

Frydeligt med Jubelkor

Danish diction for English-speaking choirs

Jonas Rasmussen (2025) · SATB a cappella

Latin text: Morten Børup (*Carmen vernale*, c. 1500) · Danish translation: C. F. Moth (1895)

How to read the phonetic pronunciation

Each line is printed three ways: the Danish from the score, a phonetic pronunciation meant to be read at sight, and the IPA for anyone who prefers it. In words of more than one syllable, capital letters mark the stressed syllable; hyphens divide the sung syllables; a sound in parentheses, like *me(dh)*, is feather-light. Silent letters are already left out — sing exactly what is written. The bracketed [r] in *da ram* is the only rolled r in the piece. Page 2 gives an English anchor or a short recipe for every sound; page 3, articulation and the director's notes.

Stanza 1

Danish	Phonetic pronunciation	IPA
Frydeligt med jubelkor	FREW-dhuh-lit me(dh) YOO-bel-kore	'fɾy:.ðə.lit mɛð 'ju:.bəl.kœ
hilses vårens komme,	HIL-suhs VAW-uhns KOM-muh	'hil.səs 'vɔ:.əns 'kɔ.mə
svalen melder trindt på jord:	SVAH-luhn MEL-uh trent poh yore	'sva:.lən 'mɛl.ə trɛnt pɔ jœ
“Frostens tid er ommel!”	FROS-tuhns tee(dh) air OM-muh	'frɔs.təns ti:ð ɛɐ 'ɔ.mə
Land og hav og lundens træ'r	lahn aw hahw aw LON-uhns trair	lan v ha:w v 'lɔ.nəns trɛ:ɐ
herligt prydes fjernt og nær.	HAIR-lit PREW-dhuhs fyairnt aw nair	'hɛɐ.lit 'pɾy:.ðəs fjɛnt v nɛ:ɐ
– nye skabningsunder!	NEW-uh SKAHB-nengs-ON-uh	'ny:.ə 'ska:b.nɛŋs.ɔn.ə
Kraft påny vort legem får,	krahft poh-NEW vawt LEH-uhm fawr	kɾaʔt pɔ.'ny: vɔɐt 'lɛ:.əm fɔ:ɐ
lægt er nu vort hjertesår	lekt air noo vawt YAIR-tuh-sawr	lɛkt ɛɐ nu: vɔɐt 'jɛɐ.tə.sɔ:ɐ
i de glade stunder.	ee dee GLAH-dhuh STON-uh	i di 'glɑ:.ðə 'stɔn.ə

Stanza 2

Danish	Phonetic pronunciation	IPA
Jordens rige blomsterpragt	YORE-dhuhns REE-uh BLOM-stuh-prahkt	'jœɐ.ðəns 'xi:.ə 'blɔm.stɐ.pɾaʔt
skovens grønne smykke,	SKOV-uhns GRUR-nuh SMEW-kuh	'skɔ.vəns 'gɾœ.nə 'smɪy.kə
fuglesangens tryllemagt	FOO-luh-sahng-uhns TREW-luh-mahkt	'fu:.lə.sɑŋ.əns 'tɾɪl.mɑʔt
fylder os med lykke.	FEW-luh os me(dh) LEW-kuh	'fy.lɐ ɔs mɛð 'ly.kə
Havets storme raser ud,	HAH-wuhts STAW-muh RAH-suh oo(dh)	'ha:.wɔʔts 'stɔɐ.mə 'ʁɑ:.sɐ u:ð
luften hærages ej af slud,	LOF-tuhn HAIR-guhs eye ahf sloo(dh)	'lɔf.tən 'hɛɐ.gəs ej af slu:ð
duggens perler rene	DOO-guhns PAIR-luh REH-nuh	'du.gəns 'pɛɐ.lɐ 'ɾɛ:.nə
samler solens stråleplans	SAHM-luh SOH-luhns STROH-luh-glahns	'sam.lɐ 'so:.ləns 'stɾɔ.lə.glans
i en dejlig perlekrans	ee en DYE-lee PAIR-luh-krahns	i en 'dɔj.li 'pɛɐ.lə.kɾans
rundt på græs og grene.	ront poh gress aw GREH-nuh	ɾɔnt pɔ gɾɛ:s v 'gɾɛ:.nə

Stanza 3

Danish	Phonetic pronunciation	IPA
Hvor dog Gud er god og vis!	vaw dow goo(dh) air goh(dh) aw vees	vɔ dɔw guð ɛɐ go:ð v vi:s
hvor er verden fager!	vaw air VAIR-dhuhn FAH-uh	vɔ ɛɐ 'vɛɐ.ðən 'fa:.ɐ
Hvor dog alt til Herrens pris	vaw dow ahlt til HEH-ruhns prees	vɔ dɔw alt til 'hɛ.ɾəns pɾi:s
ånd og tanke drager!	ohn aw TAHNG-kuh DRAH-uh	ɔn v 'taŋ.kə 'dɾɑ:.ɐ
Han har stort og småt på jord,	hahn hahr stawt aw smoht poh yore	han hæ stɔɐt v smɔt pɔ jœ
urten, som på marken gror,	OOR-tuhn som poh MAHR-kuhn grore	'uɐ.tən sɔm pɔ 'mɑɐ.kən gɾɔ:ɐ
form og farve givet.	fawm aw FAHR-vuh GEE-vuh(dh)	fɔɐm v 'faɐ.və 'gi:.vəð
Efter nat vi dagen nu	EF-tuh naht vee DAH-uhn noo	'ɛf.tɐ nat vi 'da:.ən nu:
hilse vil med frejdig hu,	HIL-suh veel me(dh) FRY-dhee hoo	'hil.sə vil mɛð 'frɔj.ði hu:
takke Gud for livet.	TAH-kuh goo(dh) fawr LEE-vuh(dh)	'ta.kə guð fɔɐ 'li:.vəð

The refrain and the score syllables

The refrain — *Frydeligt med jubelkor*, sung whole or broken into its parts — repeats the opening line of stanza 1 and is pronounced exactly as shown there.

The score syllables are sung as written: *Dam dam dam* (tenor–bass) — dahm dahm dahm — closes quickly to [m], as marked; *da ram* is the rolled-r exception — dah [r]ahm; *Dm dm dm* (alto) is a brief d released into a hummed [m]; *Doo* (soprano) and *Oo · Oh · aw · ab* (soprano–alto) open by steps — *food*, then the direct o of *god* (never English *go*), then *law*, then *father*.

Like sounds

Nearly every sound in the phonetic pronunciation can be anchored to a familiar English word; the few with no English match get a short recipe. When a sound drifts in rehearsal, name the anchor below and tune from there.

Vowels, by their English anchors

Spelled	Sounds like	Where it sings
oo	“oo” as in <i>food</i>	<i>jubel, nu, bu, slud, ud, duggens, Gud, urten</i>
ee	“ee” as in <i>see</i> — kept short in <i>vil, i, de, vi</i>	<i>tid, vis, pris, livet · vil, i, de, vi</i>
i (HIL, til)	a short, bright “ee” — <i>see</i> clipped; never the slack i of <i>bit</i>	<i>hilses, til</i>
i (-lit)	“i” as in <i>bit</i> — light and unstressed	<i>frydeligt, berligt</i>
e, eh	“e” as in <i>bed</i> — held longer in <i>legem</i> ; purer, toward “ay” with no glide, in <i>rene</i> and <i>grene</i>	<i>melder, Herrens, lægt, græs, legem · rene, grene</i>
ah	“a” as in <i>man</i> — direct and hard	<i>svalen</i>
ah	“a” as in “a car” — the article; softer and more open	<i>glade, nat, land</i>
ah	“ah” as in <i>father</i>	<i>takke</i>
o, oh	“oh” as in <i>go</i> — short and clipped, with no diphthong	<i>komme, frostens, luften, lundens, stunder, rundt · på, påny, stråleglans</i>
o (som, os)	“o” as in British <i>hot</i>	<i>som, os, skovens</i>
aw	“aw” as in <i>law</i> — kept short in <i>og, hvor</i>	<i>vårens, får, vort, stort, storme, form, for · og, hvor</i>
ow	the “o” of British <i>hot</i> , closing to a quick w	<i>dog</i>
oh	a very direct, clear “o” — not the gliding “oh” of English <i>go</i>	<i>god, solens</i>
oh	“o” as in <i>honesty</i> — open and dark; the same vowel as <i>som</i>	<i>småt, ånd</i>
ore	as in <i>more</i> , with the r melted — the vowel is the same direct, clear o as <i>god</i> and <i>solens</i>	<i>jubelkor, jord, gror</i>
air	as in <i>air</i> , with the r melted into the vowel	<i>er, nær, træ’r, berligt, fjernt, perler, verden, hjertesår, hærges</i>
eye	the English word <i>eye</i> , said as quickly as possible	<i>ej · dejlig (DYE), frejdig (FRY)</i>
uh	“uh” as in <i>comma</i> , in unstressed endings	<i>komme, lundens, legem</i>
uh	the “-er” in <i>butter</i> — brief and neutral	<i>melder, stunder, samler</i>
ew	“ee” with tightly rounded lips	<i>frydeligt, prydes, nye, påny, fylder · lykke, smykke, trylle</i>
ur	“e” as in <i>bed</i> with rounded lips	<i>grønne</i>

Everywhere else in the text, **ah** is the open “a” of *father*.

The three colors of å

The letter **å** sings in three colors in this text. In *på, påny*, and *stråleglans* it is the short **oh** of *go*; before **r** it opens to the **aw** of *law* (*vårens, får*, and the *sår* of *hjertesår*); and in *småt* and *ånd* it is darkest — the **o** of *honesty*.

u takes the first of these colors before **nd** and **ng**: *stunder, lundens*, and *rundt* lower to the same short **oh** — closer to English *go* than to *aw*.

Consonants, by their English anchors

Spelled	Sounds like	Where it sings
y	“y” as in <i>yes</i> — never the j of “jam”	<i>jubelkor, jord, hjertesår, fjernt</i>
dh	the soft d — tongue tip down, faintly like the l in <i>feel</i> ; never English “th”	<i>med, prydes, glade</i>
r (before a vowel)	a very gentle French r — never rolled, never American	<i>frydeligt, rene, Herrens</i>
r (after a vowel)	melts into the vowel — a written r here (<i>fawr, yore, NAIR</i>) is never a hard American r	<i>får, jord, nær, bar, urten, farve</i>
w	“w” as in <i>how</i>	<i>bav, havets</i>
ng	“ng” as in <i>sing</i>	<i>fuglesangens, tanke, skabningsunder</i>
s	always the crisp s of <i>biss</i> — never the z of “roses”	<i>hilses, prydes, raser</i>
b, d, g	light and voiceless — the p in <i>spin</i> , t in <i>stop</i> , k in <i>skin</i>	<i>jubelkor, duggens, dejlig</i>

Articulation and the director's notes

The sung text is on page 1 and the quick English key on page 2. This page covers how the hardest sounds are actually made, and the three rules that keep the Danish honest.

Five sounds to watch

The Danish <i>y</i> , spelled <i>ew</i>	Start with ee , then round the lips tightly without moving the tongue. That rounded ee is the sound (IPA [y:] when long, [y] when short). It is long in <i>frydeligt</i> , <i>påny</i> , and <i>fyllder</i> , and short before the doubled consonants in <i>lykke</i> , <i>smykke</i> , and <i>trylle</i> .
The Danish <i>ø</i> , spelled <i>ur</i>	Start with e as in “bed,” then round the lips (IPA [œ]). It occurs in <i>grønne</i> and stays short before the double nn .
The soft <i>d</i> , spelled <i>dh</i>	This is the Danish soft <i>d</i> (IPA [ð]). Place the tongue tip behind the lower front teeth, keep the tongue broad and relaxed, and let the blade rise gently — with no friction, and no tongue between the teeth. The result is brief, very light, and vowel-like; it is not the English “th.”
The Danish <i>r</i>	At the start of a syllable, use a gentle <i>r</i> made at the back of the mouth — a soft uvular narrowing (IPA [ʁ]) — never an American <i>r</i> and never a tongue trill. After a vowel, the <i>r</i> melts into that same syllable as a brief, open vowel sound (IPA [ɐ]) without adding a syllable. The only rolled <i>r</i> in the piece is the bracketed [r] in <i>da ram</i> .
Silent letters	Danish leaves many letters unspoken, and the phonetic pronunciation already omits them. Watch especially for the silent d after n and l (<i>land</i> , <i>ånd</i> , <i>melder</i> , <i>fyllder</i>), the silent g in -ig and -igt (<i>frydeligt</i> , <i>herligt</i>) and often between vowels (<i>rige</i> , <i>fager</i> , <i>dagen</i>), and the silent h before j and v (<i>hjerte</i> , <i>hvor</i>).

For the director

Together with the five sounds above, these three points cover the diction priorities for rehearsal. The English anchors on page 2 tune any drifting sound on the spot.

The <i>stød</i>	Spoken Danish interrupts many long vowels with a glottal catch called <i>stød</i> . Omit it entirely when singing: sustain every vowel and sonorant with smooth, legato phonation, and never insert a glottal catch.
Vowels before <i>nd</i> and <i>ng</i>	In this text, u lowers to a short [ɔ] before nd and ng (<i>stunder</i> , <i>lundens</i> , <i>rundt</i>), and i lowers toward [ɛ] before nd and ng (<i>trindt</i> , <i>skabning</i>). Keep both vowels pure and short.
Double consonants	A doubled letter marks a short preceding vowel; it does not lengthen the consonant itself. Listen for the short vowel in <i>lykke</i> , <i>smykke</i> , <i>trylle</i> , <i>komme</i> , and <i>grønne</i> .

References: Eva Hess Thaysen, Ruben Schachtenhaufen & Christen Stubbe Teglberg, *Danish Diction in Art Song* (Edition-S, 2023); Alisa Jordheim & Wencke Ophaug, “Transcribing Scandinavian Song Texts into IPA,” *Journal of Singing* 71/4 (2015); Hans Basbøll, *The Phonology of Danish* (OUP, 2005); Ruben Schachtenhaufen, Udtaleordbog.dk.