

david bowie and bing crosby little drummer boy lyrics

David Bowie and Bing Crosby Little Drummer Boy Lyrics have become an iconic piece of Christmas music history, representing a unique collaboration between two of the most influential artists in their respective genres. This article will delve into the backstory of the song, the significance of its performance, and the cultural impact it has had since its debut. Bowie and Crosby's rendition of "Little Drummer Boy" not only showcases their vocal talents but also symbolizes the blending of diverse musical styles.

Background of "Little Drummer Boy"

The song "Little Drummer Boy" was originally written in 1941 by Katherine K. Davis. It tells the story of a poor boy who, unable to offer material gifts to the newborn Jesus, plays his drum to honor him. The song quickly gained popularity and became a staple in Christmas music repertoires.

Here are some key points about the song's history:

1. Initial Release: The song was first recorded by the Trapp Family Singers and later popularized by the Harry Simeone Chorale in 1958.
2. Cultural Significance: The narrative reflects themes of humility and the idea that even the smallest contributions can be meaningful.
3. Adaptations: Over the years, "Little Drummer Boy" has been covered by numerous artists across various genres, solidifying its place in holiday music traditions.

The Iconic Collaboration

In 1977, David Bowie and Bing Crosby teamed up for a Christmas television special titled "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas." Their performance of "Little Drummer Boy" is often considered one of the most memorable moments in television history, primarily because of the unexpected pairing of the two artists.

Choosing to Collaborate

The collaboration came about somewhat serendipitously. Bing Crosby, a legendary crooner known for his smooth vocal style and traditional Christmas songs, was looking to modernize his image and appeal to a younger audience. David Bowie, on the other hand, was at the height of his fame as a rock star and cultural icon. Their collaboration served as a bridge between generations and musical styles.

The Arrangement

What makes this version of "Little Drummer Boy" particularly special is the unique arrangement created specifically for this performance. Bowie was not keen on singing the original melody of the song, so he suggested an alternative that would allow him to showcase his vocal range. This led to the creation of "Peace on Earth," a counter-melody featuring Bowie's vocals alongside Crosby's.

The performance is structured as follows:

- Crosby's Verses: Bing Crosby sings the traditional verses of "Little Drummer Boy," bringing his classic style and warmth to the piece.
- Bowie's Counterpoint: David Bowie interjects with the newly written "Peace on Earth," which adds a reflective and almost haunting quality to the performance.
- Blending Styles: The combination of Crosby's smooth, crooning style and Bowie's theatrical rock influence creates a compelling musical dialogue.

Lytic Analysis

The lyrics of "Little Drummer Boy" have been interpreted in various ways, but when paired with Bowie's "Peace on Earth," they take on new dimensions.

Original Lyrics of "Little Drummer Boy"

The traditional lyrics revolve around the theme of giving, emphasizing the boy's desire to contribute despite his lack of wealth. Key themes include:

- Humility: The little drummer boy recognizes his limitations but still wishes to offer what he can.
- Joy of Giving: The act of playing the drum is portrayed as a heartfelt gift, illustrating that true giving comes from the heart.

New Lyrics of "Peace on Earth"

Bowie's lyrics in "Peace on Earth" introduce a contrasting narrative that reflects contemporary issues of peace and goodwill. Some significant themes include:

- Hope: The lyrics express a longing for peace, resonating with the Christmas spirit.
- Disconnection: Bowie's lines hint at a world that often feels disconnected from the values of love and unity.
- Reflection: The lyrics encourage listeners to reflect on the meaning of the season and the broader implications of peace.

Impact and Legacy

The performance of "Little Drummer Boy" featuring David Bowie and Bing Crosby has left an indelible mark on both music and television history.

Reception at the Time

When the special aired in 1977, it received mixed reviews. However, the performance itself was widely praised, and the unique combination of styles captivated audiences.

- Cult Following: Over the years, the performance has gained a cult following, with many considering it a classic Christmas moment.
- Cultural Bridge: The collaboration served as a bridge between the traditional and the modern, appealing to audiences of all ages.

Modern Interpretations and Covers

The impact of this collaboration can still be felt today, as various artists have attempted to recreate the magic of Bowie and Crosby's performance.

- Covers: Numerous contemporary artists have covered "Little Drummer Boy," often incorporating their unique styles while paying homage to the original duet.
- Tributes: The performance has inspired tribute concerts and reenactments, highlighting its enduring influence.

Conclusion

The collaboration between David Bowie and Bing Crosby in their rendition of "Little Drummer Boy" is a shining example of how music can transcend genres and generations. The combination of the traditional Christmas song with Bowie's poignant lyrics of "Peace on Earth" creates a powerful message about humility, hope, and the true spirit of giving.

As we reflect on this iconic performance, we are reminded of the importance of unity and peace during the holiday season. The legacy of this duet continues to resonate, ensuring that the message of love and togetherness remains relevant, even decades later. Whether you are a fan of classic crooners, modern rock, or simply the spirit of Christmas, Bowie and Crosby's collaboration is a timeless reminder of the beauty of music and its ability to bring people together.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the significance of the collaboration between David Bowie and Bing Crosby on 'Little Drummer Boy'?

The collaboration is significant because it brought together two iconic artists from different musical eras, showcasing a unique blend of rock and traditional pop. The performance aired in 1977 and has since become a classic holiday duet.

How did the 'Little Drummer Boy' duet come about?

The duet was initially conceived for Bing Crosby's Christmas special in 1977. Bowie was invited to appear, and they decided to perform 'Little Drummer Boy' together, adding a new verse that Bowie wrote.

What themes are present in the lyrics of 'Little Drummer Boy'?

The lyrics of 'Little Drummer Boy' convey themes of humility, generosity, and the spirit of giving, as the narrator offers his simple gift of drumming to the newborn Jesus.

What was David Bowie's contribution to the 'Little Drummer Boy' lyrics?

David Bowie contributed a new verse to the traditional 'Little Drummer Boy' lyrics, which added a more contemporary and reflective tone to the song's narrative.

How did audiences react to the performance of 'Little Drummer Boy' by Bowie and Crosby?

Audiences reacted positively to the performance, appreciating the unlikely pairing of Bowie and Crosby. The duet has since gained a nostalgic and beloved status during the holiday season.

What impact did the 'Little Drummer Boy' performance have on David Bowie's career?

The performance helped to broaden David Bowie's appeal beyond rock music, introducing him to a wider audience during the holiday season and showcasing his versatility as an artist.

Where can I watch the David Bowie and Bing Crosby 'Little Drummer Boy' duet?

The duet can be watched on various platforms, including YouTube, where clips from Bing Crosby's 1977 Christmas special are available.

Did David Bowie and Bing Crosby ever collaborate again after 'Little Drummer Boy'?

No, the duet on 'Little Drummer Boy' was a one-time collaboration. Bing Crosby passed away shortly

after the special aired, making it a unique and memorable event.

What are some notable performances of 'Little Drummer Boy' outside of Bowie and Crosby's duet?

Many artists have performed 'Little Drummer Boy,' including traditional renditions by the Harry Simeone Chorale, as well as modern interpretations by artists like Pentatonix and Joan Jett.

What legacy has the Bowie and Crosby duet left in popular culture?

The duet has left a lasting legacy in popular culture as a quintessential holiday performance, symbolizing the blending of musical styles and the spirit of Christmas.

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