

# "WORDS BY FANNY CROSBY"

By Dan Neidermyer

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Many of the world's best-known and most beloved hymns such as "Blessed Assurance," "Rescue the Perishing," "Near the Cross" and "To God be the Glory," were written by a blind poetess! As a child, a teenager and a mature woman, she loved the world and the God who created it. Fanny Crosby shared this bubbling, joyous love of her Savior through her poems. Many were often spoken and penned in but a few moments, to a tune she was humming or was being hummed to her! A reporter that comes for an interview can't believe she is for real. Could she really be that dedicated to God? The reporter is quite impressed with Fanny's humble attitude after hearing and seeing her accomplishments, and yet Fanny still insists on going down to the Bowery to witness to people. This is a play that will warm the hearts of your congregation. A strong message of commitment to God.

### **SEVERAL NOTES ABOUT CASTING**

Fanny, Alexander, Dr. Russ, William Doane and Eunice Paddock Crosby were actual people within the life of Fanny Crosby. All others within this script are the product of imagination and "individuals who could have interacted with Fanny and most probably, someone like each did."

The roles of Alexander, Russ, Doane, and the Chaplain should be played by men. All other roles--with the slight changing of a word or two--could be played by women or any combination of men and women available.

Fanny Crosby was quite proficient at playing the piano and organ. She could also play the guitar and was one of America's finest harpists of her day. Within this script, only teenage Fanny is asked to play an instrument as a demonstration of this proficiency. The teenage Fanny may

actually play the piano, organ, guitar and/or harp or could appear only to be doing so.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(8 M, 5 F, or 4 M, 9 F, or any combination thereof; flexible; doubling possible, plus extras and a choir)*

**FANNY CROSBY:** Blind writer of more than 8,000 hymns, short and slight, yet truly an inspirational giant! (1820-1915)

**FANNY CROSBY:** As an eight-year-old child.

**FANNY CROSBY:** As a teenage student at the New York Institution for the Blind.

**REPORTER:** Brash, brusque, often arrogant, sent to do a job and doing just that with little regard or respect for the subject of his/her job assignment.

**CHAPLAIN:** Spiritual provider for the New York State Prison, and also caring about those living on the streets of New York City's Bowery district.

**ALEXANDER VAN ALSTYNE:** Fanny's husband from 1858 until his death in 1902. Quite talented, excellent pianist and organist, accomplished music instructor at the New York Institution for the Blind.

**WILLIAM H. DOANE:** One of several composers for Fanny's hymns, also a publisher.

**PERCY:** A child between ages 8-12, friend of Fanny's.

**ANN:** A child between ages 8-12, friend of Fanny's.

**EUNICE PADDOCK CROSBY:** Fanny's loving and caring grandmother. She taught Fanny as a young child the

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Scriptures. Perhaps the most influential and caring of all the people in the life of Fanny.

**DR. JOHN DENISON RUSS:** Superintendent of the New York Institution for the Blind.

**DERELICT:** A down-and-outer on the Bowery's streets.

**DOWN-AND-OUT:** Another victim of the Bowery.

**EXTRAS:** As many as desired.

**INDIVIDUALS IN THE CHOIR:** Who in addition to singing, shout out a line of dialogue.

**PRISONERS:** Can be seated in the front of the audience or a small section on the far side of the stage.

**HUMANITY OF THE BOWERY:** All kinds, all types of individuals in great need, living on the streets of New York City's Bowery.

**CHOIR:** Used to provide the music throughout the script.

**LIST OF MUSIC**

"All the Way My Savior Leads Me"

"Pass Me Not"

"Safe in the Arms of Jesus"

"Tell Me the Old, Old Story" (words by Kate Hankey)

"Take the Name of Jesus With You" (words by Mrs. Lydia Baxter)

"To God Be the Glory"

"He Hideth My Soul"

"Rescue the Perishing"

"Redeemed"

"Praise Him! Praise Him!"

"Near the Cross"

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"Tell Me the Story of Jesus"  
"Blessed Assurance"

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### **COSTUMES**

Appropriate everyday late 19th-century clothing. In keeping with the fashion of the day, Fanny often wore long, billowy skirts, bodices buttoned up to the neck and dark glasses.

### **SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY**

Scene 1 - New York State Prison

Scene 2 - Fanny Crosby's home in Brooklyn

Scene 3 - New York Institution for the Blind

Scene 4 - The streets of the Bowery

Scene 5 - New York Institution for the Blind

Scene 6 - New York Institution for the Blind

--Also within Southeast, New York, Fanny's birthplace, and the United States Congress, Washington DC.

TIME: 1828-1875

*(See end of playbook for listing of props, set, staging and the acknowledgements.)*

## **End of Freeview**

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