

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

DECEMBER 23, 2024

ONE OF BROUHABA'S GEMS!

ART: C. HINE

The musical score is written for piano and voice in 4/4 time. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 85. The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'doo doo doo doo doo I heard the bells on Christ-mas Day their old fam-il-iar car-ols play an' wild an' sweet the words re-peat of peace on Earth good old fam-il-iar will to men (all) then thought as how this day had come (the) the bell-fries of all the bell-fries Christ-en-dom had rung so long the un-brok-en song of peace on Earth good will to'. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'rit.' and 'a tempo'. Measure numbers 1 through 19 are indicated at the start of each line.

MUSIC BY: JOHNNY MARKS (1956), WORDS BY: HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1863), ADAPTED BY JOHNNY MARKS

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I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY (CONTD.)

20 *rit.* 21 22 *a tempo* 23 24

men (all) doo doo doo doo and in dis-pair I bowed my head (there) there there

25 26 27 28 29

is no peace on Earth I said for hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on Earth good
is no

30 31 32 33

will to men (all) then pealed the bells more loud and deep God is not dead nor
more God

34 35 36 37

does he sleep the wrong shall fail the right pre - vail with peace on Earth good

38 39 40 41

rit.

will to men doo doo (doo doo doo) (doo doo) peace on Earth good

42 43 44 45 46

will (to men) peace on Earth good will to men (all)

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

...IS A CHRISTMAS CAROL ORIGINALLY BASED ON THE 1863 POEM "CHRISTMAS BELLS" BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW. HE WROTE THIS POEM DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, WHEN THERE WAS FIERCE DIVISION THAT THREATENED THE EXISTENCE OF COUNTRY, COMMUNITY, FRIENDS, AND FAMILIES. THE POEM OPENS WITH OPTIMISM BEFORE FALLING INTO THE PESSIMISTIC MOOD REFLECTING THAT OF THE NATION...AND THEN CONCLUDES WITH THE REALIZATION THAT FAITH CAN ALWAYS OVERCOME DOUBT AND DESPAIR, AND THAT PEACE AND GOODWILL WILL PREVAIL. IN 1872 THIS POEM WAS SET TO MUSIC BY JOHN BAPTISTE CALKIN, AND IT BECAME A STANDARD CAROL.

FAST FORWARD SEVERAL DECADES TO ANOTHER ERA THAT BROUGHT US MANY OF TODAY'S HOLIDAY STANDARDS...THIS TIME BY JOHNNY MARKS. JOHNNY SPECIALIZED IN CHRISTMAS SONGS AND WROTE SEVERAL TUNES LIKE ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE, AN OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS, A HOLLY JOLLY CHRISTMAS, AND RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER...AND ALL OF THE MUSIC IN THE CLASSIC RANKIN-BASS CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OF THE SAME NAME.

JOHNNY ALSO REIMAGINED I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY, COMPOSING HIS OWN WONDERFUL MELODY AND HARMONIES, USING VERSES 1, 2, 6, AND 7 FROM THE LONGFELLOW POEM. JOHNNY'S VERSION WAS DEBUTED BY BING CROSBY IN 1956, AND HAS SINCE BECOME A HOLIDAY CLASSIC. IT'S BEEN RECORDED COMMERCIALY OVER 60 TIMES, AND HAS BEEN COVERED BY HAIRY BELAFONTE, JOHNNY CASH, ANDY WILLIAMS, AND THE CARPENTERS.

TO PUBLISH HIS HOLIDAY COMPOSITIONS, JOHNNY MARKS ALSO FOUNDED SAINTT NICHOLAS MUSIC, WHICH IS TODAY OWNED BY HIS SON, MICHAEL. BROUHaha LOVES THIS TUNE, AND REALLY HOPED WE COULD HELP BRING THIS SONG TO OUR BARBERSHOP COMMUNITY. WE REACHED OUT TO MICHAEL MARKS, TOLD HIM HOW MUCH WE LOVED HIS DAD'S MUSIC AND THIS SONG IN PARTICULAR, AND TOLD HIM ABOUT OUR INVOLVEMENT IN BARBERSHOP AND ABOUT BROUHaha'S GEMS...AND ASKED HOW WE MIGHT GET HIS APPROVAL TO RECORD AND RELEASE THIS FOR FOLKS TO ENJOY. MICHAEL GAVE US PERMISSION TO RECORD THE SONG AND RELEASE IT AS A GEM TO BARBERSHOPPERS EVERYWHERE - FREE OF CHARGE. HE ALSO SAID "FYI, MY LATE FATHER CONSIDERED 'I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY' TO BE HIS BEST SONG, IN PART BY REASON OF ITS INTERESTING CHORD PROGRESSIONS, WHICH I IMAGINE CAN BE VERY BEAUTIFULLY REALIZED BY BROUHaha OR OTHER TALENTED BARBERSHOP SINGERS." WE HOPE WE'VE DONE THAT IN PRESERVING THIS GEM.

WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN MANY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THIS SONG BASED ON LONGFELLOW'S POEM, WE WANTED TO HONOR THE MAN WHO GAVE US SO MANY HOLIDAY CLASSICS BY PRESERVING THE LYRICS, HARMONIES, AND CONSTRUCTION THAT WE THINK HE HAD IN MIND WHEN HE CREATED THIS CLASSIC SONG. ALL WE ASK - IN JOHNNY'S HONOR - IS THAT YOU SHARE THE SPIRIT OF LOVE, JOY, PEACE, AND GOODWILL THROUGH THIS MUSIC!