

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN REJOICE

Lyrics, Medieval 14th c. Latin Carol, trans. John M. Neal, 1853
Tune: IN DULCI JUBILO, 14th c. Traditional German Carol

IN DULCI JUBILO ("IN SWEET REJOICING") is a traditional Christmas carol, a folk dance; it is filled with rhythmic energy. There are many organ and choral arrangements of this tune.

In its original setting, dating from the Middle Ages, the carol is a macaronic text meaning it consists of two languages, in this case, German and Latin. Subsequent translations into English, such as J.M. Neale's arrangement "*Good Christian Men, Rejoice*" have increased its popularity. J. S. Bach's "*chorale prelude*" based on the tune (BWV 729) is also a traditional postlude for Christmas services.

Expressing the good news of the birth of Christ, who is born to save, this medieval carol calls all Christians to 'rejoice with heart and soul and voice'! The earliest manuscript of the text dates from around 1400 (Leipzig), though the carol wasn't published until 1533 in Joseph Klug's "*Geistliche Lieder*". Mention of the carol, however, was made by a fourteenth-century writer who claimed that angels sang this hymn while dancing with the mystic Heinrich Suso (d. 1366). The carol is part of the late medieval tradition of teaching Bible stories to peasants by means of folk music.

~ Tull

