

Nowell Sing We

Medieval English Carol
arr. Dan Robinson

Notes on Nowell Sing We

Nowell Sing We is a medieval English carol (circa 1450). It is, largely, about the birth of Christ, the joy in the birth, and his role in saving everyone leading to eternal life in heaven.

I've chosen to use the original text, a sort of early modern English because it so closely and happily fits the sprightly melody. This is a macronic carol, using words in English and Latin. The Latin is, of course, unchanged from the Latin still common in the Catholic Mass. The English are mostly familiar. The rest of the text is pronounced as if the words modern English. They just have slightly different meanings or no longer exist in English. A slight exception are the two words that begin with a "y". We will pronounce that letter as a short "I", as in "it". Below is a glossary of unfamiliar words and phrases. Enjoy!

Glossary

1. "all and some" – everyone, as in "one and all"
2. "Rex pacificus – King of peace"
3. "is ycome" – is born
4. Exurtum est – He is risen
5. "liss" – joy
6. "gan us giss" – began to guide us
7. "bought – bought our way to bliss (heaven)"
8. "Puer Natus" – a Child is born
9. "from bale us blent" – from evil blinded us (his us)
10. "ywent" – fallen (gone)
11. "Gloria tibi – Thine is the glory"
12. "wiss" – instruct us
13. "rent" – riches

Nowell Sing We

Music: Anon. English, mid-15th C.

arr.: Dan Robinson

Burden *fine*

Tenor
No - well sing we both all and some, Now *Rex pa - ci - fi - cus* is y come.

Baritone
No - well sing we both all and some. Now *Rex pa - ci - fi - cus* is y - come.

Bass
No - well sing we both all and some. Now *Rex pa - ci - fi - cus* is y - come.

⁹ **Verse 1**

T
Ex - or - tum est in love and liss, now Christ his grace he gan us

B
Ex - or - tum est in love and liss, now Christ his grace he gan us

¹⁸

T
giss, and with his bo-dy us bought to bliss both all and some.

B
giss, and with his bo-dy us bought to bliss both all and some.

Nowell Sing We

27 Verse 2

T
8
Pu - er na - tus to us was sent, to bliss us bought, from bale us

B
Pu - er na - tus to us was sent, to bliss us bought, from bale us

B
Pu - er na - tus to us was sent, to bliss us bought, from bale us

36
8
T
blent, and else to woe we had y - went, both all and some.

B
blent, and else to woe we had y - went, both all and some.

B
blent, and else to woe we had y - went, both all and some.

45 Verse 3

T
8
Glo - ri - a ti - bi ay and bliss; God un - to his grace he us wiss, the

B
Glo - ri - a ti - bi ay and bliss; God un - to his grace he us wiss, the

55
8
T
rent of hea - ven that we not miss both all and some.

B
rent of hea - ven that we not miss both all and some.

Da Capo al fine