

# **A Christmas Songbook**

edited by

Daniel Sadowsky

**E♭ Reed Score**

2025 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
Masters in This Hall	19
The Holly and the Ivy	20
Deck the Hall	21
Away in a Manger	22
Silent Night	23
God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen	24
Auld Lang Syne	25

### Part III

O Tannenbaum	27
In dulci jubilo	28
Puer natus in Bethlehem	29
Quem Pastores	30
Los Peces en el Río	31
Fum, Fum, Fum	32
Guillô, pran ton tamborin	33
Minuit, chrétiens	34
How Great Our Joy	35
Eesus Ahatonyah	36
Boh predvičný narodilsja	37

## 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 the Carpathian mountains dating as early as the late eighteenth century. The lyrics reproduced here are the first two 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

The image displays a musical score for the hymn "Adeste Fideles". It is arranged for a four-part vocal choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The score is written in G major (three sharps) and common time (C). The first system covers measures 1 through 10. The second system, starting at measure 11, includes a repeat sign at the end of the first vocal part and a "x3" marking, indicating a three-measure repeat. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand, often using octaves. The vocal parts enter in a staggered fashion, with the Soprano and Alto parts having more melodic lines and the Tenor and Bass parts providing harmonic support.

# Ding Dong Merrily on High

George Ratcliffe Woodward, 1910

Thoinot Arbeau, 1589

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

Rhyt.

6

12

x3

The musical score is written for four parts: Melody (Mel.), Continuo (Cont.), Bass (Basso), and Rhythm (Rhyt.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is a simple tune, and the accompaniment consists of chords and a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into three systems, with measures 6, 12, and 18 marked at the beginning of each system. The final measure of the third system is marked 'x3'.

# O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks, 1868

traditional (SE England)

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1903

The musical score is arranged for SATB voices and piano. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/2 time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) includes vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), and piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the vocal and piano parts. The third system (measures 11-15) concludes the piece with a repeat sign and a double bar line. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands. The vocal parts are written in a simple, homophonic style, with each voice part having its own staff. The score is marked with measure numbers 1, 6, and 11 at the beginning of their respective systems. The final measure of the third system is marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign.

# 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 accompaniment. It is written in the key of D major (two sharps) and common time (C). The score is divided into three systems, each containing four staves. The first system (measures 1-6) includes vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), along with piano accompaniment. 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 at the end. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more melodic treble line.

# It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund Sears, 1849

Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

arr. Uzziah Christopher Burnap

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 7. The second system begins with a measure rest for 8 measures, followed by measures 9 through 15. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The vocal parts have various melodic lines, including some with grace notes and ties. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign, with a 'x3' marking indicating a triple repeat of the final measure.

# Angels We Have Heard on High

traditional (Languedoc)

Ibid.

trans. James Chadwick, 1862

arr. Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958)

8

S  
A  
T  
B

9

1 2

x3

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano. The title is 'Angels We Have Heard on High'. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has 8 measures. The second system starts at measure 9 and includes a repeat sign with two endings, labeled '1' and '2'. The piano part is indicated by a large bracket on the left of the first system and a smaller one on the left of the second system. The piano part consists of four staves. The vocal parts are indicated by 'S', 'A', 'T', and 'B' on the left of each staff. The piano part includes a variety of musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, and rests. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

# 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 sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains six measures of music for the voices and piano. The second system begins with a measure number '6' and contains seven measures, ending with a repeat sign and a 'x4' instruction. The piano accompaniment is written in four staves, with a bass clef on the bottom staff and a common time signature. The SATB parts are written in four staves, with soprano (S), alto (A), tenor (T), and bass (B) parts. The piano part features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The SATB parts are primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The overall texture is a homophonic setting of the hymn.

# 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 written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8. The second system, starting with a measure number '9' at the beginning, contains measures 9 through 16. The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal parts are written in single staves. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign, with a 'x2' marking indicating a repeat.

# Joy to the World

Isaac Watts, 1719

Lowell Mason, 1839

S  
A  
T  
Basso

The first system of the musical score for 'Joy to the World' features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (Basso). The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). The Soprano part begins with a half note G5, followed by quarter notes A5, B5, and a half note C6. The Alto part starts with a half note F#5, followed by quarter notes G5, A5, and a half note B5. The Tenor part begins with a half note E5, followed by quarter notes D5, C5, and a half note B4. The Bass part starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and a half note A3. The system concludes with a double bar line.

11 x4

The second system of the musical score continues the vocal parts from the first system. It begins with a measure rest for the Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts, while the Bass part plays a half note D4. The system then continues with the vocal parts entering with quarter notes. The Soprano part has a half note G5, followed by quarter notes A5, B5, and a half note C6. The Alto part starts with a half note F#5, followed by quarter notes G5, A5, and a half note B5. The Tenor part begins with a half note E5, followed by quarter notes D5, C5, and a half note B4. The Bass part starts with a half note D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and a half note A3. The system concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

## Part II

Music for Christmas, mostly in one or two parts.

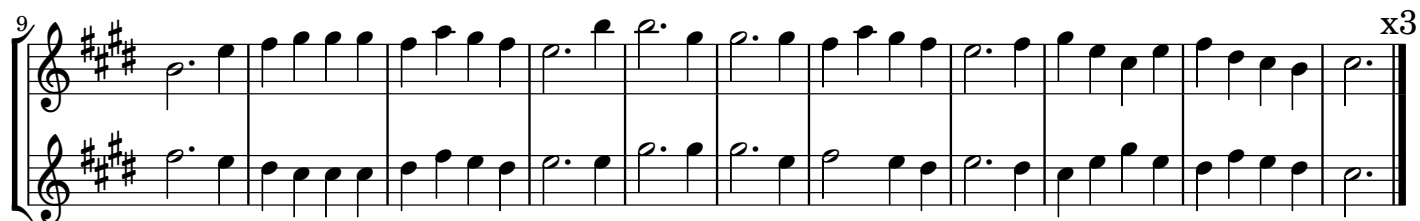
# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

anonymous, 1710

anonymous, 15th c.

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

Prin. Org.



# We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Traditional (England)

Ibid.  
arr. ed.

Mel.

Cont.

Basso



8

x4



# The Snow Lay on the Ground

traditional (Ireland)

Ibid.

S  
A  
T  
B  
Basso

16 x4

# Here We Come A-wassailing

traditional (England)

Ibid.

arr. ed.

The musical score is arranged in four staves: Mel. (Melody), Harm. (Harmony), Cont. (Continuo), and Basso (Bass). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. The first system contains 8 measures. The second system starts at measure 9 and ends with a repeat sign and a 'x3' multiplier. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, while the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The continuo part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The bass part provides a rhythmic foundation with eighth and sixteenth notes.

# 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. Basso

8

x9

# Masters in This Hall

William Morris, c. 1860

Marin Marais, 1706

arr. ed.

Play 4 times

Mel.

Harm.

Cont.

Basso

9

4th verse only

17

# The Holly and the Ivy

traditional (Gloucestershire)

transcr. Cecil Sharp, 1911

arr. David McCarthy, 2021

The musical score is arranged in four staves: Mel., Harm., Cont., and Basso. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written in the treble clef. The harmony is written in the treble clef. The continuation is written in the treble clef. The bass is written in the bass clef. The score consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system ends with a repeat sign. The second system begins with a repeat sign and ends with a final double bar line. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune. The harmony consists of chords. The continuation consists of chords. The bass consists of a simple, folk-like tune. The score is marked with a '3' at the end of the first system and an 'x3' at the end of the second system.

# Deck the Hall

Thomas Oliphant, 1862

traditional (Wales)

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

6

11

x3

# Away in a Manger

anonymous, 1883

William J. Kirkpatrick, 1895, alt.

S  
A  
Cont.  
Basso

9 x2

# Silent Night

Joseph Mohr, 1816, alt.

Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818

trans. John Freeman Young, 1859

The musical score for 'Silent Night' is presented in four systems. Each system contains four staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Contralto (Cont.), and Bass (Basso). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The score begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The first system shows the vocal parts and a piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The third system continues the vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The fourth system concludes the piece with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

# 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

The musical score for 'Auld Lang Syne' is presented in three staves: Melody (Mel.), Continuation (Cont.), and Bass (Basso). The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems, each with a repeat sign at the end. The first system is marked with a '8' and the second with an 'x5'.



## Part III

Music for Christmas, mostly not in English.

# O Tannenbaum

Ernst Anschütz, 1824

traditional

Mel.

Cont.

Basso

7

x3

# In dulci jubilo

Heinrich Seuse, c. 1328

traditional

arr. Robert Lucas de Pearsall, 1837

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each with four staves. The first system contains staves for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) voices, followed by a piano accompaniment staff. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The third system concludes the piece, marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The key signature is D major (two sharps), and the time signature is 3/4. The piano part is marked with an '8' at the beginning of each system, indicating the octave. The final measure of the third system is marked with 'x3', indicating a triple repeat.

# Puer natus in Bethlehem

Anonymous, 1582

Ibid.

arr. Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 65

The musical score is written for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the vocal parts and the beginning of the piano accompaniment. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, marked with a '9' at the start and a 'x4' at the end, indicating a four-measure repeat. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

# Quem Pastores

Anonymous, 14th c.

Ibid.

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1928

S  
A  
T  
B

9 x3

# Los Peces en el Río

traditional (Jerez)

Ibid.

Mel.

Harm.

Cont.

Basso

8

9

17

25

x3

# Fum, Fum, Fum

traditional (Catalonia)

Ibid.

Mel.

I

II

III

Basso

9

x3

# 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.

Cont.

Basso

5

10

15

21

x3

# How Great Our Joy

anonymous, 1623

trans. Theodore Baker, alt.

Ibid.

arr. ed.

echo

The musical score is written for SATB voices and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 11. The second system, starting at measure 12, includes vocal 'echo' parts and a piano 'x3' (triple) section. The piano part consists of four staves (treble and bass clef for both hands). The vocal parts are labeled S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), and B (Bass). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

# Eesus Ahatonyah

Jean de Brébeuf, 1643

traditional

transcr. John Steckley

arr. ed.

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a keyboard accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8, and the second system contains measures 9 through 16. The vocal parts are written on treble clefs, and the keyboard part is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign, with a 'x3' marking indicating a triple repeat.

# Boh predvičny narodilsja

traditional (Transcarpathia)

Ibid.

trans. Joseph Roll (alt.)

arr. ed.

Sheet music for the song "Boh predvičny narodilsja" in 2/4 time, key of D major (three sharps). The score is arranged for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The first system contains 15 measures. The second system starts at measure 16 and ends with a repeat sign and a multiplier 'x3', indicating the final three measures are repeated three times. The bass line in the first system has an '8' below it, and the bass line in the second system has an '8' below it.