

Willi, Bring (or Take) Your Little Drum (Patapan or Pat-a Pan)

Guillô, Pran Ton Tamborin

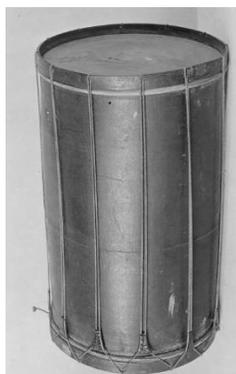
Guillô, Pran Ton Tamborin is a French Burgundian Christmas carol written by Bernard de La Monnoye (pseudonym Gui Barozai) (1641–1728) and first published in 1721. He was a French lawyer, poet, scholar and critic. The carol tells the birth of Jesus from the perspective of shepherds who play simple instruments—flutes and drums. Even today local shepherds in rural French churches are given the place of honor at Christmas midnight mass. Guillo and Robin are stock characters who bring food to the manger and represent the village community.

The onomatopoeic sound gives the song its name; "patapan" is meant to mimic the sound of the drum, and "tu-re-lu-re-lu," the flute. This is similar conceptually to the carol *The Little Drummer Boy* with its chorus of "pa-rum-pa-pum-pum."

A Provençal tambourin is a small low-pitched cylindrical tenor drum hung from the shoulder played with one hand allowing the free hand to play the 3-hole tabor pipe known in France as a galoubet.

Tabor pipes have a long history and are found throughout the globe. Each culture has developed a different style of pipe, with a different method of playing and a different range of notes. A deep, two-headed drum of Arabic origin, called the *tambourin [de Provence]*, is mentioned as early as the 1080s and noted as the "tabor" in the *Chanson de Roland*. In the 18th Century Rameau, Handel and Gluck included tambourins in many of their operas.

The pipe and tabor are associated with civilian music and Court etiquette rather than military music. It was used by all classes for dancing, ceremonies, processions, and street entertainment. It was popular from an early date in France, the Iberian Peninsula, and Great Britain and remains in use there today. In the Basque Country it is a hallmark of Basque identity and folk culture.



Tambourin



3-Hole Galoubet or Tabor Pipe



13th Century



Roman

Pat Kilburn

Disclaimer: I have pieced together the origins of this song from the sources below. You may find other sources with different or additional information. Reconstructing the history of carols is fraught with uncertainty. Most French accents are missing.

Sources: The New Oxford Book of Carols edited by Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott, 1992, The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians, sheet music, and various websites, and Wikipedia articles.

Burgundian lyrics

Bernard de La Monnoye

Guillô, pran ton tamborin;
Toi, pran tai fleûte, Rôbin!
Au son de cés instruman,
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Au son de cés instruman
Je diron Noei gaiman

C' éto lai môde autrefoi
De loué le Roi dé Roi,
Au son de cés instruman,
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Au son de cés instruman,
Ai nos an fau faire autan.

Ce jor le Diale at ai cu
Randons an graice ai Jesu
Au son de cés instruman,
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Au son de cés instruman,
Fezon lai nique ai Satan.

L'homme et Dei son pu d'aïcor
Que lai fleûte & le tambor.
Au son de cés instruman,
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Au son de cés instruman,
Chanton, danson, sautons-an.

Literal French Translation

Ruthann Price, French teacher
West Valley Chorale member

William, get your drum,
And you, get your flute, Robin;
At the sound of these instruments,
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
At the sound of these instruments
I will happily say Noel.

It was a former custom
To praise the King of Kings;
At the sound of these instruments
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
At the sound of these instruments,
He makes us do so.

This day the devil is vanquished,
Let's thank Jesus for it.
At the sound of these instruments,
Turelurelu, patapatapan
At the sound of these instruments
Let's thumb our nose at Satan.

Man and God agree
That the flute and the drum;
At the sound of these instruments
Turelurelu, patapatapan
At the sound of these instruments
Let's sing, let's dance, let's jump
about it!

Typical English Translation

Willie, bring your little drum
Robin, get your fife, and come
And be merry while you play
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Listen as you play
For the joy of Christmas day

When the men of olden days
Gave the King of Kings their praise
They had pipes on which to play
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
They had drums on which to play
For the joy of Christmas day

God and man this day become
Joined as one with flute and drum
Let the happy tune play on
Turelurelu, patapatapan,
Flute and drum together play
As we sing on Christmas Day