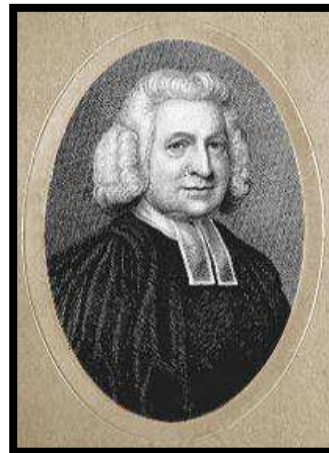


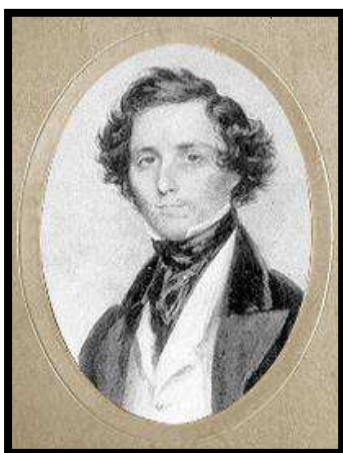
Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, Lyrics, 1739; Felix Mendelssohn, Music, 1840

I usually don't start thinking about practicing Christmas music until after Thanksgiving and then get good at it by about the middle of February! But, "*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*" is a classic Christmas anthem, to practice year round! The words were penned in 1739 by Charles Wesley, who along with his brother John, was a leader of the evangelical revival in the Church of England in the 18th century, which eventually evolved into the Methodist church. Charles wrote over 9000 hymns and poems in his lifetime. Some of his better-known works include "*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*", "*Love Divine All Loves Excelling*", and "*Amazing Love*", as well as, the Easter anthem, "*Christ the Lord is Risen Today*", both which are included in this Volume VI collection. In fact, Charles wrote both his famous Easter and Christmas anthems in 1739, and originally, they both shared the same tune (which is still the tune most commonly associated with "*Christ the Lord Is Risen*").



About 15 years after its original publication, Wesley's student and friend, George Whitfield, made some changes to the original lyrics, reorganized the verses to make them longer, and deleted some of Wesley's original lines (all against Wesley's expressed written wishes!). But, the transformation of this hymn didn't end there. In 1840, Felix Mendelssohn wrote a cantata to commemorate Johann Gutenberg and the invention of his printing press. In 1856, organist W. H. Cummings adapted the 2nd movement of that cantata to this Christmas hymn, further reorganizing the lines into the now familiar 10-line stanzas, and further altering Mendelssohn's music to fit.



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