

Away in a Manger

James R. Murray 1887

The musical score for "Away in a Manger" is presented in three staves. The first staff begins with a G chord and continues with C, G, and D7 chords. The second staff features D7 and G chords, ending with a C chord. The third staff includes G, D, G, Am, D7, and G chords. The piece is in G major and 3/4 time.

"Away in a Manger" was first published in this setting by James R. Murray in his 1887 book "Dainty Songs for Little Lads and Lasses". Murray had somehow gotten the idea that it was written by Martin Luther, for which there is little or no evidence other than Murray's own book.

But since Murray attributed the song to Luther, Murray's name was dropped in several later publications. By 1914, it had been attributed to "Carl Mueller", whoever that is. So now the tune is often attributed to "Mueller".

There is another musical setting, by an American composer named Kirkpatrick, which is apparently more popular in England. And there are several more musical settings.

Given the number of musical settings and attributions, we are lucky that no one has tried setting the lyrics to "Jingle Bells", though they might fit. You could also set the lyrics to the tune of "Greensleeves" and claim that it was written by Henry the Eighth. But that would be wrong.