

Good King Wenceslas

Words & Music:
Traditional English

David Hodge has an arrangement of this, along with a nice discussion of how to create an arrangement of a traditional carol, in the December 2006 issue of Acoustic Guitar. His version is in C. Good King Wenceslas was a real person: Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia, who ruled from 921 until his death in 935. Believe it or not, he is a direct ancestor of mine.

G Em C G
Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen,
G Em C G
When the snow lay round about deep and crisp and even.
G Em C G
Brightly shown the moon that night though the frost was cruel;
G Em D C G
When a poor man came in sight Gathering winter fu-----el.

"Hither, page, and stand by me, if thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence by Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither."
Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together;
Thro' the rude wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how, I can go no longer."
Mark my footsteps, good my page; tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing.