

The Hidden Orchard

Apple Wassail

***Setting of a poem by Debbie Whitton Spriggs
for SATB choir and keyboard
with audience (or optional semichorus)***

**Music by
JANET WHEELER**

Duration c.3'



Image: Debbie Whitton Spriggs

Page 2 contains background information on the tradition of Apple Wassailing
Page 3 contains the complete text of the poem

For an Apple Wassail ceremony in Great Chesterford 2025

The Hidden Orchard

Apple Wassail

Words by Debbie Whitton Spriggs
from Wassail! a poem cycle in
celebration of orchards

Music by Janet Wheeler

1 **Allegretto** ♩ = 80

Soprano Alto

Tenor Bass

Piano

Allegretto ♩ = 80
strong and rhythmic (dynamics to match each verse)

1. Be - neath the gaze of
2. These sen - ti - nels, the
3. Be - neath each scarred, be-
4. Be - low the sward, in
5. Walk_____ this for - est

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2. These sen - ti - nels, the
3. Be - neath each scarred, be-
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5. Walk_____ this for - est

6

win - ter trees, Be - hind the tang - led veil,_____ Be - fore the leng - then -
an - cient seers, Where knot and rot are rife,_____ All bear the fruit of
diz - ened branch, Flocks_____ and herds are fed,_____ Be - tween the heart - wood
sweet - ened ground, A world of be - ing teems,_____ And was - sail words are
row by row. Read_____ be-tween the lines._____ Bless_____ this ark of

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row by row. Read_____ be-tween the lines._____ Bless_____ this ark of

10

Chorus
f

ing of days, We come to sing, "Was - sail! Was -
roll - ing years, De - cay - ing in - to life._____
and the bark, Mul - ti - tudes are bred._____
passed a - round Be - tween the list' - ning trees._____
ap - ple - wood. Ob - serve this sa - cred time._____

ing of days, We come to sing, "Was - sail! was - sail! Was -
roll - ing years, De - cay - ing in - to life, to life_____
and the bark, Mul - ti - tudes are bred, are bred._____
passed a - round Be - tween the list' - ning trees, the trees._____
ap - ple - wood. Ob - serve this sa - cred time, this time._____

13

S
sail the ap - ple! _____ Beat the bounds! _____ Was - sail, _____ was -

A
sail the ap - ple! Was - sail *the* ap - ple! Beat the bounds! Beat the bounds! Was - sail, _____ was -

T
sail the ap - ple! _____ Beat the bounds! _____

B
sail the ap - ple! Was - sail the ap - ple! Beat the bounds! Beat the bounds!

Audience: Was - sail the ap - ple! Beat the bounds! _____

The musical score is for a four-part vocal setting of 'The Apple Tree' with an audience part. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The Soprano part begins with a melodic line, followed by the Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. The lyrics are: 'sail the apple! Beat the bounds! Was - sail, was - sail the apple! Beat the bounds! Beat the bounds! Was - sail, was - sail the apple! Beat the bounds! Beat the bounds!'. The audience part enters with 'Was - sail the apple! Beat the bounds!'. The piano accompaniment is in the bottom system, featuring chords and moving lines in both hands.

* After a unison verse, altos and basses begin the chorus here

18 fifth time to Coda ⊕

sail this hal-lowed ground!

sail this hal-lowed ground!

Was - sail, was - sail this hal-lowed ground!

Was - sail, was - sail this hal-lowed ground!

Was - sail, was - sail this hal-lowed ground!

fifth time to Coda ⊕

23 CODA ⊕

ground! Was - sail, was - sail this hal - lowed

ground! Was - sail, was - sail this hal - lowed

sail, was - sail this hal-lowed ground! Was -

sail, was - sail this hal-lowed ground! Was -

sail, was - sail this hal-lowed ground! Was -

CODA

27

ground! this hal - lowed ground! ground! ground! sail, was - sail this hal - lowed ground! sail, was - sail this hal - lowed ground! sail, was - sail this hal - lowed ground!

Performance Options

Consider adding contrast and drama to your performance by varying the treatment of the verses, possibly having some of them sung as melody line only by different soloists, small groups or sections of the choir, or by omitting the keyboard at times.

There are many ways this could be done. Here is one possible plan:

- verse 1 full unison tune
- verse 2 lower voices sing the tune
- verse 3 sopranos sing the words, lower voices accompany on their lines sung to ooh
- verse 4 full harmony with no keyboard
- verse 5 full harmony with keyboard

In chorusses which follow a unison verse, sopranos and tenors begin and altos and basses join in from the last note of bar 13.

Dynamics can also change from verse to verse, but it is important to keep rhythmic energy and clear words throughout.