

AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS

Composer: Gian Carlo Menotti

Libretto by the composer

One of the most popular of American operas, Menotti's work is performed throughout the country every Christmas season. At its premiere the work was the first opera ever written expressly for television, and it was replayed on NBC every year until the original video recording was lost.

Cast of Characters

Amahl, a crippled boy, about 12, treble

His mother

Kaspar

Melchior

Balthazar

The page

Chorus of shepherd and villagers, dancers

Amahl, a shepherd, tries to tell his mother about what he has seen outside; an enormous star with a long tale. His mother, used to his habitual lying, grows angry; she is even angrier when Amahl tells her that a knock at the door is three kings come to visit them. The kings enter and tell the two peasants that they have come to find a king, and they show the rich gifts they have brought him. While Amahl's mother is out gathering the neighbors, Amahl asks the kings questions about their lives. The mother returns, and the villagers present their gifts to the visitors. That night, Amahl's mother tries to steal some of the kings' gold to use to help her child; she is caught, and when the kings offer to let her keep the gold, explaining that the king they seek will need nothing but love to rule his kingdom, she returns it. Amahl offers his staff as an additional gift, and suddenly finds that he can walk. He leaves with the kings to pay homage to the child who has healed him.