



NOWELL SING WE

(Text from two 15th Century carols)

by

RICHARD DIRKSEN

FOR MIXED VOICES (S.A.T.B.)
(A-1120) - (30 CENTS)

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THE TEXT FOR "NOWELL SING WE" is a confluence of two separate macaronic carol texts, both dating from c. 1430–1450. The first four and last stanzas are from the Cambridge: Trinity College, Ms. O.3.58; and the others from Oxford: Bodleian Library, Ms. Selden b.26. Here is a literal translation of the whole:

Good news we sing, one and all,
for the King of Peace has come.

He arose in love and delight,
now Christ doth ordain his grace for us,
and with his body hath linked to happiness
both one and all.

Of the fruit of the womb of Mary bright,
both God and man in her spring forth,
out of distress he did us save,
both one and all.

This new-born Son was sent to us
to bring us happiness, to rouse us from misfortune,
otherwise we would have turned to woe,
both one and all.

In that fair city, Bethlehem,
a child was born of a noble maiden,
who shall himself be a lord and prince,
from lands that see the sun arise.

Full many children were slain,
Jesus, for the love of thee,
wherefore their souls are saved
though Herod be an infidel foe.

As the sun shines through the glass,
so Jesus was in his mother;
now grant us grace to serve thee,
O blessed light of the Trinity.

Now God is come to honor us,
now Jesus is born of Mary,
let us make merry together
and let heaven resound with praises.

Glory be to thee, yes and happiness,
God has made known his grace to us
that we may not miss the blessings of heaven,
both one and all.

— o —

(COVER DESIGN, NANCY WEHL)

Nowell Sing We

3

(for s.a.t.b., unaccompanied)

Text from two
15th Century carols

RICHARD DIRKSEN

BURDEN

Fast (♩. = ca. 84)

No-well sing we now, all_ and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus* is come...

mf No -

T.
B.

mf
mp

No-well sing we now, all_ and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus* is come.

(S. div.) (S. unis.) No -

well sing we now, all_ and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus* is come.

well sing we now, all_ and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus* is come.

mp *mf* *mf* *mf*

VERSE 1

Slow (freely, as in plainsong)

SOPRANO and ALTO (unis.)

Ex - ort - um est in love_ and liss; Now Christ his grace he gan_ us giss.

(Eks - ohr-tōom est)

And with his bod-y bought_ to bliss, Both all and some.

mp *slowly*

REPEAT BURDEN,
THEN TO VERSE 2.

mp *slowly*

VERSE 2

Slow (freely, as in plainsong)

TENOR and BASS (unis.)

De fruc-tu ven - tris of Mar - y_ bright; Both God and_ man in her a - light;

(Deh frōök - tōō vehn - trees)

Out of_ dis-ease he did_ us_ dight, Both all_ and some.

mp *slowly*

REPEAT BURDEN,
THEN TO VERSE 3.

mp *slowly*

PERFORMANCE TIME: Approx. 5:30

*Pronounced pah-chee-fee-kōōs. See page 7 for glossary.

**In the plainsong passages in verses 1, 2, 6, and 8, a line over a note doubles its length and serves to stress it slightly.

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A - 1120

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VERSE 3

Slowly

(S.) *pp* very expressively

(A.) Pu-er na - tus to us was sent, To bliss us bought, fro bale — us blent,

(T.) very expressively

pp

(B.) Pu-er na - tus to us was sent, To bliss us bought, fro bale — us blent,

(Pöo-ehr nah - töös)

(fro bayl)

And else to woe — we had y-went, Both all — and some.

And else to woe — we had y-went, Both all — and some.

(ee-went)

REPEAT BURDEN,
THEN TO VERSE 4.

VERSE 4

Lively (♩ = ca. 72)

SOPRANO

In Beth-lem, in that fair cit-y, A child was born of a maid-en free, That —

TENOR

In Beth-lem, in that fair cit-y, A child was born of a maid-en free, That —

shall a Lord and prin - ce be, A so - lis or - tus car - di-ne.

(prin - seh) BASS

A so - lis or - tus car - di-ne.
(ah soh - lees ohr - töös car - dee-neh.)

VERSE 5

Same tempo

SOPRANO and ALTO (unis.)

mp smoothly

Chil-dren were slain full great plen - ty, Je - su, for the love of thee;

TENOR and BASS

(unis.)

mp smoothly

Chil-dren were slain full great plen - ty, Je - su, for the love of

(Jee - zoo)

poco rit. *mf* *a tempo*

Where-fore their soul-es sav - ed - be. Hos-tis Her-o - dis im-pi - e.
 thee; Where-fore their soul-es sav - ed - be. Hos-tis Her-o - dis im-pi - e.
 (Hoh-stees Heh-ro - dees eem-pee - eh.)

VERSE 6

Slow (freely, as in plainsong)
 TENOR and BASS (unis.)

mp smoothly

As sun-ne shin - eth through the glass, So Je - su in his mother was;
 (sun-nuh)

SOPRANO and ALTO (unis.)

O - lux - be - a - ta trin - i - tas.
 Thee to ser - venow grant us - grace, O - lux - be - a - ta trin - i - tas.
 (ser - vuh) (lōō - ks beh-ah-tah treen - ee - tahs.)

VERSE 7

Joyously (♩ = ca. 72) (strictly in tempo)
 SOPRANO and ALTO (unis.)

f

Now God is com-en to wor-ship-en us; Now of Mar - y is born -
 TENOR and BASS (unis.) (kohm-en)

(div.) *f*

Je - sus; Make we mer - ry a - mong-es us; *Ex -
 (uh - mung - ess)

*Exultet celum laudibus, pronounced Ex - ōōl - tet cheh - lōōm lah - oo - dee - bōōs.

SOPRANO
- ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum

ALTO
Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum
Ex - ul - tet, Ex - ul - tet ce - lum lau - di - bus, ce - lum

TENOR
Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum

BASS
Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum

lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet

lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum
lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum lau - di - bus,

lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet ce - lum

ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet

ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet

ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus. Ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet, ex - ul - tet

ul - tet ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus.

ul - tet ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus.

ul - tet ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus.

ul - tet ce - lum lau - di - bus, lau - di - bus.

VERSE 8

Slow (freely, as in plainsong)

ALL VOICES UNISON

Glo-ri - a ti - bi ay and bliss: God un - to his grace he us wiss,
(Gloh-ree-ah tee - bee)

The rent of heav'n that we not miss, Both all and some.

BURDEN

Tempo I

SOPRANO and ALTO (unis.)

No - well sing we now, all and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus is come. No -

TENOR and BASS (unis.)

No - well sing we now, all and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus is come. No -

well sing we now, all and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus is come!

well sing we now, all and some, For Rex Pa - ci - fi - cus is come!

GLOSSARY

a solis ortus cardine: from lands that see the
sun arise

alight: spring forth

all and some: one and all, or everyone of us

amongest us: together

aye: yes

bliss: happiness

bought: linked

comen: come

de fructu ventris: of the fruit of the womb

dight: save

disease: distress

exortum est: he arose

exultet celum laudibus: let heaven resound
with praise

fro bale us blent: from misfortune rouse us

gan us giss: doth us ordain

gloria tibi: glory be to thee

hostis Herodis impie: Herod, infidel foe

liss: delight

Nowell: good news

O lux beata trinitas: O blessed light of the
Trinity

puer natus: a son is born

rent: blessings

Rex Pacificus: King of Peace

sunne: sun

Trinitas: Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit

wiss: make known

worshipen: honor

y-went: turned