Christmas Bells

I heard the bells on Christmas Day	It was
Their old, familiar carols play,	The h
And wild and sweet	An
The words repeat	The
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!	Of pe
And thought how, as the day had come,	And i
The belfries of all Christendom	'There
Had rolled along	'Fo
The unbroken song	An
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!	Of pe
Till ringing, singing on its way,	Then
The world revolved from night to day,	'God
A voice, a chime,	The
A chant sublime	The
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!	With

s as if an earthquake rent nearth-stones of a continent, nd made forlorn e households born eace on earth, good-will to men! in despair I bowed my head; e is no peace on earth,' I said; or hate is strong, nd mocks the song eace on earth, good-will to men!' pealed the bells more loud and deep: is not dead, nor doth He sleep; e Wrong shall fail, e Right prevail, peace on earth, good-will to men.' Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1882)

Christmas Bells was written in response to a request from the Financial Times for a carol as part of their annual Christmas fundraising. In searching for a suitable text, I found that Longfellow's American Civil War poem resonated for me with the commemoration of the outbreak of the First World War, a subject which was already occupying much of my vocal programming and composition at the time. It felt important to be reminded of the seasonal message of peace even when war felt an ever-present topic. *Christmas Bells* was first performed by the Godwin Choir at St George the Martyr, Southwark, directed by Alex Davan Whetton with Steven Neugarten at the piano in December 2014 on YouTube for the Financial Times.

Duration: c. 4 minutes

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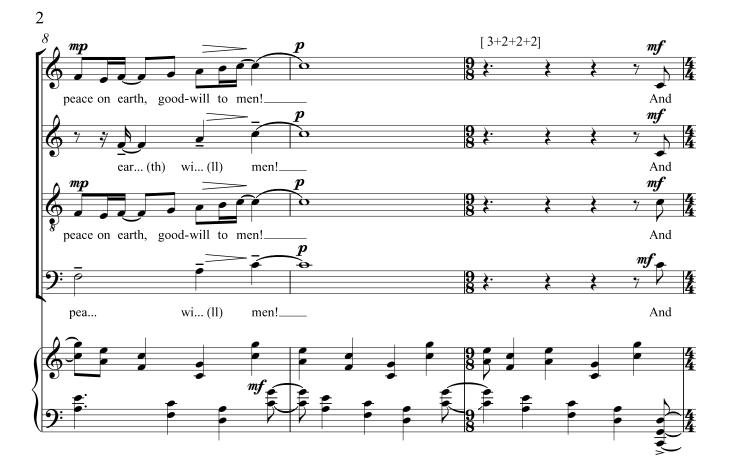
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)

Roderick Williams (b.1965)



(use the sustaining pedal freely to blur the chiming)







Edition Peters