

Star In The East

The origin of the tune used here is not known. It has been ascribed to Reginald Heber (English, 1783-1826), whose poem "Brightest and Best" (1811) is the source of most of the lyrics. However, there are other hymns named Star in the East, and other lyrics, so that definite attribution is not possible. It is usually called an American folk carol, which likely arose from the Appalachian mountain range of southeastern USA.

The tune first appeared in 1831 in "The Christian Lyre", a collection of hymns printed with shaped notes. Other early publications include "The Southern Harmony" and "The Kentucky Harmony", both in 1835 and also in shaped notes. Since then, the tune has become popular among shaped-note singers, and it is often used as example of that practice.

Brightest and Best a poem by Reginald Heber

Brightest and best of the sons^a of the morning;
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star in the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all!

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

2. "sons" is often replaced with "stars".

Other lyrics, not from the poem are used in early versions of "Star in the East", beginning with "Hail the blest morn, see the great Mediator..."

Several choral versions of the tune are available. The best I have found is by Brad Holmes. An excellent performance of his arrangement by the Thornton Chamber Singers of USC is found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQmwyMXG_M&list=RD_ZQmwyMXG_M&start_radio=1

With his permission, I have adapted his harmonies for the saxophone quartet.

Bruce Evans, 2023

Star In The East

American Christmas Carol

Anonymous

Arranged by Brad Holmes

Transcribed for Sax Quartet by Bruce Evans

Brightly $\text{♩} = \sim 90$

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The piece consists of 56 measures, divided into eight systems of seven measures each. The melody is characterized by long, sweeping phrases connected by a continuous line. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte) at measures 1, 25, and 41; *p* (piano) at measures 17 and 49; and *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) at measures 23 and 55. A tempo marking of *a tempo* appears at measure 25. A repeat sign is present at measure 33, with a first ending bracketed over measures 33-40 and a second ending bracketed over measures 41-43. The piece concludes with a final sharp sign at measure 56.

57 *mf* *a tempo* 58 59 60 61 62

63 64 65 81 *mf* 82 83 84

85 86 87 *poco rit.* 88 89 *f* *a tempo* 90

91 92 93 94 95 96

97 *mp* 98 99 100

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American Christmas Carol

Anonymous
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Brightly $\text{♩} = \sim 90$

The musical score is written for Alto Saxophone in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The piece is marked 'Brightly' with a tempo of approximately 90 beats per minute. The score consists of eight staves of music, each containing measures numbered 1 through 52. The music is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, often beamed together in groups. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) at measures 1, 25, 33, and 41; *p* (piano) at measures 17 and 49; and *poco rit.* (poco ritardando) at measure 24. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 52.

53 54 55 *poco rit.* 56 57 *mf a tempo* 58 59

60 61 62 63 64 65 *mf* 16

82 83 84 85

86 87 *poco rit.* 88 89 *f a tempo* 90

91 92 93 94 95

96 97 *mp* 98 99 100 *Slower*

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Brightly $\text{♩} = \sim 90$

1 *mf* 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 17 *p*

18 19 20 21 22 23 *poco rit.* 24

25 *mf a tempo* 26 27 28 29 30

31 32 33 **16** 49 *p* 50 51 52

53 54 55 *poco rit.* 56 *mf a tempo* 57 58

59 60 61 62 63 64

8
65 73 74 75 76 77
mf

8
78 79 80 81 89 90
f a tempo

91 92 93 94 95 96

Slower
97 98 99 100
mp

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Brightly $\text{♩} = \sim 90$

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. The piece consists of 73 measures, divided into eight systems. The first system (measures 1-6) begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system (measures 7-13) continues the melodic line. The third system (measures 14-20) includes a dynamic marking of *p* at measure 17. The fourth system (measures 21-27) features a *poco rit.* marking from measure 24 to 25, followed by *mf a tempo* at measure 25. The fifth system (measures 28-33) contains a repeat sign at measure 32, with a first ending of 16 measures. The sixth system (measures 49-61) includes a second ending of 8 measures at measure 49, followed by *mf a tempo* at measure 57. The seventh system (measures 62-67) includes a dynamic marking of *mf* at measure 65. The eighth system (measures 68-73) concludes the piece.

74 75 76 77 78 79

80 81 89 *f a tempo* 90 91 92 93

94 95 96 97 *mp Slower* 98 99 100

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1 *mf* 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14 15 16 17 *p*

18 19 20 21 22 23 *poco rit.* 24

25 *mf a tempo* 26 27 28 29 30

31 32 33 41 *mf* 42 43

44 45 46 47 48 49 *p*

50 51 52 53 54 55 *poco rit.* 56

57 *mf a tempo* 58 59 60 61 62

63 64 65 **16** 81 *mf* 82 83

84 85 86 87 *poco rit.* 88 89 *fi tempo*

90 91 92 93 94 95

96 97 *mp* 98 99 100

Slower