BALULALOW

for SATB choir a cappella,
with soprano and baritone soloists

Some individual singing is required from all singers,
and all four sections are divisi at various points.

A piano reduction is provided when required,
for rehearsal purposes only.

Text in Scots (16th century), from
"The Gude and Godlie Ballads"
by J., J. & R. Wedderburn,
believed to be a translation into Scots
of Martin Luther's "Von Himmel Hoch"

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I come from hevin heich to tell
the best nowells that e'er befell.
To you thir tythings trew I bring
and I will of them say and sing:
This day to you is born ane Child
of Marie meik and Virgin mild.
That blissit bairn bening and kind
sall you rejoyce baith hart and mind.

Lat us rejoyis [now] and be blyth
and with the Hyrdis go full swyth,
and see what Godis grace hes done
throu Christ to bring us to his throne.
My saull and life, stand up and see
wha lyis in ane cribbe of tree.
What Babe is that, sa gude and fair?
It is Christ, Godis Son and Air.

The silk and sandell thee to eis
ar hay and sempill sweilling clais
warin thou gloris greitest King
as thou in hev'n war in thy ring.
And war the warld ten times sa wide
celed ouer with gold and stanes of pride
unworthie yit it were to thee
under they feet ane stule to be.

O my deir hart, yung Jesus sweit,
prepair thy creddill in my spreit!
And I sall rock thee in my hart
and never mair fra thee depart.
Bot I sall praise thee evermoir
with sangis sweit unto thy gloir.
The kneis of my hart sall I bow
and sing that rycht Balulalow.

"Balulalow" should rhyme with "now" (so that it rhymes with "bow" in the last couplet).
If there is doubt about the pronunciation of a word, it may be pronounced to match the modern English equivalent. This is an approximation of Scots pronunciation (words which are pronounced as they look - e.g. war, warin, sa - are omitted):

v.1: heich: "hee", then a ch as in loch (high)
Marie: same as English "Mary"
meik: as English "meek"
bening: "ben" then ing as in "ring" (benign)
sall: as if it was the opening syllable of "Sally"

v.2: Lat: as written (let)
rejoyis: as "rejoice", but with the diphthong partly split into two syllables; "rih-jaw-ees".
blyth: as English "blithe"
swyth: rhymes with "blithe" (swift)
throu: same as "through"
gude: same as "good"
Air: same as "heir" (the h is silent)

v.3: eis: ay-ees (ease)
sweilling: swee-ling (swaddling)
crais: clay-ees (clothes)
greitest: gree-test (greatest)
ouer: ah-oor (ow'r, over)
stule: same as "stool"

v.4: sweit: same as "sweet"
spreit: spreet (spirit)
evermoir: same as "evermore"
sangis: "sang-is" (songs)
gloir: rhymes with "more" (glory)
kneis: same as "knees"
rycht: richt (i sound as in lift, ch sound as in loch) (right, appropriate)
Balulalow

Words: from *The Gude and Godlie Ballatis* (J, J & R Wedderburn), 16th century

Calmato, \( \text{c. 140} \)

This PDF is for sample purposes only: to order a copy for your choir, email chris@hutchingsmusic.co.uk.

Accompanist's edition: a piano reduction is provided from page 5 onwards (where the choir is in more than 2 parts)

Chris Hutchings

Soprano solo

1 come from

Sop.

balulalow.

A

pp

pp

balances
to tell

The best no wells that

6

luula

A

mf

luulalow.

Sop.

e'er be fell;

To you thirtythings trew I

9

A

la

lalow.

Sop.

bring And I will of them say and sing:

12

A

Balulalow.
This day to you is born ane child Of Ma-rie meik and Vir-gin mild.

That blissit bairn be-ning and kind, That blissit bairn be-ning and kind

Sall you re-joyce baith hart and mind.

Sall you re-joyce baith hart and mind.
Let us re-joy-is, let us re-joy-is and be blyth

Let us re-joy-is and be blyth

To

Go-dis grace hes done

Throu Christ to bring us

My saull and life, stand up and see

to his throne.

My saull and life, stand up and see

to his throne.

My saull and life, stand up and see
What babe is that, sa gude and fair?

What babe is that, sa gude and fair?

What babe is that, sa gude and fair?

What babe is that, sa gude and fair?

What babe is that, sa gude and fair?

What babe is that, sa gude and fair?
Maestoso, \( \text{c.} \ 120 \)

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Maestos
The silk and...
And war the warld ten times sa wide,
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride,
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride,
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride.

And war the warld ten times sa wide, cled ouer with
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride, Cled ouer with gold and
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride, Cled ouer with gold and
Cled ouer with gold and stanes of pride.
Sop.
\[ a \text{ tempo} \]
\[ Un \text{ wor thie yit it were to thee} \]

Bar.
\[ a \text{ tempo} \]
\[ Un \text{ wor thie yit it were to thee} \]

S
\[ f \text{ a tempo} \]
\[ pride, \text{ ba lu la low,} \]

A
\[ f \text{ a tempo} \]
\[ stanes of pride, \text{ ba - lu - la low,} \]

T
\[ f \text{ a tempo} \]
\[ stanes of pride, \text{ ba - lu - la low,} \]

B
\[ f \text{ a tempo} \]
\[ pride, \text{ ba - lu - la low,} \]

(RH 8ve higher ad lib.)
The notes in boxes are to be sung in any order, freely, being repeated as required, by each member of the section, ad lib. Bring in each note pp, with a swell in the middle (volume should never be more than mp, usually p), and fade it off with a diminuendo; leave a slight rest before the next note.

Only the choir's held notes are included in the piano reduction here, to save space. The trill line indicates to play the held notes repeatedly but quietly if the choir need support (one note at a time rather than repeating the whole chord, a sort of multi-note tremolo). Durations are not exact.
sweet,  prepare_thy_cred-dill_in_my_spreit,  And_I_sall_rock_thee_in_my


Begin to fade out (over about 5 seconds) when "depart" is sung: all singers should sing "low" as their last syllable before fading out.


Begin to fade out (over about 5 seconds) when "depart" is sung: all singers should sing "low" as their last syllable before fading out.
The conductor should give a signal about 10" before he/she wishes the piece to end; at this point, everyone should make their next syllable "low" (on the notes of a D major chord) entering individually within 1-3 seconds of the conductor's signal, and fade off gradually on that syllable.