

A Christmas Songbook

edited by

Daniel Sadowsky

Instrumental Score

2024 edition

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

-Luke 2:10

“Christ-mas day: the old heathens feasting day, in honour to Saturn their idol-god; the Papists massing day; the prophane mans ranting day; the superstitious mans idol day; the multitudes idle day; whereon, because they cannot do nothing: they do worse then nothing[...].”

-Ezekias Woodward, 1656

Table of Contents

Part I

Adeste Fideles	2
Ding Dong Merrily on High	3
O Little Town of Bethlehem	4
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	5
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear	6
Angels We Have Heard on High	7
Once in Royal David's City	8
In the Bleak Mid-Winter	9
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming	10
Joy to the World	11

Part II

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel	13
We Wish You a Merry Christmas	14
The Snow Lay on the Ground	15
Here We Come A-wassailing	16
What Child Is This?	17
I Saw Three Ships	18
Wassail! Wassail! All Over the Town	19
Masters in This Hall	20
The Holly and the Ivy	21
Deck the Hall	22
Away in a Manger	23
Silent Night	24
God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen	25
Auld Lang Syne	26

Part III

O Tannenbaum	28
In dulci jubilo	29
Puer natus in Bethlehem	30
Quem Pastores	31
Los Peces en el Río	32
Fum, Fum, Fum	33
Guillô, pran ton tamborin	34
Minuit, chrétiens	35
How Great Our Joy	36
Eesus Ahatonyah	37
Boh predvičny narodilsja	38

Notes on the Collection

There are three types of vocal pieces that are worth singing during the Advent and Christmas seasons in the English-speaking world. There are the classics: a repertoire mostly of hymns and mostly in four parts which are all widely known in excellent, singable arrangements. There is also a large repertoire of carols which, in part due to their origin as such, have only melodies which are well-known; attempts to arrange such tunes in four parts have been largely unsuccessful, and no such attempts are made here. And finally, there is a repertoire which originates outside of the English-speaking world that many would find either too difficult or unfamiliar, but which is too delightful to neglect entirely.

Each of the three parts in this collection takes on one of these three repertoires and is designed both to sample the best literature in the public domain and also to be sung through as a set. The entire collection is edited with spontaneous groups of singers and/or instrumentalists in mind. Directions to the performers, for example, are kept at a bare minimum in order to allow users of the scores maximum flexibility. For most groups, especially large ones, the first part of the collection contains the pieces which should form the core repertoire. Ensembles for which four-part harmony is not an option might consider the second part of the collection, which contains several two-part arrangements. And while it may be that only relatively adventurous groups of vocalists will approach the third part of the collection, there is plenty of excellent material for instrumental groups to be found there.

Notes on the License

This collection draws from a wealth of texts, music, and arrangements which are in the public domain. Some pieces appear with arrangements which are the original work of the editor (and which are distinguishable as such by the abbreviation “arr. ed.”) while others, long ago perfected, appear with nothing original but the name of the editor. All engravings, regardless of their novelty, are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, as are any novel arrangements. The intent in using such a license is to allow, for example, for individual pages from the collection to be reproduced and distributed freely; the easiest way to comply with the terms of the license is to ensure that the icon and text at the bottom of each page is preserved in all copies. For more information, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.



Notes on the Songs

Ding Dong Merrily on High The arrangement here borrows heavily from the original 4-part harmonization by Charles Wood, but has been considerably simplified. It should be performed at a lively tempo.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming The anonymous text and melody first appears in the Speyerer Gesangbuch of 1599. The setting by Praetorius is best performed either a cappella or, if necessary, with light keyboard accompaniment. The German lyrics provided are taken from Friedrich Layritz's 1844 edition of the text, which makes slight alterations to the original.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel While the oldest known manuscript containing the melody dates to the 15th century and the text is a paraphrase of the much older O Antiphons, the marriage of the two dates only to 1851. However, the 15th century manuscript, in which the melody is only one of two voices in a parallel organum, was probably unknown to the melody's 19th century popularizers and was only rediscovered in 1966. The practice of setting the text to both parts of the organum seems to be first suggested in 2015 by Jeff Ostrowski, choirmaster of St. Vitus Roman Catholic Church in San Fernando, CA.

The Snow Lay on the Ground An Anglo-Irish carol of unknown origin. The arrangement here borrows heavily from Julius Henry Waterbury's 1871 "Children's Praise".

I Saw Three Ships Several variants of this folk song have been recorded; the two-part arrangement here is based on two separate arrangements published by William Sandys in 1833 and 1862 based on a variant collected in Derbyshire. One possibility for performance is to have women sing the melody while men sing the second line down an octave. Alternatively, both parts can be sung by mixed groups of men and women. However it is sung, the melody should be heard first alone.

Deck the Hall This song originated with a 1862 publication of several popular Welsh songs. Alongside the lyrics to the traditional New Year's carol, Nos Galan, the publication included a very loose English paraphrase by Thomas Oliphant. These lyrics, as well as the tune of Nos Galan, were the basis of a 1877 publication, "Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly", by the Pennsylvania State Education Association. This version notably censored all mention of alcoholic beverages and, in doing so, introduced the notorious lyric "Don we now our gay apparel". Here, Oliphant's 1862 lyrics are restored, with one minor alteration. The arrangement featured here makes an attempt to reconnect with the song's roots as a dance tune, and should be played at a lively tempo.

Away in a Manger The two-part setting which has been reproduced here with minimal alteration is the version that is best known in the United Kingdom, despite the lyrics and setting both being of North American authorship.

Silent Night The duet arrangement here reproduces the vocal parts that appear in Gruber's 1818 manuscript, although the bass line has been altered. It should not be performed at a slow tempo.

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen While the earliest known text, "Sit you merry Gentlemen", dates to c. 1650, the earliest extant printing of the tune reproduced here is Edward F. Rimbault's 1846 "A Little Book of Christmas Carols". Rimbault and other authors suggest that the association of the tune with the carol originates in London. The text used here comes from the J. & C. Evans (1822-1828) broadside, which contains eight verses, the first two and final two of which are reproduced here. Two customary alterations of the text are also accepted: the line "And it's tidings" has been altered to "O tidings", and the "To save pour souls from Satan's Power, Which had long time gone astray" has been altered to "To save us all from Satan's pow'r, When we were gone astray". This carol should be sung at a lively tempo, and to encourage this, a four-part arrangement is not used. However, an optional descant has been composed. If the descant is used, it should not be used on the first and final verses.

Auld Lang Syne The original poem in the Scots language by Robert Burns is reproduced here along with a minimalist English translation.

Puer natus in Bethlehem Like most choral settings of this tune, the setting by Bach from the cantata BWV 65, "Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen" that is used here was originally set to a 1545 German text by Cyriakus Spangenberg. The Spangenberg text is a loose translation of the original Latin, which is thought to date to the 13th century. Here, the first four verses found in the Piae Cantiones manuscript of 1582 are used.

Los Peces en el Río This score is based on the 1958 recording by Manolo Escobar, where the song is presented as one of three "aires navideños jerezanos", as well as a later recording by Escobar. The song is often suggested to be of Extremaduran, and ultimately Arabic, origin; however, there does not seem to be any documentation of this.

Fum, Fum, Fum A traditional Catalan carol originating in either the 16th or 17th centuries. The best known English translations are not in the public domain.

How Great Our Joy This piece, often known as the “Echo Carol”, should be performed in such a way that the sections marked “echo” are distinct from the sections that precede them. This can be done to good effect with two different groups of singers or a group of singers and a group of instrumentalists, if such forces are available. Another possibility is to simply make a dynamic contrast between the two.

Eesus Ahatonyah A recent transcription by John Steckley of Brébeuf’s original Wendat lyrics has been used here with permission. The text should be pronounced as it would be in North American English, with the exception of “th” and “sth”, which should be executed as “t” and “st”, respectively, and followed by an aspiration. Brébeuf wrote six verses; the first, second, and final verses appear here.

Boh predvičny narodilsja A traditional Rusyn-language carol from Galicia dating as early as the late eighteenth century. The lyrics reproduced here are the first three verses and the final verse from the Užhorod Pisennik of 1913. The “c” in Rusyn is pronounced as a “ts” in English, the “č” as a “ch”, the “j” as a “y”, the “š” as a “sh”, the apostrophe as a consonant “y”, the “ž” like the “s” in ‘measure’, and the “r” is always trilled.

Part I

Music for Christmas, mostly in four parts.

Adeste Fideles

John Francis Wade(?), 1744

Ibid.

trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841

Desc.

S

A

T

Basso

8

15

trun

trun

x3

Ding Dong Merrily on High

George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1910

Thoinot Arbeau, 1589

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

Rhyt.

6

12

x3

The musical score is arranged in four staves: Melody (Mel.), Continuation (Cont.), Bass (Basso), and Rhythm (Rhyt.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains measures 1-5, the second system measures 6-11, and the third system measures 12-16. The melody is written in treble clef, the continuation in treble clef, the bass in bass clef, and the rhythm in a simplified notation with 'x' marks. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign, with a 'x3' multiplier indicating three repetitions.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks, 1868

traditional (SE England)

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1903

Score for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices. The music is in 4/2 time and B-flat major. The first system contains six measures of music.

Continuation of the vocal score, measures 6 through 11. The music continues in 4/2 time and B-flat major.

Continuation of the vocal score, measures 11 through 16. The music concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The final measure is marked with 'x2'.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, 1739 (alt.)

Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

adapt. William H. Cummings, 1855

The musical score is arranged for SATB voices and piano. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-6) introduces the vocal parts. The second system (measures 7-13) continues the vocal and piano parts. The third system (measures 14-20) concludes the piece with a repeat sign and a 'x3' marking. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and a more active treble line with chords and moving lines. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund Sears, 1849

Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

arr. Uzziah Christopher Burnap

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains the first eight measures of the piece. The second system begins with a measure number '8' at the start and ends with a measure number 'x3' at the final measure, indicating a three-measure repeat. The score is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are arranged in a four-part setting, with the Soprano and Alto parts in the upper staves and the Tenor and Bass parts in the lower staves. The piano accompaniment is written in the bottom two staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Angels We Have Heard on High

traditional (Languedoc)

Ibid.

trans. James Chadwick, 1862

arr. Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958)

The musical score is arranged for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of eight measures. The second system begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket labeled '1.' and a second ending bracket labeled '2.'. The first ending is followed by a repeat sign and the instruction 'x3'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more melodic treble line with some grace notes.

Once in Royal David's City

Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848, alt.

Henry John Gauntlett, 1849

arr. Arthur Henry Mann, 1919

The musical score is arranged for SATB voices and piano. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains six measures, and the second system contains seven measures, with a repeat sign and a 'x4' marking at the end. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand) are all written in B-flat major. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal lines.

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

Christina Rossetti, 1872

Gustav Holst, 1905

S
A
T
B

8 x3

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

anonymous, 1599, alt.

Ibid.

trans. Theodore Baker, 1894

arr. Michael Praetorius, 1609

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8. The second system, starting at measure 9, includes a repeat sign at the end with a 'x2' multiplier. The score is written for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are arranged in a four-part setting, with the Soprano and Alto parts often moving in parallel motion. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and a more active treble line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and bar lines.

Joy to the World

Isaac Watts, 1719

Lowell Mason, 1839

Desc. S A T Basso

The first system of the musical score for 'Joy to the World' features five vocal parts: Descending Soprano (Desc.), Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (Basso). The music is written in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The Desc. part begins with a whole rest, while the other parts enter with a half note G. The system concludes with a final whole note G in all parts.

The second system continues the vocal and piano accompaniment. It begins with a measure rest (8) for the Desc. part, which then enters with a half note G. The piano accompaniment, consisting of right and left hand staves, provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The system ends with a final whole note G.

14 x4

The third system, marked with a measure rest (14) and a repeat sign (x4), contains the final vocal entries and piano accompaniment. The Desc. part enters with a half note G, followed by the other vocal parts. The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line and chordal accompaniment. The system concludes with a final whole note G and a double bar line.

Part II

Music for Christmas, mostly in one or two parts.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

anonymous, 1710

anonymous, 15th c.

trans. John Mason Neale, 1861 (v. 1, 4-7); Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916 (v. 2-3)

Prin. Org. Prin. Org.

9 x3

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Traditional (England)

Ibid.
arr. ed.

Mel.

Desc.

Cont.

Basso

8

x4

The Snow Lay on the Ground

traditional (Ireland)

Ibid.

S
A
T
B
Basso

8

16 x4

Here We Come A-wassailing

traditional (England)

Ibid.
arr. ed.

Mel. Harm. Cont. Basso

The musical score is arranged in four staves: Melody (Mel.), Harmony (Harm.), Continuation (Cont.), and Bass (Basso). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 6/8. The melody is written in treble clef, while the harmony, continuation, and bass are in bass clef. The continuation staff features a 7-measure rest in the first measure. The bass staff begins with a 7-measure rest. The score consists of two systems. The first system contains 7 measures. The second system begins with a measure rest marked with a superscripted '8', followed by 11 measures, and concludes with a double bar line and a 'x3' repeat instruction.

What Child Is This?

William Chatterton Dix, 1865

traditional

Mel.

Desc.

Cont.

Basso

6

11

I Saw Three Ships

traditional (Derbyshire)

Ibid.

arr. William Sandys, 1833

Mel. Harm. Cont. Mel. Harm.

x9

The musical score is written for five parts: Mel. (treble), Harm. (treble), Cont. (treble), Mel. (bass), and Harm. (bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The melody is a simple tune, and the harmony and continuation provide accompaniment. The score is marked 'x9' at the end, indicating a repeat.

Wassail! Wassail! All Over the Town

traditional (Gloucestershire)

Ibid. (Roud #209)

arr. ed.

The musical score is arranged in two systems, each with four staves labeled Mel., Harm., Cont., and Basso. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/4. The first system consists of five measures. The second system begins with a measure marked with a '5' above the staff, followed by four measures, with the final measure marked 'x3' indicating a triple repeat. The notation includes various note values (half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and chords. The Cont. and Basso staves feature sustained chords and rhythmic patterns.

Masters in This Hall

William Morris, c. 1860

Marin Marais, 1706

arr. ed.

Mel. Harm. Cont. Basso

9

17

4th verse only

20

The Holly and the Ivy

traditional (Gloucestershire)

transcr. Cecil Sharp, 1911

arr. David McCarthy, 2021

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It is organized into two systems. The first system includes three staves: "Mel." (Melody) in the treble clef, "Harm." (Harmony) in the treble clef, and "Basso" (Bass) in the bass clef. The second system includes three staves: a vocal line in the treble clef, a piano accompaniment in the treble clef, and a bass line in the bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The piano accompaniment features a repeating eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Deck the Hall

Thomas Oliphant, 1862

traditional (Wales)

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

8

x3

Away in a Manger

anonymous, 1883

William J. Kirkpatrick, 1895, alt.

S
A
Cont.
Basso

The first system of the musical score for 'Away in a Manger' is written for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Contralto (Cont.), and Bass (Basso). The music is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The Soprano and Alto parts feature a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The Contralto part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The Bass part consists of a simple eighth-note accompaniment. The system contains eight measures.

9 x2

The second system of the musical score continues the piece, starting at measure 9. It maintains the same four-voice arrangement and musical style as the first system. The Soprano and Alto parts continue their melodic lines, while the Contralto and Bass parts provide accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line and a 'x2' marking, indicating a repeat. The system contains eight measures.

Silent Night

Joseph Mohr, 1816, alt.

Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818

trans. John Freeman Young, 1859

Sheet music for Silent Night, featuring Soprano (S), Alto (A), Contralto (Cont.), and Bass (Basso) parts, along with piano accompaniment. The music is in 6/8 time and B-flat major.

The score is divided into four systems, each containing four staves (Soprano, Alto, Contralto, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The first system is marked with a '4' above the first staff. The second system is marked with a '7' above the first staff. The third system is marked with a '10' above the first staff. The fourth system is marked with a '10' above the first staff and an 'x3' at the end, indicating a repeat.



God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

traditional (London)

Ibid.

arr. ed.

Mel.

Desc.

Cont.

Basso

10

x4

Auld Lang Syne

Robert Burns, 1788, alt.

traditional

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

8

x5

Part III

Music for Christmas, mostly not in English.

O Tannenbaum

Ernst Anschütz, 1824

traditional

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

7

x3

The image displays a musical score for the song 'O Tannenbaum'. It is arranged in three parts: Melody (Mel.), Continuo (Cont.), and Bass (Basso). The time signature is 3/4. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains seven measures. The second system starts with a repeat sign and a '7' above it, indicating a seventh measure, followed by six more measures, and ends with a double bar line and an 'x3' multiplier. The Melody part is written on a treble clef staff. The Continuo part is written on a treble clef staff with a C-clef on the first line. The Bass part is written on a bass clef staff. The Continuo and Bass parts provide harmonic support for the melody.

In dulci jubilo

Heinrich Seuse, c. 1328

traditional

arr. Robert Lucas de Pearsall, 1837

The musical score is arranged for SATB voices and piano accompaniment. It is in 3/2 time and B-flat major. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-9) includes vocal staves for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), and a piano accompaniment staff. The second system (measures 10-19) continues the vocal and piano parts. The third system (measures 20-29) concludes the piece, with a repeat sign at the end of measure 29 and a 'x3' marking indicating a triple repeat. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

Puer natus in Bethlehem

Anonymous, 1582

Ibid.

arr. Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 65

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a four-part piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system shows the vocal entries and the piano accompaniment. The second system shows the continuation of the piece, with a repeat sign at the end of the first system and a 'x4' marking at the end of the second system.

Quem Pastores

Anonymous, 14th c.

Ibid.

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1928

x3

S
A
T
B

Los Peces en el Río

traditional (Jerez)

Ibid.

Mel.

Harm.

Cont.

Basso

9

17

25

x3

Fum, Fum, Fum

traditional (Catalonia)

Ibid.

Mel.

I

II

III

Basso

10

x5

Guillô, pran ton tamborin

Bernard de la Monnoye, c. 1700

Ibid.
arr. ed.

Mel.

Harm.

Cont.

Basso

7

x4

Minuit, chrétiens

Placide Cappeau, 1843

Adolphe Adam, 1847

Mel.

Harm.

Cont.

Basso

5

10

15

21

x3

The musical score is written for piano and features a melody and a bass line. The melody is in the treble clef and the bass line is in the bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into five systems. The first system includes staves for Melody, Harmony, Continuation, and Bass. The subsequent systems show the progression of the melody and bass line. The score ends with a repeat sign and a 'x3' instruction.

How Great Our Joy

anonymous, 1623

trans. Theodore Baker, alt.

Ibid.

arr. ed.

echo

The image displays a musical score for a four-part vocal setting of "The Rose Tree." The score is written for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The melody is primarily carried by the Soprano and Alto parts, with the Tenor and Bass parts providing harmonic support. The score includes a main melody and an "echo" section starting at measure 12, which is repeated three times (x3). The notation uses standard musical symbols, including treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, and bar lines. The lyrics "The Rose Tree" are written below the vocal lines.

Eesus Ahatonyah

Jean de Brébeuf, 1643

transcr. John Steckley

traditional

arr. ed.

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a keyboard accompaniment. The key signature is G major (one sharp, F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system consists of 8 measures. The second system consists of 16 measures, ending with a repeat sign and a 'x3' instruction, indicating that the final 8 measures of the second system are to be repeated three times.

Boh predvičny narodilsja

traditional (Galicia)

Ibid.
arr. ed.

16

x4

The image displays a musical score for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The vocal parts are arranged in four staves, and the piano accompaniment is in two staves. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system contains 15 measures, and the second system contains 16 measures, starting with a measure number of 16. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign, indicating that the final measure should be repeated four times (x4).