

NOWELL SING WE

(Text from two 15th Century carols)

by

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FOR MIXED VOICES (S.A.T.B.)



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.

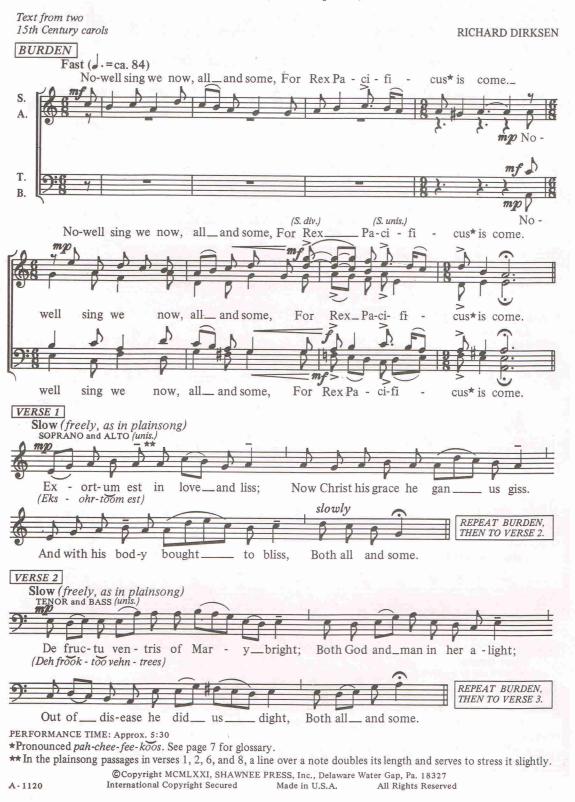
As the sun shines through the glass, so Jesus was in his mother; now grant us grace to serve thee, O blessed light of the Trinity.

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.

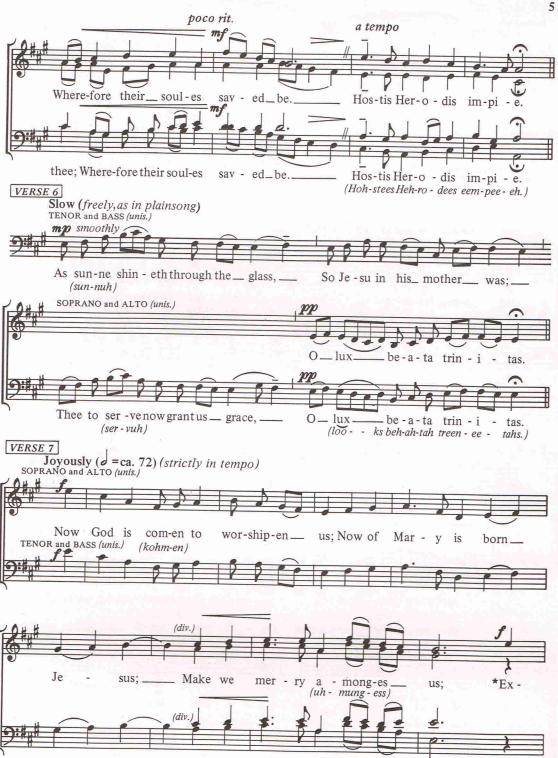
Nowell Sing We

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









*Exultet celum laudibus, pronounced Ex-ool-tet cheh-loom lah-oo-dee-boos.



ul - tet

ce -

lum lau - di - bus,

lau-di - bus.



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

A - 1120

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