

HERE WE COME A-WASSAILING

Traditional

Brad Hansen
arranger

PROGRAM NOTES

About the Music

The text used in this arrangement of *Here We Come A-Wassailing* can be found in the *New Oxford Book of Carols*. The word "wassail" is derived from the Old English toast "*waes hael*" (be in good health). Originally, the verses were sung in 6/8 time, and the chorus switched to 2/2. In this arrangement the verses are in 5/4, and the chorus (refrain) swings in 4/4 time. A different soloist sings the tag line at the end of each Refrain. This energetic treatment is fun for both the musicians and the audience.

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: C4 – Eb5 A: B3 – B4 T: D3 – F4 B: F#2 - Bb3. **Duration** is approx. 2' 45".

Lyrics

1) Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green;
Here we come a-wandering
So fair to be seen.

REFRAIN

Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too;
And God bless you and send to you a Happy New
Year
And God send you a Happy New Year.

2) Good master and good mistress,
While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
Who are wandering in the mire.
REFRAIN

3) Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring.
Let him bring us a glass of beer,
And better we shall sing.
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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Here We Come A-Wassailing

Arranged by Brad Hansen
for SSATB Voices and Piano

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Lively ♩ = 140

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

Lively ♩ = 140

mf

5

mf

Here we come a- was- sail- ing a- mong the leaves so green; Here we come a-

mf

a- mong the leaves so green; Here we come a-

mf

Here we come a- was- sail- ing a- mong the leaves so green; Here we come a-

mf

Here we come a- was- sail- ing a- mong the leaves so green; Here we come a-

10

Slower, Swing time ♩ = 112

Four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo/mood is 'Slower, Swing time' with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. The lyrics are: 'wan- der - ing so fair to be seen! Love and joy come to'. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with a crescendo leading to a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic.

wan- der - ing so fair to be seen! Love and joy come to

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wan- der - ing so fair to be seen! Love and joy come to

Slower, Swing time ♩ = 112

mf

14

Four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo/mood is 'Slower, Swing time' with a quarter note equal to 112 beats per minute. The lyrics are: 'you, and to you your was-sail too; and God bless you and'. The piano part continues the melodic and bass lines from the previous section, ending with a triplet in the right hand.

you, and to you your was-sail too; and God bless you and

you, and to you your was-sail too; and God bless you and

you, and to you your was-sail too; and God bless you and

you, and to you your was-sail too; and God bless you and

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