

Welcome Back, Billy Best!

A Roaring Parable of the Twenties

The story of the prodigal son in a twenties setting
for unison/two part voices with duo piano accompaniment

Based on Luke 15

by
Joe Cox
and
Jody W. Lindh

Also available:

Choral Score - Code CGC36

Demonstration CD - Code CGCD22

Accompaniment CD - Code CGCD23

Director's Preview Kit - Code CGK13
(Includes choral score and demo CD recording)

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 SCENE ONE

Time: The 1920's. On a small side stage, a spotlight focuses on city street corner, a box for the preacher to stand on, and a lamp post. Optional SFX (sound effects): Street sounds — cars and buses, street car trolleys, etc. If desired, a Salvation Army mission band plays "Onward Christian Soldiers" (not too well), or it may be played on the piano or other keyboard. The Preacher enters and stands on a box, inviting a passing public to gather around and listen. Most passers-by look skeptically at the Preacher and leave, but a few stay to listen. The Preacher's lines are delivered in a feverish preaching style with key words delivered in an elongated, tremoring tone.

PREACHER

Gather 'round! I tell you — step right up and hear the Word of the Lord! (*Waving the floppy Bible*) Sinners, repent! (*Invites more to gather.*) Step right up, brothers and sisters, hallelujah!

A small crowd gathers; music fades and continues under dialogue.

Wouldn't any among you who owned a hundred sheep and lost one of them, leave the ninety and nine and go after the one who is lost until he finds it?

(to a passing pair)

Join us, brothers and sisters.

And when he found the one which was lost, he will put it on his shoulders with great joy, and as soon as he gets home, he will call his friends together, "Come and celebrate with me," he will say, "for I have found that sheep of mine which was lost.

I tell you, my friends, it is the same in heaven! There is more joy over one sinner whose heart is changed than over the ninety and nine who have no need of repentance. Hallelujah!

CROWD (solo voices or all)

(skeptically, disbelieving, amongst themselves) Applesauce ... ah, baloney! ... What a bunch of banana oil!

The preacher tries to regain the crowd's attention.

PREACHER

Brothers and sisters — listen to me! Say there's this woman who has ten silver coins, and if she loses one, will she NOT — hear me out, now — will she NOT search the house from top to bottom until she finds it? And when she finds it ... *(pause)* ... she calls together her friends and neighbors, and says, "Come, celebrate!" for I *(overly dramatic)* have found ... the coin ... that was lost!

Crowd starts to leave.

(quickly) I tell you, friends, it is the same in heaven — there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner — whose heart is changed.

The crowd grows more skeptical, groaning.

CROWD (solo voices or all)

He's all wet. ... This guy's nuts. ... Let's get out of here!

Music stops.

PREACHER

(more calmly) OK, OK. Let me put it to you another way.

Lights fade on side stage.

(Dramatic, looking off in the distance) There once was a man who had two sons, *(fading)* and the younger of them said to his father . . .

Street corner crowd exits. The Preacher exits as Scene Two begins the portrayal of the prodigal son story.

SCENE TWO

As music for Song 1 begins, the lights come up on a busy newsroom of a large metropolitan newspaper. Set background: city skyscrapers. Optional SFX: press room typing, teletype, presses running, phones ringing. If desired, each group (reporters, editors, photographers) may enter just prior to their vocal entrance.

1. Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

Chorus: Reporters, Editors, Photographers, Secretaries, Mr. Best

Joe Cox and Jody W. Lindh

With Precision (♩=130) Reporters: *mf*

With Precision (♩=130) *8va* News-print and dic-ta-phones, *simile*

Piano I *mp*

Piano II *mf*

4 tick-er tape and tel-e-phones, got to make that dead-line! Slan-ders and scan-dals, we'll

8va

4

8

Editors:

find all the an-gles, we'll stay up past our bed-time! We

8va

11

check each quo-ta-tion, we check punc-tu-a-tion, we dot our I's and cross our

8va

p

simile

mf

14

T's! And when there's a scoop, we work till we're pooped, we're the

8va

17

All: *f*
Best Times from A to Z! Ex - tra! Ex - tra! Read all a-bout it!

8va

legato

f

simile

f RH

In - ter - views, book re - views! Ex - tra! Ex - tra!

Read all a - bout it! If it seems we're ring - ing our own

legato

27

chime, _____ just read our sto - ries and

Piano accompaniment for measures 27-29. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Piano accompaniment for measures 30-32. The right hand continues the melodic development with chords and eighth notes, and the left hand maintains the harmonic support.

30

head - lines, just take a look _ at our by - lines, and you can

Piano accompaniment for measures 30-32. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Piano accompaniment for measures 33-35. The right hand continues the melodic development with chords and eighth notes, and the left hand maintains the harmonic support.

read it in the Times for on - ly a dime!

This block contains the musical notation for measures 33, 34, and 35. It features a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics, and a piano accompaniment in G major with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The piano part includes chords and melodic lines in both the right and left hands. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'PREVIEW' is overlaid diagonally across the page.

This block contains the musical notation for measures 36, 37, and 38. It continues the piano accompaniment from the previous block, showing more complex chordal textures and melodic development. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'PREVIEW' is overlaid diagonally across the page.