

Silent Night, Hole-y Night by David Kai ©2006
(A might-have-been Christmas story)

This skit would be appropriate for a family Christmas Eve service, or other celebrations during the Christmas season. It is a retelling of the story behind the carol, "Silent Night, Holy Night".

Speaking roles: Franz Gruber (FG), Pastor Mohr (PM), Mrs. Gruber (Mrs. G) , Mouse 1, 2 & 3 (M1, 2 & 3), Reader 1 & 2 (R1, 2), Narrator (N), Choir members (at least 3), other mice (at least 3)

Other roles: Mary, Joseph, animals, (shepherds and angels if using the longer reading from Luke 2). A chorus off to the side could sing in support of the stage choir and church mice. A musician is needed to play organ notes unless these are pre-recorded.

Notes:

Franz Gruber should have some singing ability, as should Mouse 1, 2 & 3. The Mouse 1 part would be suited to a comical actor with a big personality.

Props and settings should be kept very simple. A simple manger scene could be set up on one side of the stage/chancel, and a portable table draped with a cloth used as the organ. For mouse costumes, ears can be attached to headbands, makeup used for whiskers/noses and tails added to grey or brown track pants with matching sweaters or jackets.

A simple choreography could be prepared for the instrumental verse of the Church Mouse Song. Modified square dance moves would work well. The chorus has a samba / hula feel, which might suggest movements that could be done in place.

“SILENT NIGHT, HOLE-Y NIGHT”
(a might-have-been Christmas Eve story)

SCENE I: St. Nicholas' Church

(Narrator, Franz Gruber and Pastor Mohr enter and sit in 2 chairs)

Narrator/N1: (serious and stuffy) Good evening, everyone. Welcome to our historic presentation regarding the origins of the hymn, Silent Night. Picture, if you will, a small church in the town of Obendorf, Austria - St. Nicholas' Church. The year is 1818. But this is not just any ordinary small church in any small town. And this is not just any ordinary Christmas Eve. For on this historic evening will be introduced one of the best-loved hymns of all time – with words flowing from the pen of the minister, Joseph Mohr and music composed by the brilliant musician, Franz Gruber. We take you now to the study of Pastor Mohr on this historic Christmas Eve day.

Franz Gruber/FG: (calm/snobby/stuffy) Good morning, Pastor. I trust that all is going well.

Pastor Mohr/PM: (calm/snobby/stuffy) Oh yes, everything is going perfectly as usual. Of course, everything must be perfect to celebrate the birth of our Saviour.

FG: And it certainly is. The hymn that we wrote is splendid. The choir has been practising it for the past four months and it sounds just superb.

PM: Wonderful! Then we can relax and meet back here just before the service. Let's have a cup of tea....

(Mouse 1/M1 jumps on stage, bumping N1 away from the mike.
All look at M1 in surprise)

M1: No, wait, wait! That's not the way it happened at all. Don't you want to hear the real story?

N1: Real story? What do you mean by that?

M1: Well, things didn't go quite as perfectly as all that. Now here's what really happened.

(N1, FG and PM leave, giving M1 a dirty look)

It was a dark and stormy night one December a long time ago. My family and I were freezing outdoors.

(mice enter, shivering)

We had to find some shelter – and quick! We managed to get inside the local church, but even then it was still cold – too cold for our poor babies. But then we found the cosiest place of all – the church organ!

(mice gather around the organ, acting pleased. M1 joins other mice who move to front of the stage. Chorus sings along from off-stage)

THE CHURCH MOUSE SONG (part I)

We need a place to hide, it's awfully cold outside

It must be about minus forty-three.

But now we've found this shelter, turn up the heat and swelter

It's gonna be the bestest Christmas Eve.

In this organ, we can ride on the high C's,

we'll escape all the cold breeze, we'll be happy again.

In this organ, warm like sun on the white sand,

we'll pull out all the stops and we'll be happy again.

(instrumental 2nd verse – dance scene)

(continue dance moves through chorus)

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(mice hide under and back of "organ")

(Franz Gruber/FG and choir enter)

FG: Come along, now, choir. This is the last rehearsal before the big Christmas Eve service – and you know that Pastor Mohr wants everything to be perfect. Let's warm up now. Please sing this note to "LAH".

(plays strange note which choir tries to imitate)

Hmm – the organ is sounding a bit strange. Let's try that again.

(plays another strange note which choir tries to imitate)

Now don't panic – I'm sure that it's relatively minor problem.

(plays a sickly sounding minor chord)

On second thought, perhaps it IS something major.

(plays a sickly sounding major chord – then looks under the organ)

Say! The bellows are full of holes! No wonder it's not working properly.

(mice start to come out)

Egads! The organ is full of mice! OK, everyone; now you can panic!

(choir members start screaming and run off)

FG: (while moving offstage) Our anthem is ruined! I've got to go and tell Pastor Mohr! (exits)

(mice gather at front of chancel, M1 & M2 by microphone)

M1: Well, there goes the neighbourhood.

M2: It's amazing how scared some people are of some little mice.

M1: Well, we're not exactly little mice.

M2: I'm sorry if we've caused them any trouble. After all, we like music and Christmas too!

THE CHURCH MOUSE SONG (part 2) (slower, "angelic")

Although we ate your bellows, and made your keys turn yellow,
we needed all that leather and that felt.

We're comfy and we're cosy, our cheeks aren't red and rosy (faster)
We think our paws are finally gonna melt.

In this organ, we can ride on the high C's,
we'll escape all the cold breeze, we'll be happy again.
In this organ, warm like sun on the white sand,
we'll pull out all the stops and, we'll be happy again.

So sorry for the mess up, it's our fault, yes we 'fess up,
we didn't mean to ruin all your plans
We're here now but don't worry, not long and then we'll scurry
Come springtime we'll be on our way again.
Come springtime we'll be on our way again.
(mice exit)

SCENE 2: Pastor Mohr's office

(PM already seated in office; FG enters. M1& M2 are visible, hiding to the side)

FG: Pastor Mohr!

PM: (rising from seat) Mr. Gruber!

FG & PM: (at the same time) I have terrible news!

PM: YOU have terrible news?

FG: Yes, but let's hear yours first.

PM: Well, I just received word that the baby who was to be the baby Jesus in our Christmas pageant is sick – with the chicken pox!

FG: That IS terrible news.

PM: But what were you about to tell me?

FG: Mice have taken over the organ! They've eaten holes in the bellows! It's completely ruined!

PM: So what are you going to do about it?

FG: For one, I'm going to bring my cat over.

PM: I suppose you could – but that won't help us for this evening. Our Christmas Eve service is ruined!

FG: There isn't an organ repair person within 20 miles of here. And with all this snow, they'd never make it here in time.

PM: Couldn't the choir sing the anthem without the organ?

FG: Unfortunately, when the choir saw the mice, they screamed so much that they've made themselves very hoarse.

PM: (upset) Oh no, this is going to be the WORST Christmas Eve ever!!

FG: Pastor Mohr, please stop worrying. Didn't you always tell us to put everything into God's hands and it will all work out?

PM: Yes, yes, of course. Well, I suppose that I could just preach for the whole hour...

FG: (panicked) Wait! Just hold that thought - I'm going to go home and work on this. Perhaps I can write some new music that doesn't require an organ.

(exits, followed by PM)

(M1 & M2 come out of hiding to the microphone)

M1: I feel so badly that we ruined their Christmas Eve service.

M2: Maybe there's a way that we can make it up to them.

M1: I think there is! Put on your coats, everyone; we're going outside!

(mice exit)

SCENE 3: The Gruber Home

(M1, 2 & 3 are to the side, hiding but visible to the congregation. Mrs. Gruber enters first, FG enters quickly carrying a paper and pencil)

Mrs. G: What's the matter, Franz? You look worried.

FG: Oh, it's a disaster. The organ at the church is broken. Some mice have gotten in and completely ruined it!

Mrs. G: My goodness, what will happen to the service tonight?