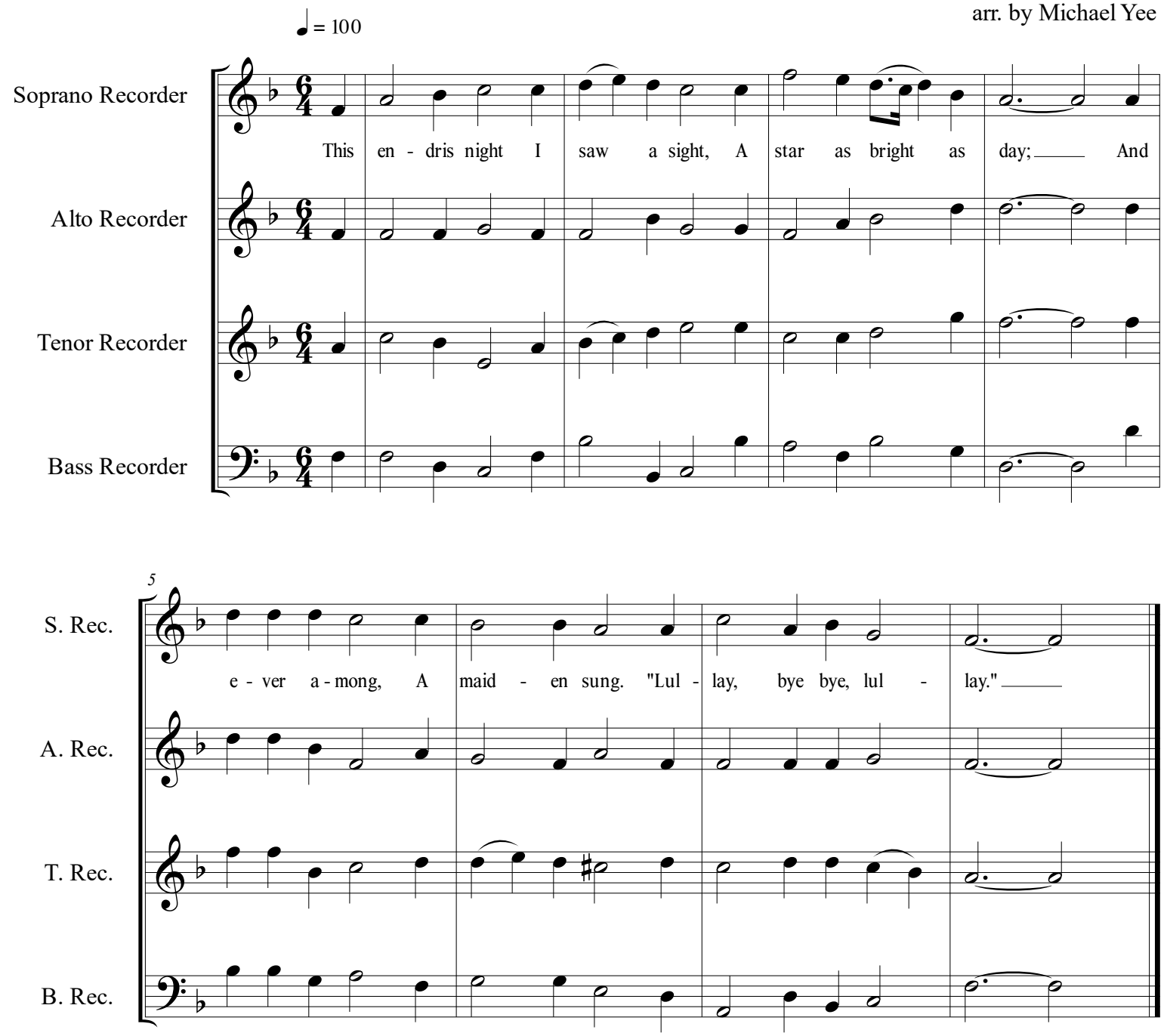
This Endris Night

15th Century English Carol

arr. by Michael Yee



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This endris night I saw a sight,
A star as bright as day,
And now and then, a maiden sung,
"Lullay, by, by, lullay."

This lovely lady sat and sung,
And to her child did say,
"My son, my brother, my father dear,
Why liest thou thus in hay?

My sweetest bird, 'tis thus betid
Though thou be king verray,
But nevertheless I will not cease
To sing 'By, by, lullay'."

The child then spake in his talking,
And to his mother said,
"I am known as Heaven-King
In crib though I be laid.

For angels bright gave to me light;
Thou knowest 'tis no nay.
And of that sight thou mayst be light
To sing, 'By, by, lullay'."

"Now, sweet son, since thou art king,
Why art thou laid in stall?
Why ne thou ordained thy bedding
In some great kinge's hall?

"Methinks 'tis right that king or knight
Should lie in good array.
And then, as so, it were no wrong
To sing 'By, by, lullay'."

"Mary mother, I am thy Child,
Though I be laid in stall;
For lords and dukes shall worship Me,
And so shall kinges all.

"Ye shall well see that kinges three
Shall come the Twelfth Day.
For this behest give Me thy breast
And sing, 'By by, lullay'."

"Now tell, sweet Son, I Thee do pray,
Thou art beloved and Dear—
How should I keep Thee to Thy pay,
And make Thee glad of cheer?

For all Thy will I would fulfill—
Thou knowest full well, in fay;
And for all this I will Thee kiss,
And sing, 'By, by, lullay'."

"My dear mother, when time it be,
Thou take Me up on loft,
And set Me then upon thy knee,
And handle me full soft.

"And in thy arm thou hold Me warm,
And keepe night and day,
And if I weep, and may not sleep,
Then sing, 'By, by, lullay'."

"Now sweet Son, since it is come so,
That all is at Thy will,
I pray Thee grant to me a boon,
If it be right and skill:

"That child or man, who will or can
Be merry on my day,
To bliss Them bring—and I shall sing,
'Lullay, by, by, lullay'."

Notes

Endris – recently past, other
betid – happened
verray – in truth
among – in that circumstance
behest – promise
lief – beloved
pay – liking
fay – faith
skill – reason.