

Danish Hymns and Christmas Carols

issued by the YorkMasterBBb project

Selection principles - Background - Composers - Titles - Years - Poets - Errata

This selection of Danish Hymns and Carols follows the preferences of the editor. Mostly at least. Other factors have had an influence.

It has been a major consideration to steer clear of copyright problems. This factor in its own right (or lack of such right) excludes hymns and carols written by more recent composers (most notably Carl Nielsen) and chorales re-harmonized by scholars and composers of the twentieth century. This editor can harmonize chorales, but as it has been the whole idea to present a tradition honed by actual popular use, such self-promoting work-around has not been taken into consideration. After all this tradition is what sounds in the ears of this editor and is what he loves him self. Only a very few cue notes have been added and even fewer alterations have been made to make this material available for certain instruments. All of these editions are clearly marked.

The hymns and carols uploaded so far therefore are from the period of 1569 through 1881. Zinck and Weyse were Germans working in Copenhagen. They both had great influences on the development of Danish music during their lifetimes. Den danske Romance (The Danish romantic song) simply is a genre founded by Weyse. As with their countrymen by birth, Schultz and Kuhlau, the Danes consider them both Danish composers.

The other composers have first names, which reveal them as Danish born no matter how German a family name like Hartmann might sound. The special situation around Lindeman will be told below here.

The English translations of the hymn and carol titles are by this editor. They are very prosaic and are lacking any trace of the archaic poetry of the Danish originals. And they probably constitute extremely bad English, too. A flute ensemble of Eugene - Oregon has taken a truly original countermeasure to that: a member studies Danish and presents the titles in Danish. That's the way to go!

The numbers indicating the years of the compositions in some cases rather indicate the years, when they first were printed. The composers are listed chronologically, roughly so at least.

Hans Thomissøn (1532 -1573)

Det hellige kors, vor Herre han bar (The holy cross, our Lord he carried) - 1569

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1837 on basis of a Medieval Danish hymn. Hans Thomissøn lived and worked in the clerically turbulent decades right after the Reformation. He was a headmaster of the Latin school in Ribe 1557 -

1561 and in 1569 he issued a hymnbook for the Danish church. Regarding this hymn we should rather see him as the editor than the composer. The comments on the use of the Picardian third written for *Se, hvor nu Jesus træder* by Arrebo also apply here. Those of you finding that Laub uses a Picardian third followed by a plain minor third in a dominant cadenza are right. And you provoke this editor to admit his real point of hearing: the Picardian third is a powerful effect, which should not be abused by too frequent use.

Anders Arrebo (1587 - 1637)

Se, hvor nu Jesus træder (Watch where now Jesus walks (about his last entry into Jerusalem)) - 1627

Arrebo issued his *Psalter* in 1627. He was a priest in Vordingborg on Zealand and a bishop in Tronhjem in Norway, which was not very odd, as Denmark and Norway shared kings and hence secular and clerical administration for 4 centuries. The harmonisation has been done by Thomas Laub, who was a reformist on the usage of hymns in the Danish church in the decades around 1900. He wanted the overly romantic and the secularly based tunes out of the church. Just about the contrary project was undertaken by general Booth of the Salvation Army. And in the longer historical view it was general Booth, who followed the older clerical practises. Lots of chorales in the Danish hymnbook are based on renaissance dances. Ironically this is also the case with this present Laub harmonised hymn with its changes of meters between 6/8 and 3/4. Most likely the first note in bar #4 has been a half note originally, similar to the last bar, but this edition has chosen to follow the present execution practises. Laub lets each verse end with a Picardian third. In the ears of this editor that gives an undesirable clash with the upbeat for the next verse. Hence the raised third is not introduced until the last ending.

Verses by Thomas Kingo 1685.

Gud Helligånd, vor trøstermand (God Holy Spirit, our Comforter) - 1612.

The tonality of this hymn is the Phrygian mode. This editor is not enough of a musicologist to know, whether the term of "Picardian third" applies outside the minor modes. If so, then it appears wherever a cadenza ends on the tonic chord. As the raised third appears in the melody, and as the Phrygian cadenza ending on a major chord is sort of a fixture in period music, this editor will not suggest changing that.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1846.

Hardenack Otto Conrad Zinck (1746 - 1832):

Nu kom der bud fra englekor (A message came from angels' choir) - 1801. Zinck was choir master at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen from 1789. He also pursued careers as composer, musician, singer, and teacher. In 1801 he issued a collection of chorales for the then used Danish Hymn Book.

Verses by Thomas Kingo 1689 revised by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1837, both major contributors to the Danish Hymn Book

Christoph Ernst Friedrich Weyse (1774 - 1842):

Velkommen igen, Guds engle små (Welcome back, you Angels of God) - 1838

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1825

Julen har bragt velsignet bud (Christmas brought a blessed message) - 1841

Verses by B. S. Ingemann 1840. The morning- and night-songs by Ingemann and Weyse constitute a cornerstone in “Den danske sangskat” (The treasury of Danish songs). Many of these songs are found in the Danish Hymn Book.

Det er så yndigt at følges ad (It is so beautiful to walk along) - 1833

This is the main Danish wedding hymn. Known by all Danish brass players, as there is a tradition of family, friends, and a brass quartet singing and playing early at the mornings of silver and golden wedding anniversaries.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1855

Altid frejdig når Du går (Always confident when you walk the paths of the Lord) – 1838

Verses by Chr. Richardt 1867. Formally a night hymn it also is much used at funerals. Its fame within my and my preceding generations comes from a dark part of Danish history. It was the hymn sung by the Danish resistance fighters before they were executed by the German occupation troops during WWII. The execution place, Ryvangen, formerly a military exercise terrain in northern Copenhagen, was made a memorial park for the resistance fighters after the liberation. When the 25th anniversary of the radio announcement of the German surrender to general Montgomery was celebrated in the evening of the 4th of May 1970, I was the bass trombonist in the band playing at the ceremony held in Ryvangen. There I met a veteran from the resistance, who was in extremely poor health from torture and from being imprisoned in a German concentration camp. My father had been in the resistance. Not in the fighting groups, but getting them money and fuel for operations. The resistance was in strictly separate sections for security reasons. After WWII my father like other younger teachers from the resistance went to Northern Germany to teach the Danish minority. That is where I spent my first eleven years. I was very much aware about the history of this hymn, and I think I was scared by it. I simply didn't like it. Since then I have played it at the graveside at a friend's funeral. It is an important Danish hymn and belongs in this series of hymns.

Verses by B. S. Ingemann 1838 (Dagen går med raske fjed - The day is soon gone)

This is the original text to the 1838 melody by Weyse. Also a night hymn, but much less dark than the text by Richardt. Both texts are in the Danish hymnbook.

Bliv hos os når dagen hælder (Stay with us, when the day fades) - 1838

Verses by B. S. Ingemann 1838

One more of the songs by Weyse and Ingemann. Often sung by older generations including my own. Quite tricky rhythm in bar #6, at least for unaccompanied community singing.

Til vor lille gerning ud (Out for our small deeds happily we walked) - 1838

Verses by B. S. Ingemann 1838

Yet another night hymn from Weyse's and Ingemann's collection. This hymn has been compressed graphically to stay on one page. The music spacing suffers abit.

Danish traditional 1814

Lovet være du, Jesus Krist (Praised be you, Jesus Christ) Harmonies by Rung and Laub.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1837 and 1845 after Luther 1524.

Anonymous Danish tune

Dejlig er den himmel blå (The blue sky is beautiful) - around 1840. Harmonisation by Berggreen 1853.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1810. The translation of the title is impossible as "himmel" in Danish covers most of the semantic content of "sky" as well as of "heaven", and the first verse makes a point of as well the visual as the spiritual meanings of "himmel". This carol is special in so far, as it is written for Epiphany, but as it recapitulates the predictions of the star telling of the birth of Messiah, it has won a great popularity, and it is sung right from the beginning of the Advent until Epiphany.

Carl Christian Nikolai Balle (1806 - 1855):

Det kimer nu til julefest (The bells announce the Christmas feast) - 1850. In contrast to most of the other composers Balle was not a member of the musical environment of Copenhagen. He was the priest of two rural parishes in Jutland far away from the capital. There have been speculations about Berggreen and Rung having contributed to the harmonisation of this carol. Balle composed a few very popular hymn tunes.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1817

I denne søde juletid (This sweet Christmas time) - 1855. Rung probably made most of the harmonisation.

Verses by H. A. Brorson 1732

Christian Bull (?? - around 1860)

Lær mig, o skov, at visne glad (Teach me, oh forest, to wither happily) - 1855. Aside from Bull being a Danish musician, we know nothing about him.

Verses by Adam Oehlenschläger 1813. Despite the obviously German family name Oehlenschläger is an extremely central poet in the Danish romanticism. He wrote the verses for our national hymn.

Andreas Peter Berggreen (1801 - 1880):

Julen har englelyd (Christmas has the sound of angels) - 1852 on the basis of a pre-Reformational Danish tune.

Berggreen made a huge effort to collect Danish traditional tunes, which he issued in several volumes. These had a strong influence on his contemporary musical environment in Denmark. This present editor read the Berggreen volumes over and over during his youth.

Old Latin-Danish hymn

Present textual incarnation by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1830 - 1837

Vær velkommen, Herrens år (Welcome to the year of the Lord (Advent)) - 1852

The present textual incarnation of this Danish traditional text is by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1849. Grundtvig also wrote a text on the same tune to welcome the beginning of the secular New Year. That version is heard on state radio and television every New Year's night right after the transmission of the Town Hall bells in Copenhagen chiming in the New Year.

Her vil ties, her vil bies (Here vil be silence, here will be waiting) - 1854

Song of Sol. 2, 11-14. Present textual incarnation by H. A. Brorson 1765

Henrik Rung (1807 - 1871):

Kimer, I klokker (Chime, You Bells) - 1857. Starting out as a double bass player at the Royal Theatre Rung ended up as the choirmaster of that house along with his pursuit of a career as composer of operas, choir works, and several popular songs and hymns.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1856

Tag det sorte kors fra graven (Take away the black cross from the grave) - 1857

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1832

A small anecdote: This editor together with 3 more brass players was hired to play in *Jesuskirken* in Copenhagen for its nationwide TV-transmitted 10AM High Mass on Easter Sunday 1974. Doing the early morning preparations for a bikeride diagonally through most of a very quiet Copenhagen while listening to the brasses of our RSO on the radio playing our treasure of Easter hymns. Especially the rendition of this present hymn constituted an aural memory for a lifetime.

I al sin glans nu stråler solen (In all its glory the sun now shines) - 1857

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1843

Johan Peter Emilius Hartmann (1805 - 1900):

Blomstre som en rosegård (Flowering like a rose garden) - 1861

Isaiah 35:1-6

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1837

Jert hus skal I bygge (Your house you shall build) - 1870

Almost as popular a wedding hymn as *Det er så yndigt at følges ad* by Weyse.

Verses by J. Paulli 1878

Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812 - 1887):

O Kristelighed (Oh, Christianity) - 1862. This hymn technically does not belong among the hymns for Whitsuntide, as it praises Christianity. Please forgive this editor, who found this fine hymn unavoidably belonging to this project of presenting Danish hymns. After the engraving of the scores was done, research for these notes revealed that even if this hymn belongs to the most beloved Danish hymns, one might argue, that it is not Danish. Lindeman after all lived in Oslo during a period, where Norway after the post-Napoleonic Congress of Vienna transferred from the Danish to the Swedish king. Lindeman was organist at the Vor Frelzers Kirke (Our Saviour's Church) and collected Norwegian folk music. Despite these reservations this hymn will stay within the present project. It was written for Grundtvig's verses and the Norwegian and the Danish cultures were still strongly intertwined in 1862, when the written versions of their languages were still next to identical. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) called his language Norwegian, which was true, but it also is some of the best Danish ever written. More of Lindeman's hymns are likely to be presented here.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1824

Herrens venner ingen sinde (The friends of the Lord never shall meet for a last time) - 1862.

Verses by J. Schørring 1866

Niels Wilhelm Gade (1817 - 1890):

Udrust dig, helt fra Golgata (Prepare your armament, you hero from Golgotha) - 1856. Gade was a prominent, if not the most prominent, composer in Danish romanticism with his symphonies, overtures, and incidental music. As a conductor he succeeded Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. This present hymn is considered very grave, and I have issued a special text on the history behind its verses within this project (it is in the same folder as this present file).

Barn Jesus i en krybbe lå (Child Jesus in a manger lay) - 1859. Verses by H. C. Andersen 1832.

Christian Barnekow (1837 - 1913):

Du, som går ud fra den levende Gud (You who come from the living God (about the Holy Spirit)) - 1858.

Barnekow composed romances and spiritual songs. He also furthered printed versions of Danish music, a major issue in a small country.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1837 after J. Montgomery 1823

Caspar Christian Hoffmann (1839 - 1893):

Hil dig, frelser og forsoner (Hail to you, Saviour and Redeemer) - 1878. Hoffmann was organist in Næstved on Zealand and at the nearby boarding school, Herlufsholm.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1837 after Arnulf of Louvain (before 1250)

Johan Henrik Nebelong (1847-1931):

Den store, hvide flok vi se (The huge white crowd we see) - 1881. Nebelong was organist at St. Johannes Kirke in Copenhagen. He became a professor 1892. In 1896 he opened Københavns Organistskole (The Organist School of Copenhagen). The latter must be seen in the context of the huge rise in the number of churches in Copenhagen at that time. A lot of families moved from rural areas to the capital as part of Denmark's development from an agricultural to an industrial nation. These families were packed closely in speculative slum housing. Where Danish churches usually are stand-alone buildings, one will find several churches in Copenhagen, which are integrated fully into the contiguous street fronts of large blocks. As housing standards have improved, Copenhagen has lost half of its inhabitants to the suburbs, and a lot of large churches are left with a quite reduced attendance. So far local loyalties have prevented any churches from being abandoned. Only two older churches have been taken out of regular use. One now is a cultural center, one now only is used in official contexts by the parliament and the royal house.

Verses by H. A. Brorson 1765 (Revelation 7, 9-17)

Thomas Laub (1852 - 1927):

Alt står i Guds faderhånd (Everything is in the fatherly hand of God) - 1916. Laub through his career worked as organist at three of the large inner city churches in Copenhagen. He studied ancient music in Italy and the renewal of the church music in Bavaria. He advocated a turn towards the church music from before 1600. Romantic tunes and chorales sung in a dragging tempo should out of the church. His opinions were publicly much debated. His influence, however, cannot be denied.

Verses by N. F. S. Grundtvig 1856

Errata:

Nu kom der bud fra engle kor: The second system had a wrong measure number indication. Corrected as of 25.11.03.

Det kimer nu til julefest: Both recorder scores had the third staff of the second system wrongly designated as T. Corrected to A as of 26.11.03.

I denne søde juletid and *Det kimer nu til julefest:* The Bb-4 score wrongly had the 4th staff of the 2nd system designated as B. Corrected to T as of 15.12.03.

Some of the Flute Choir scores missed the “Bass flute” indication on their lowest staff. Corrected as of 23.12.03.

None of the hymn-editions for the *Whitsuntide* have found their final form until 04.05.04, even if some versions have been uploaded for months. The changes mostly are in the text areas. But also some bar numbering errors have been corrected.

Det er så yndigt at følges ad: The first series of uploads missed all legatos. Corrected as of 08.05.04.

Korsør 27.11.05

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