

Here's a little background on the evolution of SummerTime's cover of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah.

The SummerTime Quartet (Dale Schueffner, Loren Paulson, Duane Schuh and I) was invited to sing for the Rush River Lutheran Sunday morning church service on December 29, 2013 (a small country church a couple of miles south of Baldwin, WI).

Two weeks before the service, I called to confirm the plan, and was told "we don't have a pastor any more, so you have the whole service".

The quartet huddled, then Loren decided to do a little research, and determined that he could put together a mini-sermon around the 1,000 years of prophecy of Jesus' birth (to resurrection). He'd had a couple of years of seminary so he wasn't totally starting from zero.

So, singing every service-appropriate song we knew, adding in some congregation sing-along hymns, and with a message following the line of thought of Loren's research, we performed the service, which filled just about an hour.

Some time after that I attended a Barbershop workshop in Menomonie, and one of the sessions was moderated by Adam Scott, from the US Barbershop headquarters. At the end of the session, Adam handed out his 4-part harmony arrangement of Cohen's Hallelujah, and told us our copies were legal, so we could use them however we wanted.

I really liked the arrangement, but the other quartet guys convinced me that the words were too dark and negative. I didn't want to give up on singing it, so I asked Loren for his notes from his sermon at the Rush River Lutheran service, and went to work.

After several weeks of hard labor, and with input from the other guys plus a couple of other people I know, a new SummerTime song was born.

More time passed, and with Jay Althof's help, I've now made it legal from a copyright standpoint.

And as Paul Harvey used to say – "Now you know the rest of the story . . ."

I'm glad you liked it.