

"Shchedryk" is a traditional Ukrainian folk song that has gained international recognition and popularity, especially in its English adaptation known as "Carol of the Bells." The song was composed by Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych in 1916, based on a much older folk chant. (Leontovych was killed in 1921 by an agent of the Cheka (Extraordinary Commission), the Soviet secret police, because the composer was known for his nationalist views and support of Ukrainian culture and independence. During those years, the Soviet regime brutally suppressed any manifestations of Ukrainian nationalism.)

Origins and Meaning:

The word "Shchedryk" is derived from "shchedryi," which means "bountiful" or "generous" in Ukrainian. The song is traditionally sung during New Year's celebrations, specifically on the eve of the Julian New Year (January 13), known as "Malanka" or "Generous Eve."

The primary textual source is related to the pre-Christian era, when the new year began in early spring with the return of swallows to Ukraine. The lyrics of "Shchedryk" tell the story of a swallow flying into a household to sing of wealth and prosperity coming in the New Year. It describes various good fortunes that the family will experience, symbolizing hope and abundance.

Musical Composition:

Mykola Leontovych arranged "Shchedryk" as a choral work, and it was first performed by students at Kyiv University in December 1916. The composition is characterized by its four-note ostinato, a repeating motif that gives the song its distinctive and mesmerizing quality.

Global Reach:

"Shchedryk" gained international fame when it was performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City in 1921 by the Ukrainian National Chorus.

Ukrainian	Dutch
Щедрик, щедрик, щедрівочка, Прилетіла ластівочка, Стала собі щебетати, Господаря викликати.	Shchedryk, shchedryk, shchedrivochka, Een kleine zwaluw vloog, Begon te twitteren, De gastheer bellen.
Вийди, вийди, господарю, Подивися на кошару, Там овечки покотились, А ягнички народились.	Kom naar buiten, kom naar buiten, gastheer, Kijk naar de schaapskooi, Daar zijn de ooiën bevallen, En de lammetjes zijn geboren.
В тебе товар весь хороший, Будеш мати мірку грошей, Хоч не гроші, то полова, В тебе жінка чорноброва.	Uw goederen (vee) zijn in orde, Je zult veel geld hebben, Als het geen geld is, dan kaf, Je hebt een vrouw met donkere wenkbrauwen.
