

The Boars' Head Carol

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The first staff has four measures with chords C, G C, F, and G C. The second staff has four measures with chords Am, Em Am G C, F, and G C. The third staff has four measures with chords C F G, Am F G F, and G C.

1. The boar's head in hand bear I
 Bedecked with bays and rosemary.
 I pray you, my masters, be merry
Quot estis in convivio. (so many as are in the feast)
Chorus
Caput apri defero, (the boar's head I bring)
Reddens laudes domino. (giving praises to God)

2. The boar's head, as I understand,
 Is the rarest dish in all this land,
 Which thus bedecked with a gay garland,
 Let us *servire cantico.* (serve with a song)
Chorus

3. Our steward hath provided this
 In honor of the King of bliss,
 Which, on this day to be served is
In Reginensi atrio. (in the Queen's hall)
Chorus

"The Boar's Head Carol" is a multi-lingual 15th century English Christmas carol that describes the ancient tradition of sacrificing a boar and presenting its head at a Yuletide feast. Of the several extant versions of the carol, the one most usually performed today is based on a version published in 1521 in Wynkyn de Worde's **Christmasse Carolles**. There are at least seven versions from various locations in various publications.

It was printed in Chappell's **The Ballad Literature and Popular Music of the Olden Time** (1859), Dearmer, Vaughan Williams, Shaw's **The Oxford Book of Carols** (1928), Greene's **The Early English Carols** (1935), Keyte and Parrott's **The New Oxford Book of Carols** (1992), Husk's **Songs of the Nativity** (1868), Rickert's **Ancient English Christmas Carols: 1400-1700** (1910), Sylvester's **A Garland of Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern** (1861), Wright's **Songs and Carols Now First Printed From a Manuscript of the Fifteenth Century** (1847) and Vizetelly's **Christmas With The Poets** (1851).

It was recorded by The Chieftains on **The Bells of Dublin** (1991), The King's Singers on **A Little Christmas Music** (1990), Maddy Prior; The Carnival Band on **Carols & Capers** (1991), Maddy Prior on **Ballads and Candles** (2000), Nowell Sing We Clear on **Nowell Sing We Clear** (1977) and Steeleye Span on **A Rare Collection 1972-1996** (1999).