

Folk Song – My Grandfather's Clock

"My Grandfather's Clock" is a traditional English folk song first published in 1876 by Henry Clay Work. The lyrics of the song tell the story of a grandfather clock that was built by his grandfather and belonged to him for many years until it finally stopped working.

It is said that the original concept behind the song was inspired by Henry Work's real-life experiences with his own grandfather. It is a standard of British brass bands and colliery bands, and it is also popular in bluegrass music. It has also been sung by male choruses such as the Robert Shaw Chorale, and was popularized by Johnny Cash.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* says the song was the origin of the term "grandfather clock" for a longcase clock. In 1905, the earliest known recording of this song was performed by Harry Macdonough and the Haydn Quartet (known then as the "Edison Quartet").

In the song, the clock is purchased on the morning of the grandfather's birth and works perfectly for 90 years, requiring only to be wound at the end of each week. Yet the clock seems to eerily know the good and bad events in the grandfather's life – as it rings 24 chimes when the grandfather brings his bride into his house, and near his death, it rings a somber alarm, which the family recognizes to mean that the grandfather is near death and gathers by his bed. After the grandfather dies, the clock suddenly stops and never works again.


To my Sister Lizzie.

GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK.

Words and Music by HENRY C. WORK.

No. 52

PIANO.



The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. This is followed by a series of sixteenth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The left hand (bass clef) begins with a series of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. This is followed by a series of sixteenth notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3.

3. My grand-fath-er said that of those he could hire. Not a ser - vant so faith - ful he found; For it
4. It rang an a-larm in the dead of the night— An a - larm that for years had been dumb; And we



The first line of the vocal melody is written on a single staff in treble clef. It begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. It ends with a quarter note: G4.

1. My grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf.—So it stood ninety years on the floor; It was
2. In watching its pen - du-lum swing to and fro, Ma-ny hours had he spent while a boy; And in



The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. This is followed by a series of sixteenth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The left hand (bass clef) begins with a series of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. This is followed by a series of sixteenth notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3.

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wast-ed no time, and had but one de-sire— At the close of each week to be wound. And it
knew that his spir - it was plum - ing for flight—That his hour of de - parture had come. Still the

The first system of music consists of a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

tall - er by half than the old man himself, Though it weighed not a pennyweight more. It was
childhood and man - hood the clock seemed to know And to share both his grief and his joy. For it

kept in its place—not a frown up-on its face, And its hands nev - er hung by its side; But it
clock kept the time, with a soft and muffled chime, As we si - lent - ly stood by his side; But it

The second system of music continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a similar rhythmic pattern to the first system. The piano accompaniment maintains the same eighth-note bass line and chordal structure.

bought on the morn of the day that he was born, And was al - ways his treasure and pride; But it
struck twenty-four when he entered at the door, With a bloom - ing and beau - ti - ful bride; But it

stopp'd short— nev - er to go a - gain— When the old man died.
stopp'd short— nev - er to go a - gain— When the old man died.

The third system of music concludes the piece. The vocal line ends with a double bar line. The piano accompaniment also concludes with a double bar line. The overall structure is consistent with the previous systems.