

Christmas Eve, Bells was written in 1991 for the Dale Warland Singers' *Echoes of Christmas* concert. I set the first three stanzas from Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam, canto XXVIII*, imagining the voices as bells ringing the changes – exploring the variations of their tunes – from “four hamlets round, from far and near, on mead and moor,” the background hum always present in their combined overtones, and a sense of wistful nostalgia for days gone by.

duration: c. 4:00

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

In Memoriam

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)