

Texts, Translations, and Notes

Sumer Is Icumen In/Summer Has Arrived



The “Sumer Canon” is one of the most famous pieces of early English music from the mid-13th century, and its spirit is strikingly joyful and earthy. Written as a *rota* (round), the overlapping vocal entries create a constant forward motion. As each voice enters with the same melody, the texture becomes increasingly vibrant and animated. This layering produces a musical “buzz” that mirrors the activity of nature in summer—everything growing, moving, and sounding at once.

*Sing cuccu nu, sing cuccu,
Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu;
Groweth sed
and bloweth med
and springth the wud enu,
Sing cuccu.*

*Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu.
Bulloc sterteth,
bucke verteth,
Murie sing cuccu.*

*Cuccu, cuccu
Wel singes thu cuccu,
Ne swik thu naver nu.*

Sing cuckoo, now sing, cuckoo,
Summer has arrived,
Sing loudly, cuckoo!
The seed is growing
And the meadow is blooming
And the wood is coming into leaf now,
Sing, cuckoo!

The ewe is bleating after her lamb,
The cow is lowing after her calf;
The bullock is prancing,
The billy-goat farting, [or the stag cavorting]
Sing merrily, cuckoo!

Cuckoo, cuckoo,
You sing well, cuckoo,
Never stop now.

Cantate Domino/Sing to the Lord (Psalm 96: 1,2 and Psalm 98: 1, 4-5)



Claudio Monteverdi's *Cantate Domino* is a vibrant sacred motet that urges joyful praise of God. Written in the early Baroque style that echoes Monteverdi's Renaissance roots, it features lively rhythms, expressive vocal lines, and a blend of imitative and homophonic textures. The piece captures a spirit of exuberance and devotion, typical of Monteverdi's move toward more dramatic and emotionally direct sacred music.

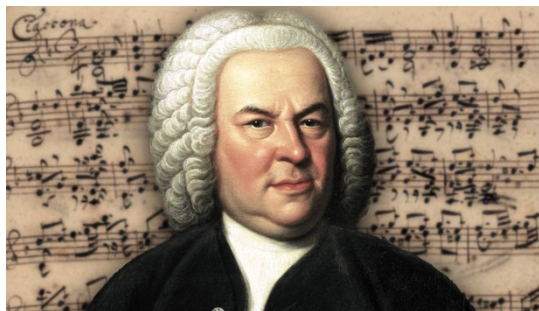
*Cantate Domino canticum novum
cantate et benedicite nomine eius
quia mirabilia fecit.*

Sing to the Lord a new song,
Sing and bless His name,
Because He has performed miracles.

*Cantate et exultate et psallite
in cithara et voce psalmi:
quia mirabilia fecit.*

Sing, and exalt, and play
On the harp and with the voice of a psalm:
Because He has performed miracles.

Jesus Bleibet Meine Freude/Jesus Shall Remain My Joy



Bach's *Jesus bleibet meine Freude* comes from church cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV 147. Commonly known as "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," the text originates from a 1653 hymn by Martin Janus. Later adapted for the cantata as a devotional German poem, the text expresses a believer's deep, personal faith: it emphasizes themes of inner peace, steadfast devotion, and the idea that Christ provides spiritual fulfillment beyond worldly concerns, even amid hardship.

*Jesus bleibet meine Freude,
Meines Herzens Trost und Saft,
Jesus wehret allem Leide,
Er ist meines Lebens Kraft,
Meiner Augen Lust und Sonne,
Meiner Seele Schatz und Wonne;
Darum lass' ich Jesum nicht,
Aus dem Herzen und Gesicht.*

Jesus shall remain my joy,
My heart's comfort and sap,
Jesus shall fend off all sorrow,
He is the strength of my life,
The delight and sun of my eyes,
The treasure and wonder of my soul;
Therefore I will not let Jesus go,
Out of my heart and sight.

Ave Verum Corpus/Hail, True Body



This short sacred motet by Mozart was composed in 1791, just months before his death. Despite its brevity (typically under four minutes), it is widely regarded as one of his most serene and perfectly balanced choral works. The words come from the medieval Latin hymn “*Ave verum corpus*” (“Hail, true body”), traditionally attributed to the 14th century, possibly to Pope Innocent VI (though the exact authorship is uncertain). The hymn is associated with the Feast of Corpus Christi and devotion to the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic tradition.

*Ave, verum corpus
Natum de Maria Virgine.
Vere passum, immolatum
In cruce pro homine.
Cujus latus perforatum
Unda fluxit aqua et sanguine.
Esto nobis praegustatum
In mortis examine.*

Hail, true Body
Born of the Virgin Mary.
Who having truly suffered,
Was sacrificed on the cross for mankind.
Whose pierced side
Flowed with water and blood.
May it be for us a foretaste
in the trial of death.

An Die Musik/To Music (Franz von Schober) (Verse 1 translated by Richard Wigmore; verse 2 paraphrased by Alan Bullard)



“An die Musik” is one of the most beloved examples of the German Lied, arranged here for four-part chorus. A simple but deeply expressive song, it captures gratitude for music itself. Schubert avoids overt dramatization; instead, he creates a sense of quiet transcendence. The climactic moments (“*du holde Kunst*”—“you gracious art”) rise naturally out of the texture, conveying heartfelt devotion without excess.

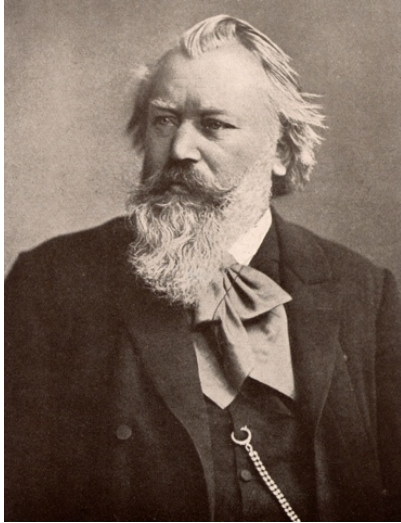
*Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden,
Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis
umstrickt,
Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb
entzunden,
Hast mich in eine bessre Welt entrückt!*

Beloved art, in how many a bleak hour,
When I am enmeshed in life’s tumultuous
round,
Have you kindled my heart to the warmth of
love,
And borne me away to a better world!

*Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf entfloßen,
Ein süßer, heiliger Akkord von dir,
Den Himmel bessrer Zeiten mir
erschlossen,
Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür!*

Let music flow with joyfulness unending,
With harmony that speaks unto the heart;
Op'ning the door to love and
understanding,
Give thanks for music's glorious healing
art!

O Schöne Nacht/O Beautiful Night! (Georg Friedrich Daumer)



Brahms's setting of "O schöne Nacht" is a richly atmospheric part-song for mixed chorus and piano. It reflects the composer's deep affinity for nature, twilight moods, and warm, blended choral sonorities. One of the most striking features is Brahms's handling of dynamics and color, where the full chorus alternates with soaring *solì* sections, and the piano sustains its own dramatic part. The piece often remains subdued, creating a hushed, intimate sound world. When the text refers to the nightingales ("es singen die Nachtigallen"), the music becomes especially tender and expressive, sometimes with slight expansions in harmony or phrasing that feel like the unfolding of the night's beauty.

*O schöne Nacht!
Am Himmel märchenhaft
Erglänzt der Mond in seiner ganzen Pracht;
Um ihn der kleinen Sterne liebliche
Genossenschaft.*

O beautiful night!
In the sky, as in a fairy tale,
Shines the moon in her full splendor;
Around her the little stars' sweet
Fellowship.

*Es schimmert hell der Tau
Am grünen Halm; mit Mach
Im Fliederbusche schlägt die Nachtigall;
Der Knabe schleicht zu seiner Liebsten
sacht —
O schöne Nacht!*

The dew shines brightly
On the green stalk; with vigor
The nightingale sings in the lilacs;
The boy steals quietly to his beloved —

O beautiful night!

Northern Lights (from Canticum Canticorum/Song of Songs 6:4-5)



Gjeilo's reverential choral piece seeks to capture the beauty and majesty of the Northern Lights. The text speaks of beauty, love, and awe, drawing parallels between the natural phenomenon of the Northern Lights and the beauty of a beloved.



*Pulchra es, amica mea,
Suavis et decora filia Ierusalem.
Pulchra es, amica mea,
Suavis et decora sicut Ierusalem,
Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.
Averte oculos tuos a me
Quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.*

You are beautiful, my love,
sweet and comely daughter of Jerusalem.
You are beautiful, my love,
sweet and adorned as Jerusalem,
awesome like the bastions of a fortress.
Turn your eyes from me,
for they have melted me away.