen. Joseph won't be the father and I'm already pregnant.

All : What!

Beccy : You can't be pregnant you're still a virgin. Aren't you?

Mum : Are you sure?

Mary : I am sure I'm pregnant – I'm not sure about anything else. I'm a little bit scared, truth be told, but I trust in God and hope you will support me. I was visited by the Holy Spirit and conceived whilst still a virgin.

Mum : This can't be – it's impossible.

Dad : No – not impossible. A miracle! We'll support you all we can. You have always been a wonderful daughter, never done a wrong thing in your life. You have believed in God and followed his word and I thank him for blessing us this way.

Mum : Does Joseph know?

Mary : No.

Mum : Oh Lord. How will he take it? This could ruin everything. He'll never marry you now. What will people say? You'll be talked about, laughed at.

Dad : Mother. We will just have to trust in God, he moves in mysterious ways and I am sure

Mum : Oh Lord. How will he take it? This could run everything. He'll never marry you now. What will people say? You'll be talked about, laughed at.

Dad : Mother. We will just have to trust in God, he moves in mysterious ways and I am sure all things will work to his plan. Come on let's let her have a few moments peace before Joseph gets here after the match.

Mum and Dad exit

Beccy : Do you want me to stay with you?

Mary : No. I think it best if I tell him on my own.

Beccy : Pity! I love to see his face. He's going to go mental.

Mary : Thanks a lot!

Beccy exits and Mary sits waiting for Joseph's return. Joseph arrives and is full of himself, excited about his game and his contribution.

Joseph : Hi sweetheart. I have had such a great game. I was amazing, made a lot of the play. Then, guess what, scored the winning goal.

Mary : Joseph, I need to tell you something.

Joseph : I wasn't sure if I was even going to play today or if I was on the bench. Then the boss put me in the starting line-up and I was fantastic.

Mary : Joseph, it's important.....

Joseph : Do you understand what this means to us. A permanent first team place, we are setup for life. We will want for nothing. Our life will be perfect.

Mary : Joseph I'm pregnant!

Joseph : What? Sorry – What?

Mary : I'm going to have a baby. A special baby.

Joseph : Whoa – hold on. Pregnant, pregnant, you can't be pregnant. We both agreed when we got together that we would save ourselves until we were married. You can't be pregnant. Unless No, no, wait a minute.

Mary : Joseph please, don't doubt me. I have not been unfaithful – I have been chosen!

Joseph : Chosen, chosen by who? Which low life would do this? How could you do this?

Mary : I was visited by an Angel of God. He told me that I had been chosen to give birth to the Messiah, the Son of God.

Joseph : What?

Mary : He said I would be visited by the Holy Spirit and would conceive a child and he would grow to be the Most High. We have both believed in God for so long and have read the scriptures; we both accepted that a Messiah was going to come to save us all. We have been chosen Joseph. We are to raise the Son of God.

Joseph : No. No. I can't accept that! Why would we be chosen, who are we to be trusted with such a task. The Messiah will be born to someone of status, of high birth themselves. He is going to be a King. He is going to destroy all evil and rule the world. He won't be born into such a family. You have been unfaithful and you are trying to cover it up with lies. Not only that but you are being blasphemous. I thought I knew you – I thought I loved you. I'll never forgive you for this.

Mary : Joseph please, don't do this to me. I love you, I would never betray you. Please believe me.

Joseph : Get out of my sight.

Mary runs off crying. Joseph slumps with his head in his hands.

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After a moment or two Gabriel appears behind Joseph, Joseph doesn't acknowledge him.

Gabriel : Joseph, Mary is pure. She has been a true and faithful servant of God all her life. She has found favour. She is to be exalted above all women and you her steadfast and loving partner have also been favoured. You will support Mary, you will be a father to the child and you will call him Jesus.

Gabriel exits

Joseph : My Lord God, I am sorry for doubting your plan. I rejoice in your trust and favour and will serve you all my days.

Mary returns and sits next to Joseph at the table. Joseph offers his hands and Mary places hers in his. They smile at each other.

Mary : Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the mighty one is holy, and he has done great things for me. He showed mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children for ever.

They both exit.

Scene 3

Mary is sitting at the table. Her three friends arrive for a "girlie evening".

- Emily :** Hiya. It's party time. I've got the Lambrini. Let's get this party started.
- Mary :** You're supposed to be coming round to cheer me up. Not rub it in that I can't drink.
- Gillian :** Yea, Emily, she can't drink cos she's pregnant. Durrh.
- Emily :** Well I'm not pregnant. Get me a glass.
- Rebecca :** Never mind them, Mary. How're you feeling and why do you need cheering up.
- Emily :** Yea, come on girl, share it with us.
- Mary :** I suppose I'm just a little scared. I'm so close now and I don't know if I'll cope with it all.
- Gillian :** Course you will. You've been so calm and serene all the way through your pregnancy. You've got Joseph and your family and you've got us. Babies are born every day.
- Mary :** Yes but mine is a little different. He will be special.
- Rebecca :** All babies are special. Though I admit your pregnancy was a surprise. We all thought that you and Joseph were going to be careful and not, you know, until you were married.
- Emily :** Mary the dark horse. Well you always think it will happen to someone else heh! Not our sweet little Mary. Anyway it's no disgrace these days to have a baby and not be married.
- Mary :** I have always been true to my beliefs and have kept my promises to my family and to Joseph. I have especially been true to God. One day you may come to understand that my baby truly is special.

Joseph enters.

- Joseph :** Well, hubble, bubble, toil and trouble. Hello girls.
- Mary :** Which one am I then. Not trouble I hope.
- Joseph :** No, you're "bubble" you can always bring me to the boil.
- Gillian :** Oh, stop it you two. Get a room! Oh it's too late for that...

Joseph and Mary share a smile

- Emily :** We're here to cheer our girl up but why she needs it with you goofing around.
- Mary :** As you know it's the Cup Final on Saturday and Joseph is in the starting line up.
- Joseph :** I don't want to leave Mary - the baby is due any day now but Gerard the manager has insisted. He's laid the law down and expects me to "stand up and be counted".
- Emily :** He's a proper tyrant that one. Who does he think he is?
- Joseph :** He is the guv'nor.

Emily : He's a proper tyrant that one. Who does he think he is?

Joseph : He is the guv'nor.

Gillian : Well what's the problem. Take her with you.

Mary : I am going with him but the doctors say I can't travel on the plane whilst my blood pressure is high. So we're going down by Limo.

Rebecca : By Limo, oh my how posh. Be a bit boring just the two of you.

Emily : Yea why not come down with us on the Supporters club coach. Be much more fun!

Joseph : Come off it. I couldn't travel on the Supporters coach. What would people think. You'll be suggesting a donkey and cart next.

Mary : Would be more fun. You could sing some of the songs instead of just listening to them.

Gillian : And as for what people would think. Well it would show that you haven't got too big for your boots and as for that "special baby" it would give him a taste of how us humble folk travel.

Emily : Come on, it's a great idea. Come on Wembley here we come. Dah, dah, etc (MOD tune)

All exit humming Match of the Day tune which is then picked up by choir.

Scene 4

A section of a football crowd are enjoying a game

Clap, Clap, Clap Clap Clap, Clap Clap, Clap Clap, Wanderers x 3

"There's only one Bolton Wanderers, one Bolton Wanderers, there's only one Bolton Wanderers, one Bolton Wanderers, there's only one Bolton Wanderers x 2

Foul – various comments to Referee

Supporters watch flow of play. From foul SL up to SR, back down to SL momentum builds till SR goal. A spotlight shines down upon this section of the crowd.

Gabriel : Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. That which has been foretold, has come to pass here today. The Saviour of the world has been born.

Crowd : What a load of rubbish. What a load of rubbish.

Gabriel : I tell you. The Saviour – yes – the Messiah, the Lord has been born today in this place. And you will recognise him by this sign. You will find a baby wrapped in an away strip and laid in a laundry basket. Glory in the heavens above to God and upon earth peace among men of goodwill.

The light goes out, then there is a moment's pause.

Paul : Come on, let's go this is fantastic news. What are you waiting for?

Bill : Are you mad? We have a coach to catch, beer to drink.

Roy : I think we should go. If it's true it's fantastic news. I want to see for my own eyes this

Paul : Come on, let's go this is fantastic news. What are you waiting for :

Bill : Are you mad? We have a coach to catch, beer to drink.

Roy : I think we should go. If it's true it's fantastic news. I want to see for my own eyes this miracle.

Gillian : Yea, let's get going – to the pub.

Rebecca : This is something special, we have been chosen to receive this message. You surely can't deny this wasn't just the stadium announcer.

Janet : Look, it's always the same. Our hopes are raised, we are going to be saved. We will have a better life, and then our hopes are dashed. Why should this be anything different? You are so gullible.

Carole : Why shouldn't we look for hope in the world? Why shouldn't we believe in light and not darkness? What have we got to lose by believing?

Colin : I think we should go and see. I felt really special and I think it's a message from God!

Emily : You my friends are off your rockers!

Paul : Well I'm going, I'm convinced. I've been waiting for something my whole life long! Come on let's go and see, what are you scared off? That's its true? We can always go to the pub after and celebrate.

Bill : Why are you buying? It's worth going just for that reason.

All : *General hub hub – jovial banter has they leave*

Scene 5

3 Affluent looking men appear from different sides of the stage. They are managers of highly successful football teams. Gaspar = Gaz , Melchoir = Mel , Balthazar – Baz. They eye each other suspiciously. The home team Manager is Gerard (pronounced to rhyme with Herod)

Mel : Gentlemen. What a surprise seeing you two here.

Baz : No surprise seeing you sniffing around here.

Mel : I've just been to watch the match.

Baz : Oh yea and I'm a monkey's uncle.

Gaz : What do you mean?

Baz : Don't act coy with me. You've heard the rumours, seen the signs. We're all here for the same reason, admit it.

Mel : OK, I admit, I'm here with a vested interest. I'm not one to let someone steal a march on me. If there is a new star on the horizon. I want in at the outset.

Baz : A new star. I've heard he's more than that, he's supposed to be the new Messi. The answer to all our prayers.

Gaz : That's what I heard and I want to have him on my team. I don't think either of you will be able to match what I am offering.

Mel : Whatever it is. I'll go higher my owners have assets that we haven't begun to tap yet. Our warehouses are full of the finest Frankincense in the world we can offer the sweetest smelling deal that will have his young head reeling. He will mesmerise people, they will come for miles to watch and shout his name.

Gaz : Ha! The owners of our club have assured me that he will want for nothing. I can lay so much Gold at his feet that he will rightly be crowned King of the world.

Baz : You are wasting your time. We have unlimited oil at our disposal. We can give him enough backing that he will be able to light up the world. People will believe in miracles again.

Mel : Come on we've talked enough. We've heard the rumours, we've seen the signs. Let's go and lay our offerings before him.

Gaz : Should we just check in with Gerard – it's his club after all. It would be the decent thing to do.

Baz : Since when have we been decent?

Gerard : Check in about what then? I heard you three were in the stadium, thought I'd better find out what you're up to. Must admit it's a bit of a miracle finding you all together.

Baz : We've come to pay our respects to your new star. The new Messi.

Gerard : I've no idea what you're talking about! I'm trying to track down a so called emergency – someone has supposed to have given birth a little early in one of my changing rooms. If you find anything out come to my office and we'll have a drink and you can fill me in.

Gaz : Well this gets more confusing by the minute. You don't have to be a wise man to know that we don't have clue what to expect.

Mel : Come on let's go and see for ourselves.

They exit together.

They exit together.

Scene 6

Tableau

The Tableau is staged around the manger with Mary and Joseph in modern dress still, the football supporters are now dressed traditionally as shepherds. The football managers, although still in modern dress bear the traditional gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.