

Behold That Star
by
Thomas Washington Talley

SATB with Solos and Accompaniment
Christmastide; Epiphany

This spiritual was written by Thomas Washington Talley (1870–1952), a professor of chemistry at Fisk University. He was also a pioneering ethnographer. In 1922 he published *Negro Folk Rhymes*, a collection of black traditional songs from rural Tennessee. *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* notes that "this successful publication was the first serious collection of folksongs from Tennessee, the first compilation of black secular folksong, and the first to be assembled by a black scholar."

In addition, Talley was a gifted musician. He sang bass and toured with the New Fisk Jubilee Singers. He was director of Fisk's Mozart Society and for a time conducted the Fisk Choir. Seeking a Christmas spiritual for the Jubilee Singers to perform and finding none that was suitable, he composed "Behold That Star." At what date is not known.

Marian Anderson (1897–1993) performed Talley's spiritual in a 1916 arrangement made for solo voice and piano by Harry T. Burleigh (1866–1949). In this version for chorus and solo voices I have kept Burleigh's original accompaniment, and have arranged a choral refrain, alternating with verses set in a call-and-response pattern between soloists and choir.

Albert Blackwell
February 2, 2012

Behold That Star

Thomas Washington Talley (1870-1952)

Thomas Washington Talley (1870-1952)
accompaniment by H. T. Burleigh (1866-1949)
adapted for chorus by Albert Blackwell

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes Solos (treble clef), Choir (treble and bass clefs), and Acc. (treble and bass clefs). The choir part begins with the lyrics "Be-hold that star, Be-hold that star up yon-der,". The accompaniment is marked *Andante moderato* and starts with a *f* dynamic, which then softens to *mf*. The second system features a Solo 1 part (treble clef) with the lyrics "There was no room found in the Inn," and continues the choir part with "be-hold that star, it is the star of Beth-le - hem." The accompaniment continues with a *mf* dynamic. The third system shows the continuation of the choir and accompaniment parts.

14 *mf*

for Him who was born free from sin,

14 *p*

it is the star of Beth-le - hem,

p

it is the star of

19 Solo 2 *mf*

The wise me came on from the East, to wor-ship Him the

19

Beth-le - hem. it is the star of Beth-le - hem,

19

mf

25 *rall.*
Prince of Peace,

25 *mf a tempo*
it is the star of Beth-le - hem. Be-hold that star, — be-hold that

25 *rall.* *mf a tempo*

31 *Solo 3 mf*

31 *p* *A*
star up yon-der, be-hold that star, it is the star of Beth-le - hem.

31 *p*

37

song burst forth up - on the night, from an - gel hosts all

37

it is the star of Beth-le - hem.

mf

42

robed in white, "Glo - ry to God, world with-out end,

42

it is the star of Beth-le - hem.

Solo 4

47 *pp* *rall.*

and peace on earth, good will to men,"

47 *a tempo*

it is the star of Beth-le - hem, it is the star of

47 *pp* *rall.* *a tempo*

52

52 *f* (*very broad*)

Beth-le - hem. Be-hold that star, — be-hold that star up yon-der, be-hold that

52 *f* (*very broad*)

58

star, — it is the star of Beth - le - hem.

rall. *rit.*

58

rall. *rit.*

Detailed description: The image shows a page of musical notation for measures 58 through 63. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 58-63) includes a vocal line with lyrics: "star, — it is the star of Beth - le - hem." The tempo markings "rall." and "rit." are placed above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The second system (measures 64-69) continues the piano accompaniment with various chordal textures and melodic lines. The tempo marking "rit." is placed above the piano staff in the final measure of this system.