

Folk Song: The Old Carrion Crow

There are quite a few versions of the folk song, "The Old Carrion Crow." In fact, its origins are somewhat disputed. Some claim that it evolved from an older Irish folk ballad called "Buttermilk Mary," only changing the name later on. Others believe that the song was originally English in origin, and was later picked up by Scottish people who migrated south to England.

Though similar, each version has its own melody and lyrics, as well as its own chorus of nonsensical syllables. Written in the Dorian mode, which corresponds to the piano keyboard's white notes from D to D (similar to Scarborough Faire), the melody usually has a moderate, upbeat tempo. The song tells the amusing story of a tailor who tries to shoot a crow, but ends up hitting (and killing) a sow.

Regardless of its origins, it is a fun folk song to sing - or try to sing - if you can keep up with those absurd lyrics!

The Old Carrion Crow

Oh, the old carrion crow was sitting on an oak,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh,
Watching a tailor cutting out a coat.
Sing he, sing ho, the old carrion crow,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh.

Refrain:

Kimelearo kill my kearo, kimelearo kimo,
To me bump, bump, bump, jump
Polly wolly lee, linko killy kum kimo

Hurry now bring me my arrow and bow,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh,
That I may shoot young carrion crow.
Sing he, sing ho, the old carrion crow,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh.

Well the tailor shot and missed his mark
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh,
And the shot the miller's sow right through the heart
Sing he, sing ho, the old carrion crow,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh.

The old sow died and the bells did toll
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh,
And the little pigs cried and prayed for her soul
Sing he, sing ho, the old carrion crow,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh.

Oh now the old sow's dead and gone
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh,
And the little pigs play and wattle along
Sing he, sing ho, the old carrion crow,
Fol the riddle, all the riddle hey ding, doh.

THE OLD CARRION CROW

For Two-Part Treble (or Unison) Voices and Piano

Nova Scotian Folk Song
Arranged by
Mary Goetze

With spirit (♩ = ca. 88) a tempo

Voices unis. *mf*

Ossia:

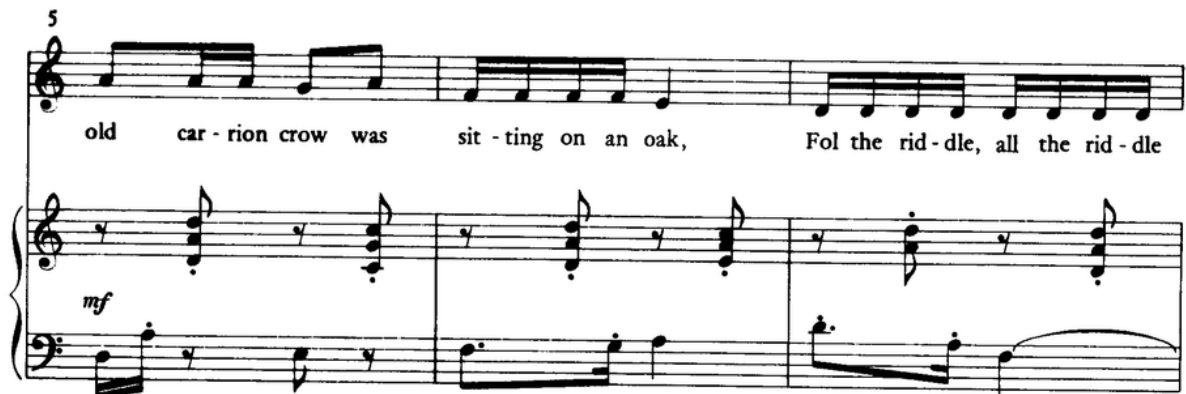
Piano *f* *mp* *mf* *rit.*



5

old car - rion crow was sit - ting on an oak, Fol the rid - dle, all the rid - dle

mf



8

hey ding doh, Watch - ing a tai - lor cut - ting out a coat. Sing

mp



11 *slightly held back* *a tempo*

he, sing ho, the old car - rion crow, Fol the rid - dle, all the rid - dle hey ding doh.

P *mf*

Ped.

15 *slight rit.* *a tempo*

Ki - me - lea - ro kill my kea - ro, ki - me - lea - ro ki - mo, To me

19

bump, bump, bump, jump Pol - ly wol - ly lee, Lin - ko kil - ly kum ki - mo

23 *mf*

Hur - ry now bring me my cross and my bow,

mf