

## The Bells of Aberdyfi

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The chords are indicated above the notes as follows:

- Staff 1: G, D, G, D, G, C, D, G
- Staff 2: C, D, G, G, D, G, C, D, G
- Staff 3: C, D, G, G, D, C, D, G, G
- Staff 4: D, G, C, D, G, D, G, D
- Staff 5: G, C, D, G, C, D, G

- Gaily ringing o'er the dales  
 Hear the silv'ry chime which hails  
 Those who come to fairest vales,  
 Greeting all to Aberdovey,  
 One, two, three, four how they ring!  
 And echoes answer as they sing,  
 The bells of Aberdovey.  
 Soft and clear thro' all the land,  
 The bells are calling clearly.  
 Ringing, Singing as we stand  
 In glades we love so dearly.  
 "Welcome friends," we hear them say  
 "Welcome each and every day,  
 Listen all at work or play",  
 Say the bells of Aberdovey.

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"The Bells of Aberdyfi" (in Welsh "*Clychau Aberdyfi*"), also known as "Bells of Aberdovey" is a Welsh air. The tune is known today as a famous Welsh folk-song, although its origins were in the English stage. The tune has been incorporated into Welsh tradition, the song was composed (in broken Welsh) by Charles Dibdin (1745-1814) for his opera *Liberty Hall* in 1786. There is no evidence to show that Dibdin used an existing tune and no copy can be found except Dibdin's of a date prior to 1844.

Dibdin's song with music was published in an oblong folio in London by John Preston in 1785 or 1786.

Irish harper Arthur O'Neill (1734-1818) mentions Dibdin in his memoirs but did not have a high opinion of his work, considering him a threat to tradition.

It was recorded by Robin Huw Bowen on *Telyn Berseiniol Fy Bgwlad/The Sweet Harp of My Land* (1996). Bowen's setting imitates the bells of the drowned cities and towns of *Cantre'r Gwaelod*, also known as *Cantref y Gwaelod*, a legendary ancient sunken kingdom said to have occupied a tract of fertile land lying in what is now Cardigan Bay to the west of Wales. It has been described as a "Welsh Atlantis" and has featured in folklore, literature and song.

I arranged this for bell choir several years ago.