

# Drew Morton

## MUSIC

## Music for Choirs

*Lullay, As I lay – a medieval English carol*

*SATB unaccompanied*



The image shows a musical score for SATB unaccompanied. It consists of four staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the lyrics: "lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay". The second system shows the burden (chorus) with the lyrics: "lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay". The third system shows the first verse with the lyrics: "lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay, lullay the lullay". The score is written in a medieval style with a treble clef and a common time signature.

The melody and words for the burden (chorus) and first verse of this ancient carol can be found in the Appendix to *Musica Britannica vol IV ed. Stevens (p.110)*. It appears in a document dating from the first quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and is likely to be considerably earlier.

Further research unearthed some supporting verses which fill out the story of the vision of Mother and Child, but the musical arrangement is an entirely new one. It tries to echo the harmonies which would have prevailed at the time while still making the carol accessible to modern choirs and audiences. The lilting triple-time is typical of the late medieval period.

*Lullay.*

*As I lay in Yoolis night, alone in my longing,  
Methought I saw a well fair sight, a Maid her child rocking*

*The Maiden would without a song her child asleep to bring,  
The Child him thought She did Him wrong and bade His Mother to sing.*

*Lullay*

*Sweet Son, said She, whereof should I sing  
Nor know I yet more of thee but of Gabriel's greeting.  
He greet me goodly on his knee and said Mary  
Hail full of grace, God is with thee, then shalt thou bear Messie.*

*Lullay*

*Certainly this sight I saw, this song I heard her sing,  
As I lay this Yoolis night alone in my longing.*

*Lullay*