

GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN

Traditional

Brad Hansen
arranger

PROGRAM NOTES

About the Music

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen is an old English blessing dating back to the 15th century. The translation is "May God keep you strong, safe, and at peace." Salsa rhythms pervade this arrangement, which alternates between the 2+3 and 3+2 sides of the Son Clave. Each verse employs a chromatic descending bass line. The texture varies widely, from unaccompanied sections to pairs of upper and lower voices in counterpoint. A classic Latin montuno is repeated by the choir, with a piano solo and body percussion by the tenors building to a crescendo. This arrangement exudes *Tidings of Comfort and Joy* and may elicit dancing in the aisles!

It is drawn from Hansen's *Medley of Carols*. All arrangements in the medley feature the piano as an equal partner with the choir. The harmonic language is jazz oriented, cast in asymmetrical and mixed meters, with swing and Latin rhythms. Suitable for High School, College, Church, and Community choirs.

Vocal Ranges S: D4 – E5 A: B3 – B4 T: D3 – E4 B: E2 – B3. **Duration** approx. 3' 50".

Lyrics

1) God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay;
Remember Christ, our Savior
Was born on Christmas day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:

REFRAIN

O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy!
O tidings of comfort and joy!

2) From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
REFRAIN

3) Now to the Lord sing praises
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide at Christmas time
All other doth deface:
REFRAIN

About the Composer

Brad Hansen is a pianist, composer, and Professor Emeritus at Portland State University where he teaches Theory and Composition. He previously taught at Ole Miss, Humboldt State (CA), and Ball State (IN). Hansen studied at Berklee, Grinnell, Cincinnati Conservatory, University of Northern Colorado, and the University of Oregon. His instrumental and choral works have been performed worldwide. The Oregon Regional Arts and Culture Council awarded him a grant to stage the *Medley of Carols* in 2025, sung by the PSU Chamber Choir accompanied by Darrell Grant.

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Arranged by Brad Hansen
for SATB Voices and Piano

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Lively Latin ♩ = 112

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

mp (Clave: 2 + 3)

Lively Latin ♩ = 112

5

mf

God rest ye mer-ry,

mp

God rest ye mer-ry,

mp

mer-ry,

mp

Rest ye

mf

10

gen - tle-men, let noth-ing you dis - may; Re - mem - ber Christ, our

gen - tle-men, let noth-ing you dis - may; Re - mem - ber Christ, our

gen - tle-men, let noth-ing you dis - may; Christ, our

mer - ry, you dis - may; Christ our

14

sav - ior was born on Christ-mas Day, To save us all from Sa-tan's pow'r when

sav - ior was born on Christ-mas Day, To save us all from Sa-tan's pow'r when

sav - ior was born on Christ-mas Day, To save us all from Sa-tan's pow'r when

Sav - ior, born Christ-mas Day, To save us all from Sa-tan's pow'r when