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)
accompaniment by H. T. Burleigh (1866-1949)
adapted for chorus by Albert Blackwell

Solos

Choir

Be-hold that star, Be-hold that star up yon-der,

Acc.

Andante moderato

Solo 1

There was no room found in the Inn,

be-hold that star, it is the star of Beth-le - hem.
9
for Him who was born free from sin,

it is the star of Beth-le-hem,

it is the star of

The wise me came on from the East,

The wise me came on from the East,

to wor-ship Him the

Beth-le-hem.

Beth-le-hem.

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

it is the star of Bethlehem.

Be hold that star,

be hold that star,

star up yonder,

be hold that star,

it is the star of Bethlehem.
song burst forth upon the night, from angel hosts all
it is the star of Bethlehem.

robed in white, "Glory to God, world without end,
it is the star of Bethlehem.

Solo 4
and peace on earth, good will to men,"

it is the star of Beth-le-hem,

it is the star of

Beth-le-hem.

Be-hold that star,

be-hold that star up yon-der, be-hold that

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