

Benedicamus Song for St. Nicholas

for the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6

Based on the Sarum Liturgy and 12th century French and English musical practices

for three solo voices (two high and one low)
and congregation and/or choir

with texts and melodies from the
Sarum Missal and Antiphoner

arr. Robinson McClellan

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VERSES 1 TO 5

The two high voices sing the words syllabically to the following melody:



Notes in parentheses are extra, required by verses 1 and 2.

In some cases more than one syllable is sung on the same pitch (other than the repeated A, F and D given above). To clarify the way the words match the melody, accents in the text show changes in the direction of the melody:

forward accent (â) = move up

backward accent (î) = move down


Underlined syllables receive a heavy stress or accent. The placement of these stressed syllables gradually transforms the text from free prose rhythm in verses 1 and 2 to regular stressed latin verse in 3, 4 and 5.

In general, words should be sung with the natural speed and rhythm of spoken speech. Syllables that would be rushed when spoken should be rushed, syllables that would be longer should be longer, and so on.

The composer suggests that the performers speak through the text several times before learning the notes. There should be a comfortable pause between verses.

Vertical lines show single points of rhythmic alignment. Where there are no vertical lines, each singer sings freely as if alone, ignoring the rhythms of the other singers.

The low voice sings a cantus firmus (long held notes against the upper voices) from the original benedicamus melody, as follows:

VERSE 1	VERSE 2	VERSE 3	VERSE 4	VERSE 5
				

* The clef here, which looks like a lower case b, indicates a B-flat on that space which carries through the whole line.

The text for the low voice shows where to change notes, including accents to show direction (as above).

When a note change occurs without a change of syllable, the vowel is reiterated with the appropriate accent.

PLEASE NOTE: This song may be sung at any pitch that is comfortable for the singers.

TEXT TRANSLATION:

v1: Once upon a time some sailors were voyaging and the ship nearly was broken up against the savage current.

v2: Now despairing for their lives, positioned in so much danger, they cried out, they all spoke in one voice:

v3: O Blessed Nicholas, Carry us from the anguish of death to the port of the sea/Harbor.

v4: Carry us to harbor, you who give help to so many for the sake of your piety/devotion/duty.

v5: While they were crying and not in vain, behold someone [Nicholas] said "I am present for your protection"

v6: At once, a gracious breeze was given, and the storm became calmed, the seas quieted.

Congregation enters:

We who are in this world, in the depth of faults, now suffering shipwreck, carry us, Glorious Nicholas, to the port of salvation, where there is peace and glory.

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Texts and melodies from
Sarum Missal and Antiphoner

Arranged/Adapted/Composed by
Robinson McClellan

PERUSAL SCORE

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VERSE 1 (*gently, as if
telling a bedtime story*)

High voice 1:

Quidám nautàe

High voice 2:

Musical notation for High voice 2, featuring a large decorated initial 'B' and the lyrics: Benedicamus domino deo gratias

Low voice:

Musical notation for Low voice, featuring a decorated initial 'C' and the lyrics: Confesio: de i nico la us nobilis progenie

H1: navigántes | et contrá fluctuum saevítiam | naví penè dissolúta luctántes

H2: Quidám nautàe navigántes | et contrá fluctuum saevítiam | naví penè dissolúta luctántes

L: ----- nè -----

VERSE 2

H1: Jam dé vità desperántes | in tantó positi perículo clamántes | vocé dicunt omnes úna

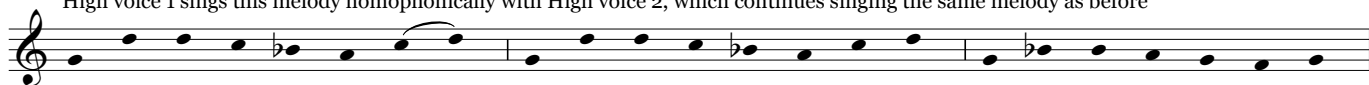
H2: Jam dé vità desperántes | in tantó positi perículo clamántes | vocé dicunt omnes úna

L: dí ----- cá ----- (á) ----- (à)

SAMPLE SCORE

VERSE 3 (*strident, pleading*)

High voice 1 sings this melody homophonically with High voice 2, which continues singing the same melody as before



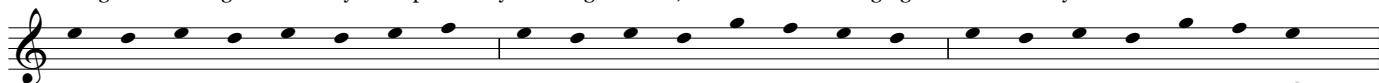
H1: "O Béatè Nicolàe, | nos ád maris portum tráhe | de mórtis àngustiá

H2: "O Béatè Nicolàe, | nos ád maris portum tráhe | de mórtis àngustiá

L: - (á) - - - - - (á) - - - - - mùs

**VERSE 4**

High voice 1 sings this melody homophonically with High voice 2, which continues singing the same melody as before



H1: "Trahé nos ád portum máris | tu qui tot àuxiliáris | piétatis graciá."

H2: "Trahé nos ád portum máris | tu qui tot àuxiliáris | piétatis graciá."

L: - do - - - - - mì - - - - - (i) - - - - - (i) - - - - - (i)

**VERSE 5** (*gently again*) High voice 1 returns to the previous melody of verses 1 and 2

H1: Dum clámarènt nec in cássum | eccé quidàm dicens, | (*tacet for rest of verse*)

H2: Dum clámarènt nec in cássum | eccé quidàm dicens

L: - nò - - - - -



In free plainchant rhythm (High voice 1 may sing this line instead. In this case reverse the parts in the previous line.)



"As- sum | ad ves - tra _____ prae - - si - di - a" _____

L: - (ò) Dè - - - - - ó - - - - -

VERSE 6

Sta - tim au - ra da - tur gra - ta, et tem - pes - tas fit se - da - ta, qui - e - ve - runt

Sta - tim au - ra da - tur gra - ta, et tem - pes - tas fit se - da - ta,

gra - - - - - ci - - - - -

ma - - - - - ri - - - a.

qui - e - ve - runt ma - - - - - ri - - - a.

- - - - - a

Congregation:

Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

Soloists (leading congregation):

Nos qui su - mus in hoc mun - do Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

vi - ti - o - rum in - pro - fun - do Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

de - o gra - - - ci - as

jam pas - si nau - fra - gi - a de - o gra - - - ci - as

Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

Glo - ri - o - se Ni - co - lae. Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

ad sa - lu - tis por - tum tra - he Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

de - o gra - ci - as

u - bi pax et glo - ri - a de - o gra - ci - as

Congregation:

Nos qui su - mus in hoc mun - do Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

High voice 1:

Nos qui su - mus in hoc mun - do Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no

High voice 2 and
Low voice (leading
congregation):

Nos qui su - mus in hoc mun - do Be - ne - di - ca - mus do - mi - no