

Veni, Domine (Come, O Lord), Op. 39, No. 1
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809 - 1847)
Four-part Motet (1830)

Mendelssohn grew up surrounded by culture. His family was wealthy and generous with it. They travelled widely, and had a large house where they entertained many prominent visitors, among them Humboldt and Hegel. The Mendelssohns, members of the assimilated German-Jewish aristocracy, converted from Judaism to Christianity in 1816.

The Mendelssohns saw to it that their four children had every possibility to learn. Felix, the second child, studied piano with Ludwig Berger and theory and composition with Karl Friedrich Zelter. At the age of nine, he gave his first public recital, at the age of ten, he became a member of the Berliner Singakademie. He was eleven when his own first compositions were publicly performed. A year later, he met Goethe, Carl Maria von Weber and Cherubini. Thereafter, he turned out sonatas, concertos, string symphonies, piano quartets and Singspiele which revealed his increasing mastery of counterpoint and form.

In 1829, at the ripe old age of 20, he directed a pioneering performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion at the Berlin Singakademie (with a reported chorus of 600 singers): this one performance (an 'event') put Bach firmly on the repertoire list for choirs. Mendelssohn was also famous as a festival organiser, he was associated especially with the Lower Rhine and Birmingham music festivals. Mendelssohn's most significant achievements as a conductor and organiser were in Leipzig (1835-47), where he conducted the Gewandhaus Orchestra to great acclaim. In 1843, he founded the Leipzig Conservatory and managed to recruit Robert Schumann and Moritz Hauptmann as teachers. His death at the age of 38, after a series of strokes, was mourned internationally.

Mendelssohn's music shows influences of Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven. He clearly liked to be inspired by his surroundings; his music often has literary, artistic, historical, geographical or emotional connotations; the underlying ideas are easily accessible.

Veni Domine is a motet for Advent, scored for high voices and organ. It is one of three moving pieces written for the nuns of Trinità de Monti in Rome; the others are Laudate pueri (opus 39/2) and Surrexit pastor bonus (opus 39/3). Just before completing the pieces in December of 1830, Mendelssohn wrote to his family in Berlin, "When the sun goes down, the entire landscape and all colours change; when it is time for the Ave Maria, I go to the church of Trinità de' Monti, where the French nuns sing, and it is truly beautiful. By God, I am becoming very tolerant, and am listening to bad music with devotion, but what can one do? The composition is laughable, the organ playing completely mad, but it is dusk, and the entire colourful church is filled with people on their knees, lit by the sinking sun whenever the door opens. The two singing nuns have the sweetest voices on this earth, movingly frail, and when one of them in particular sings the responses which I am used to hearing from gruff priests, I start to feel quite bizarre. And since you know you may not see the singers, I have made a strange decision: I shall write something for their voices, which I have memorised well, and I shall send it to them – there are various ways of doing that. It will be pretty indeed when I shall listen to my piece sung by people I have never seen, and when they have to sing it to the Barbarian German whom they in turn do not know. I am really looking forward to this. The text is in Latin, it is a prayer to Mary. Don't you love the idea?"

Veni Domine et noli tardare. Relaxa facinora plebi tuae et revoca dispersos in terram tuam. Excita Domine potentiam tuam et veni ut salvos nos facias. Veni Domine et noli tardare.	Come, Lord, and do not hesitate, Forgive your people their transgressions and gather the dispersed in your land. Exert your power and come to save us. Come, Lord, and do not hesitate.
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Gaudete (Rejoice!) from: Piae Cantiones (Pious songs, Finland 1582)--Arr. Gerald Wirth

The “Piae Cantiones Ecclesiasticae et Scholasticae Veterum Episcoporum” (Pious ecclesiastical and scholastic songs of the old bishops) are a collection of 74 Latin songs edited by Finnish scholars Teodoricus Petri and Jaakko Suomalainen (aka Jacob Finno) and printed in Greifswald, Germany in 1582. Most of the songs date to the 14th and 15th centuries; some are of German or Bohemian origin, others are quite likely Finnish.

As is customary for the time, *Piae Cantiones* did not include music for the verses; the tunes were well-known. The verses of *Gaudete* are based on the Bohemian carol “Ezecheelis Porta” (The Gate of Ezekiel); in the Vienna Boys’ Choir arrangement, they are sung by soloists. The refrain “Gaudete”, sung by the full choir, was probably added by Petri and Suomalainen and was sung to the tune of Luther’s “Danket dem Herrn” (Give thanks to the Lord).

The term “Gate of Ezekiel” refers to the prophet’s vision of the Temple layout (Ezekiel 44:1 – 4), where God tells him that the Eastern Gate must be kept shut, for that is the Gate reserved for God. The verse tells us that the Gate has been passed (by Christ); as it is the Eastern Gate, it is where the light comes from and salvation, Christ again.

Gaudete, gaudete! Christus est natus ex Maria virgine, gaudete!	Rejoice, Rejoice! Christ is born Of the virgin Mary, Rejoice!
Tempus adest gratiae, hoc quod optabamus; carmina laetitiae, devote reddamus.	The time of grace is here for which we have longed; Songs of joy Let us offer with devotion.
Deus homo factus est, natura mirante mundus renovatus est a Christo regnante.	God is made man as nature marvels; The world has been renewed by Christ’s reigning.
Ezechiellis porta clausa pertransitur; unde lux est orta salus invenitur.	Ezekiel’s gate, which was shut, has been passed; From where the light rises Salvation is found.
Ergo nostra contio psallat iam in lustris; benedicat Domino: salus Regi nostro.	Therefore our assembly shall now sing at the purification; and it shall praise the Lord: Hail to our King!

Es ist ein Ros'entsprungen

(Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming / A great and mighty wonder)

Melody and text: 14th or 15th century

Speyer Hymnal

Arr. Michael Praetorius (1571 – 1621); Transcription: Gerald Wirth

According to the Oxford Book of Carols, this carol dates to the 14th century. There are a number of textual variants, one of them by the famous German poet Hans Sachs (1524). The oldest publication of both text and melody is in a collection called *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng* (Cologne 1599).

The rose of verse one is in fact a misinterpretation of the old German word for shoot or sprig ("Reis"); later on, it became a play on the two words. The shoot is of course Jesus, the youngest offspring of an old family: the song follows Joseph's (and Jesus's) roots to Jesse (=Isai), the father of King David (cf. Matthew 1:16). This is the textual legitimization of Jesus as king, and Jesus as God.

The second verse plays on the word rose, echoing Isaiah 11:1 ("And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his roots"). The "little rose" is identified as Mary, who bore Jesus, the "blossom". In the UK and the US, the carol is known as "Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming"; it is connected to a medieval miracle legend, which tells of a monk lost in deep snow. It is nearly midnight, and he cannot find his way home, when all of a sudden, he comes across a blooming rose – and he knows everything will be all right.

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen Aus einer Wurzel zart. Wie uns die Alten sungen, Aus Jesse kam die Art Und hat ein Blümlein bracht, Mitten im kalten Winter, Wohl zu der halben Nacht.	A shoot came up From a tender root. As the ancients told us, This kind stemmed from Jesse. And it brought fourth a flower In the middle of the cold winter, At midnight.
Das Röslein das ich meine, Davon Jesaia sagt: Maria ist's, die Reine, Die uns das Blümlein bracht. Aus Gottes ew'gen Rat Hat sie ein Kind geboren Wohl zu der halben Nacht.	The little shoot that I refer to Of which Isaiah says: it is Mary, the pure, Who brings us the flower. According to God's eternal counsel, She bore a child, At midnight.
Das Blümelein so kleine, Das duftet uns so süß, Mit seinem hellen Scheine Vertreibt's die Finsternis. Wahr' Mensch und wahrer Gott, Hilf uns aus allem Leide, Rettet von Sünd' und Tod.	The little flower, so small, Smells so sweetly, And with its bright sheen It dispels the darkness. True human and true God, Save us from all pain, Saves from sin and death.

Mariä Wiegenlied (Mary's Lullaby)
Max Reger (1873 - 1916)
from: Schlichte Weisen (Simple Tunes), opus 76/52
Text: Martin Boelitz (1874 - 1918)

Max Reger, who had his first music lessons as a child, was a student of Hugo Riemann's; Riemann was at the time an eminent composer and musicologist – Riemann's Musiklexikon remains a household name to this day.

In 1898, during his time in the military, Reger suffered a nervous breakdown and returned to live with his parents. In 1901, Reger, who was a devout catholic, married a protestant divorcée. As a result, Reger found himself excommunicated. Between 1901 and 1907, Reger was busy as a composer and pianist. In 1907, he was offered a professorship at the Leipzig conservatory. In 1911, he accepted the post of court composer in Meiningen; he stayed until the outbreak of WWI. He died from a heart attack in 1916.

Max Reger is particularly known for his complex organ works; in fact, he was often criticised for being overly difficult. Reger wrote his "Schlichte Weisen" (simple songs) partly to prove them wrong. *Mary's Lullaby* is dedicated to Princess Marie Elisabeth of Saxe Meiningen; it is set in F major, the swaying rhythm imitates the gently rocking cradle. The tune is loosely based on the old carol "Resonet in laudibus", the text uses Medieval imagery. The lullaby went on to become Reger's most successful work. It features in the Vienna Boys Choir movie "Songs for Mary".

Maria sitzt im Rosenhag Und wiegt ihr Jesuskind. Durch die Blätter leise Weht der warme Sommerwind.	Mary sits in the rose garden and rocks her baby Jesus. In the leaves softly blows the warm summer wind.
Zu ihren Füßen singt ein buntes Vögelein: Schlaf, Kindlein süsse, schlaf nun ein!	At her feet, a multicolored bird sings: Sleep, sweet child, sleep now.
Hold ist dein Lächeln, Holder deines Schlummers Lust,	Lovely is your smile, even lovelier your need to sleep.
Leg dein müdes Köpfchen fest an deiner Mutter Brust! Schlaf, Kindlein süsse, schlaf nun ein!	Rest your tired little head firmly against your mother's chest. Sleep, sweet child, sleep now.

Gloria in altissimis Deo (Glory Be to God on High)
Tollite hostias (Bring Gifts)
from: Oratorio de Noël, opus 12 (1858)
Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921)
Arr. Oliver Stech

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris; his father died shortly afterwards. He received his earliest musical education from his mother and great-aunt. Young Camille turned out to have perfect pitch; he started composing at the age of four. He gave his first public recital at the famous Salle Pleyel in Paris when he was ten; among other pieces, he played a piano concerto

by Mozart. As an encore, the ten-year-old offered to play Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory. The curious concert made headlines in Europe and in Boston.

Saint-Saëns then entered the Paris Conservatory; he studied organ and composition with Jacques Halévy. He wrote his first symphony at sixteen, his second at 19. His growing reputation won him a number of friendships with famous musicians. Saint-Saëns worked as an organist at various Paris churches. In 1857, he became organist of the Madeleine; he kept that prestigious post until 1877. He was known for his stunning improvisations, and his friend Liszt claimed that Saint-Saëns was the greatest organist in the world.

In the 1860s, Saint-Saëns taught piano at the École Niedermeyer, where he raised eyebrows by including contemporary music in the school's otherwise conservative curriculum. His most successful student was Gabriel Fauré.

In 1870, the composer was conscripted to fight in the Franco-Prussian war. Five years later, he married; his two sons tragically died in early childhood. When his mother died, Saint-Saëns began to travel the world; he published an extremely popular travelogue under the name Sannois. He spent his last years in Algiers, where he died in 1921. His body was brought back to Paris for a state funeral at his old church, the Madeleine. His most famous work of music is the Carnival of Animals written in 1886.

Saint-Saëns had a broad range of interests; he was an incredibly well-read intellectual who could hold his own in scientific discussions. He wrote about philosophy, astronomy, occult sciences and acoustics, and he even wrote poetry. He was a declared atheist (for him, sciences and art replaced religion), and his outlook on life was pessimistic – he referred to himself as an agnostic, a believer in science and the arts.

Nonetheless, his sacred compositions show a deep spirituality. The Oratorio de Noël, written in 1858, shows clear connections to Bach's Christmas Oratorio. The texts are carefully chosen from the Bible; the music is restrained, refined, lyrical.

Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis!	Glory be to God on High and peace on Earth to mankind, whom he loves.
Tollite hostias, et adorare Dominum in atrio sancto eius. Laetentur coeli, et exsultet terra a facie Domini, quoniam venit. Alleluia.	Bring gifts and pray to God in his sacred courtyard. The Heavens shall be glad, and the Earth shall rejoice before the Lord, for he is coming. Hallelujah.

Ave Maria (Hail Mary)
John V. Mochnick (*1942)

After studying music at Heidelberg College Conservatory, Indiana University and the University of Cincinnati, John Mochnick taught for thirty-five years at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL. He has distinguished himself as a choral and orchestral conductor. Upon retiring, Mochnick, who plays both piano and trumpet, formed his own jazz ensemble in North Carolina.

Mochnick has published almost forty works for choir, and he has 29 original jazz compositions to his credit. His “Ave Maria” is a favourite with choirs. The Hail Mary is a Catholic prayer asking Mary to intercede on one’s behalf; it uses two quotes from the gospel of Luke.

<p>Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.</p>	<p>Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.</p>
<p>Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.</p>	<p>Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death Amen.</p>

The Lamb (2004)

Gareth Walters (1928 – 2012)

Text: William Blake (1757 - 1827)

Gareth Walters was a Welsh composer and professor of music. He started composing as a schoolboy; he received praise and encouragement from Benjamin Britten, who was a frequent guest in the Walters' home. Walters went on to study music in London, Paris, and Siena, and later taught himself at the Royal Academy. Many of his works have been recorded. Walters was a versatile musician, occasionally writing for film and TV; his music was used in Monty Python's Flying Circus.

The Lamb is a song by William Blake, first published in 1776 with Blake's artwork in his collection “Songs of Innocence”; the deceptively simple text is phrased like a riddle for children, it is soothing and disturbing at the same time. In the first verse, the lamb may be just that, a lamb; but it could also be a child, or any human being. In the second verse, it is clear that it is Jesus, who is of course called the Lamb of God. By becoming a child, Jesus becomes a stand-in for all of mankind. “God bless thee”, sung twice at the end, offers a solution to the song's question, “Do you know who made thee?” - of course, God.

Blake's original melody is now lost. Composers like Ralph Vaughn Williams and John Taverner have set the poem to music.

<p>Little lamb, who made thee? Does thou know who made thee, Gave thee life, and bid thee feed By the stream and o’er the mead; Gave thee clothing of delight, Softest clothing, woolly, bright; Gave thee such a tender voice, Making all the vales rejoice? Little lamb, who made thee? Does thou know who made thee?</p>	<p>Little lamb, I’ll tell thee; Little lamb, I’ll tell thee: He is callèd by thy name, For He calls Himself a Lamb. He is meek, and He is mild, He became a little child. I a child, and thou a lamb, We are callèd by His name. Little lamb, God bless thee! Little lamb, God bless thee!</p>
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**Three pieces from: A Ceremony of Carols, opus 28 (1943)
Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)**

- **There Is No Rose**

- **This Little Babe -- Text: Robert Southwell (ca. 1561 – 1595)**

- **Deo Gracias**

After three successful years in America, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears boarded a Swedish cargo vessel, the *Axel Jonsson*, on the 16th March 1942 for their return to Britain. The journey took nearly a month, and the mood must have been subdued. A war was on, there were U-boats about, and the *Axel Jonsson* was not meant for passengers. Britten had intended to continue work on *Hymn to St. Cecilia* and a piece for Benny Goodman, but customs officials confiscated the manuscripts fearing that they might be in code for clarinet-playing Nazi spies.

During the voyage the ship berthed at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Britten came across a book of medieval poems, most of them of religious content with a distinctly pagan flavour. Some of these he set during the voyage as the *Ceremony of Carols*, a work for boys' choir and harp. "One had to alleviate the boredom," Britten wrote.

The "Ceremony" is more than a set of jolly or sweet Christmas carols: Britten's carefully crafted music captures the poems' medieval spirit and evokes the fight of light against dark, good against evil. For this year's holiday program, the Vienna Boys Choir has selected three pieces from Britten's cycle.

There Is No Rose is set in F major. The rose is Mary, who, pregnant, holds an entire universe in her womb. The text alternately employs English and Latin, something that came about during the Late Middle Ages, when Christmas was exclusively celebrated in church. The Latin passages were sung by the clergy, the English by the congregation.

This Little Babe was written by Robert Southwell (1561 – 1595), a Jesuit priest who spent much of his life in hiding. His poems had to be printed and circulated secretly. Their powerful imagery and language soon made them popular: a certain W. Shakespeare was among his readers. In the end, Southwell was captured; he was hanged in 1595 after 13 years in prison. Britten's setting of the poem is spectacular. One voice starts it off, tentatively, this little babe having just been born. But he is here to defeat "Satan's fold". The baby's weapons seem silly and weak; still, his tears and cries cause hell to quake. The voices chase one another until they reach the end: "If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy" - this is the best way to deal with your enemies - "then flit not from this heavenly boy". The harp is used as percussion, imitating battle noises.

In the end we thank God that Adam, who represents mankind, was benighted and lay i-bounden for so long (note that the poet refers to this state of stupor as winter), simply because he had indulged in an apple. But if he had not taken the apple, there would not have been Mary, or Christ. Sometimes a rash (and not necessarily good) action can have the most surprising outcome.

**There Is No Rose
(Anonymous)**

<p>There is no rose of such vertu As is the rose that bare Jesu. Alleluia. For in this rose containèd was Heaven and earth in litel space, Res miranda. [A miracle.] By that rose we may well see There be one God in persons three,</p>	<p>Pares forma. [Equal in nature.] The aungels sungen the shepherds to Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gaudeamus. [Let us rejoice.] Leave we all this werldly merth And follow we this joyful birth, Transeamus. [Let us pass over.]</p>
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**This little Babe
Text: Robert Southwell**

<p>This little Babe so few days old, Is come to rifle Satan's fold; All hell doth at his presence quake, Though he himself for cold do shake; For in this weak unarmed wise The gates of hell he will surprise. With tears he fights and wins the field, His naked breast stands for a shield. His battering shot are babish cries, His arrows looks of weeping eyes, His martial ensigns Cold and Need, And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.</p>	<p>His camp is pitched in a stall, His bulwark but a broken wall; The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes; Of shepherds he his muster makes; And thus, as sure his foe to wound, The angels' trumps alarum sound. My soul with Christ join thou in fight; Stick to the tents that he hath pight. Within his crib is surest ward; This little Babe will be thy guard. If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy, Then flit not from this heavenly Boy.</p>
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**Deo Gracias
(Anonymous)**

<p>Deo gracias! Adam lay i-bounden, bounden in a bond Four thousand winter thought he not to long. Deo gracias! And all was for an appil, an appil that he tok, As clerkès finden written in their book.</p>	<p>Deo gracias! Ne had the appil take ben, The appil take ben, Ne hadde never our lady a ben hevене quene. Blessed be the time That appil take was. Therefore we moun singen Deo gracias!</p>
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Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day
Arr. John Rutter (*1945)
English Carol

This carol goes back to Medieval times. The speaker is Jesus, who basically offers a preview of his entire biography before his birth. The line "To see the legend of my play" suggests that the carol may have been part of a mystery play, performed for the feast of Corpus Christi.

The dance here may be taken both literally and in a figurative sense, to dance is an expression of joy; to dance is to live. The "true love" is the soul of a believer, and this fits well with Medieval mysticism, where the soul is the bride and Jesus is the groom. The imagery in the song is closely related to that in "Lord of the Dance".

<p>Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance to see the legend of my play, to call my true love to my dance.</p> <p>Chorus Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love, my love, This have I done for my true love.</p>	<p>Then was I born of a virgin pure. Of her I took fleshly substance Thus was I knit to man's nature, To call my true love to my dance. (Chorus)</p> <p>In a manger laid and wrapped I was, so very poor, this was my chance, betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass to call my true love to my dance. (Chorus)</p>
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There Is No Rose
Robin John King (*1961)
Text: 14th century

Robin John King is a composer from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
 For the anonymous text, see above the notes on Benjamin Britten's piece.

Wexford Carol (Carul Loch Garman, "Good People All")
Arr. Gerald Wirth
Irish carol; 12th century?

The Wexford Carol, better known by its first line, "Good people all, the Christmas time", is one of the oldest European carols, with roots possibly going back to the 12th century. Words and tune were taken down from a traditional singer in County Wexford. The first verses appear in W.H. Shawcross's *Old Castleton Christmas Carols*, and the first verse was used by Vaughn Williams with another tune.

The song achieved popularity when William Grattan Flood (1859 - 1928), organist and director of music at St. Aidan's Cathedral in Enniscorthy, transcribed the carol from a local singer, and had it published in the Oxford Book of Carols. The Vienna Boys Choir sings it with a celtic introduction by Alan Doherty - who contributed to the soundtrack of "Lord of Rings" - in Curt Faudon's upcoming movie "Good Shepherds", and a solo version with celtic instruments is on the choir's Good Shepherds album.

Good people all, this Christmas time,
 Consider well and bear in mind
 What our good God for us has done
 In sending his beloved son
 With Mary holy we should pray,
 To God with love this Christmas Day
 In Bethlehem upon that morn,
 There was a blessed Messiah born.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
 Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep
 To whom God's angel did appear
 Which put the shepherds in great fear
 Arise and go, the angels said
 To Bethlehem, be not afraid
 For there you'll find, this happy morn
 A princely babe, sweet Jesus, born.

With thankful heart and joyful mind
 The shepherds went the babe to find
 And as God's angel had foretold
 They did our Saviour Christ behold
 Within a manger he was laid
 And by his side a virgin maid
 Attending on the Lord of Life
 Who came on earth to end all strife.

La virgen lava pañales (The virgin washes the swaddling)

Arr. Robert deCormier

Traditional Spanish carol

This traditional Spanish carol is a so-called villancico; a song in stanzas with a chorus, usually on a rustic theme. The form dates back to the 15th century. Villancicos became popular in the 16th and 17th centuries; religious villancicos like this one often explain Biblical themes in everyday imagery and settings. “La virgen lava pañales” shows Mary and Jesus as humans, pure and simple and at the same time extraordinary, whose mere touch makes nature happy, turns nature into paradise.

<p>La virgen lava pañales y los tiende en el romero; y los pajaritos cantan y el agua se va riendo.</p>	<p>The virgin washes the swaddling and places it on the rosemary and the birds are singing and the water flows by cheerfully.</p>
<p>Pastores, venid, pastores, llegad, adorar al niño que ha nacido ya.</p>	<p>Shepherds, come, shepherds, come, adore the child, who has been born.</p>
<p>El Niño Dios se ha perdido y todos le estan buscando;</p>	<p>The divine child was lost and everyone was looking for him.</p>

a la orillita del rio peces estaba pescando.	On the banks of the river he stands and catches fish.
Pastores, venid, . . .	Shepherds, come, . . .

Dormi, dormi bel Bambin (Sleep, sleep, beautiful Baby)

Arr. Gerald Wirth

Italian Christmas lullaby from Ticino

Christmas lullabies are popular everywhere; nothing conveys quite like a lullaby the idea of Jesus as a human. Dormi, dormi originated in Ticino and Lombardy.

Dormi, dormi bel Bambin, Re Divin, Re Divin Fa la nanna bel Bambino, Re Divin, Re Divin Fa la nanna bel Bambino. Fa la ninna, fa la nanna Fa la ninna nanna a Gesù. Gli angioletti su nel Cielo Veglieran su te Gesù. La, la la . . .	Sleep, sleep, beautiful baby, divine King, divine King, Go to sleep, beautiful child, divine King, divine King. Sleep, sleep, Sing a lullaby for Jesus. The little angels under the sky Will watch over you, Jesus.
Chiudi gli occhi mio tesor, dolce amor, dolce amor, Fa la nanna sul mio cuore, dolce amor, dolce amor. Fa la nanna sul mio cuore. Fa la ninna, fa la nanna Fa la ninna nanna a Gesù. Gli angioletti su nel Cielo Veglieran su te Gesù.	Close your eyes, my treasure, sweet love, sweet love, Sleep under my care, sweet love, sweet love, Sleep under my care. Sleep, sleep, Sing a lullaby for Jesus. The little angels under the sky Will watch over you, Jesus.

Carol of the Bells (Shchedryk) 1916

Mykola Leontovich (1877 - 1921)

English text: Peter Wilhousky (1902 - 1978) 1936

The original Ukrainian *Shchedryk* is not a Christmas carol, but rather a shchedrivka (New Year's carol) traditionally sung on Malanka or Shchedry Vechir ("bountiful evening"), the Ukrainian New Year's Eve (January 13). Like most songs of this genre, *Shchedryk* looks into the year ahead; it longs for swallows and an early spring, invokes a luscious wife for the farmer, wealth in general and a rich harvest. It was first performed in Kiev in 1916.

Shchedryk travelled across Europe and North America with the Ukrainian Republican Capella Choir in the 1920s, and attracted the critics' attention. Today it is hugely popular in the United States and Canada, often sung with Wilhousky's English text and under its alias *Carol of the Bells*.

<p>Hark how the bells, sweet silver bells, all seem to say, throw cares away Christmas is here, bringing good cheer, to young and old, meek and the bold.</p> <p>Ding dong ding dong that is their song with joyful ring all caroling. One seems to hear words of good cheer from everywhere filling the air.</p>	<p>Oh how they pound, raising the sound, o'er hill and dale, telling their tale. Gaily they ring while people sing songs of good cheer, Christmas is here.</p> <p>Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas, Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas. On on they send, on without end, their joyful tone to every home. Ding dong ding... dong!</p>
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Es wird scho glei dumpa (It will be dark soon)--Anton Reidinger (1839 – 1912)
arr. Gerald Wirth
Sacred lullaby from Upper Austria

This particular carol takes the form of a lullaby for Jesus; it would have been sung in the Alps by carollers dressed as shepherds – it is thus a so-called shepherd carol. Shepherd carols focus on the shepherds’ role in the Christmas story; their belief, their dignity, their reliability. An important aspect in the performance of these carols was the possibility for both listeners and singers to identify with someone who is part of the story: the Biblical shepherds are simple people, yet their gifts are as important as the gifts from the three kings. In short, the story – the gospel – concerns everyone.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, singers in Austrian rural communities would act out the text while singing, much like a mystery play. It was customary to come up with at least one new carol each Christmas. These carols are typically written and sung in the local dialect. Anton Reidinger, a priest in Upper Austria, wrote this intimate piece for his congregation – it is hugely popular in Austria and Germany.

<p>Es wird scho glei dumpa, Es wird scho glei Nacht. Drum kimm i zu dir her, Mein Heiland, auf d'Wacht. Will singen a Liadl Dem Liebling, dem kloan, Du mågst ja net schlåfn, I hör' di nur woan.</p> <p>Hei, hei, hei, hei! Schlaf süß, herzliabs Kind!</p> <p>Vergiss hiaz, o Kinderl, dein Kummer, dei Load, dass d'dåda muasst leidn im Ståll</p>	<p>It will be dark soon, it will soon be night. Therefore I come to you, My saviour, to guard (you). I want to sing a carol for (my) darling, the little one. You cannot sleep: I hear you fret.</p> <p>Hei, hei, hei, hei. Sleep softly, (my) darling child.</p> <p>Now forget, o child, your sorrow, your pain, Which makes you suffer in the stable,</p>
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<p>auf da Hoad. Es ziern jå die Engerl dei Liegerstatt aus. Möcht schöna nit sein drin an König sei Haus.</p> <p>Hei, hei . . .</p> <p>Jå Kinderl, du bist hålt im Kripperl so schen, mi ziemt, i kånn nimmer då weg von dir gehn. I wünsch dir von Herzen die süasseste Ruah, die Engerl vom Himmel, die deckn di zua.</p> <p>Hei, hei . . .</p>	<p>on the heather. Angels adorn your bedstead. It could not be prettier in a king's house.</p> <p>Hei, hei, hei, hei. Sleep softly, (my) darling child.</p> <p>Yes, (my) child, you are so beautiful in your crib, That I feel as if I could not part from you. I wish you with all my heart the sweetest of rests, (for) the angels from heaven tuck you in.</p> <p>Hei, hei . . .</p>
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Fröhliche Weihnacht überall (Merry Christmas Everywhere)

Karl Neuner (1778 – 1830); Arr. Gerald Wirth

Text: Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739 – 1791)

The text was written in 1786 by Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739 – 1791), a poet and journalist, and the author of Franz Schubert's *Die Forelle* (The trout). Schubart, a champion of free speech, was forever in trouble with the authorities; but his poems were much loved by his contemporaries - he had veritable fans in the modern sense.

Munich-born composer Karl Neuner wrote the melody in 1814; he may have been inspired by a French or an English tune.

<p>Chorus Fröhliche Weihnacht! Überall Tönet durch die Lüfte froher Schall. Weihnachtston, Weihnachtsbaum, Weihnachtsduft in jedem Raum! Fröhliche Weihnacht! Überall Tönet durch die Lüfte froher Schall.</p> <p>Darum alle stimmt ein, In den Jubelton; Denn es kommt das Licht der Welt Von des Vaters Thron. (Chorus)</p> <p>Licht auf dunklem Wege, Unser Licht bist du; Denn du führst, die dir vertraun, Ein zur sel'gen Ruh. (Chorus)</p> <p>Was wir andern je getan Sei getan für dich. Das bekennen jeder muss Christkind kam für mich.</p>	<p>Chorus Merry Christmas! All around The air rings with cheerful sound, Christmas sound, Christmas tree, Christmas scent in every room. Merry Christmas! All around The air rings with cheerful sound.</p> <p>Therefore everyone join In the singing, For the light of the world arrives Before his Father's throne. (Chorus)</p> <p>Light on a dark path, You are our light, For you lead those who trust in you Towards eternal bliss. (Chorus)</p> <p>Anything we ever did for others Was done for you, For everyone must confess: Christ arrived for me.</p>
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Winterszeit (Wintertime) 2016
Eve Schwarz (*1932)
Arr. Oliver Stech

Eve Schwarz is largely self-taught: She started to play the piano and sing as a young child in Vienna; she composed her first pieces at age six. Although clearly talented, Schwarz was forbidden from studying music: Her parents forced her to take over the family company, a dressmaking business. While Schwarz ran a successful business, she continued to paint and compose in her spare time. At a business convention in the early 1980s, she had something of an epiphany. She sold her business, and moved into a 200-year-old hunting lodge in Lower Austria.

She taught herself to play the accordeon and became a full-time artist, dividing her time between painting and music. She founded a local choir, the idea was to provide music for the community. The choir sang mostly songs by Schwarz herself; to date, she has written more than 200 songs. Schwarz is also the author of a book of poems, a book of fairy tales, and her own autobiography. At 85, she continues to be active, looking after her house, which she shares with a dog and six canaries, thinking, and writing words and music.

“Winterszeit” is a recent work, inspired by her rural surroundings.

<p>Wie schön ist doch die Winterszeit wie stille kommt die Nacht. Es zieht der Mond im stillen Kreis zu seiner ewigen Wacht. Es rauscht im Hain, wenn's stürmt und schneit; zur Neige geht der Tag. Am Heimweg ist die Wintersonn', weil's nicht mehr scheinen mag.</p> <p>So sag' ich nun, behüt' euch Gott das Tagwerk ist vollbracht. Am Weg nach Hause, den wir geh'n, begleitet uns die Nacht. Der Nebel fällt, es knirscht der Schnee auf der verschneiten Flur. Die Hoffnung auf den nächsten Tag ist ein paar Stunden nur.</p>	<p>How beautiful is wintertime, how quietly falls the night. The moon moves in a quiet circle to its eternal watch. The forest rustles through storm and snowfall, the day draws to a close. The winter sun turns homeward, for it is tired of shining.</p> <p>So I say to you, may God protect you, the day's work is done. On the way we take home, the night surrounds us. Fog falls, and the snow crunches on the snow-covered field. The hope for the next day lasts but a few hours.</p>
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Leise rieselt der Schnee (Softly falls the snow)
Eduard Ebel (1839 - 1905)
Arr. Gerald Wirth

Ebel, a theologian, wrote the song around 1900; he uses wintry images to conjure up a Christmassy landscape, and emotions to go with that. The spirit of Christmas, then, helps to keep your cares at bay – and everyone looks forward to the coming of the Christ child, who brings peace.

Song and text are somewhat corny, but cling to memory, and as with many such songs, there are countless parodies, some mocking everyday matters such as schoolwork, some specific political events in Germany.

In German-speaking countries, both Saint Nicholas and the Christ child might bring the gifts at Christmas; the Christ child as bringer of gifts was allegedly thought up by Martin Luther, to counter the catholic veneration of Saint Nick while maintaining the rather useful custom of giving gifts to each other. Nowadays, the Christ child is pretty popular in most German-speaking countries, regardless of denomination.

<p>Leise rieselt der Schnee Still und starr liegt der See, Weihnachtlich glänzet der Wald, freue dich, Christkind kommt bald.</p>	<p>Softly falls the snow, Still and motionless lies the lake, The forest sparkles with Christmas, Be happy, the Christ child is coming.</p>
<p>In den Herzen ist's warm Still schweigt Kummer und Harm Sorge des Herzens verhallt: freue dich, Christkind kommt bald.</p>	<p>In the hearts it is warm Sorrow and pain are silent, And your heart's pain dies off: Be happy, the Christ child is coming.</p>

Jingle Bell Rock (1957)

Joseph Carleton Beal (1900 – 1967), James Ross Boothe (1917 – 1976)

Arr. Alan Billingsley

Jingle Bell Rock is a hugely popular, fun carol; title and text refer to other well-known carols like Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and of course Jingle Bells, the music makes reference to Rock Around the Clock.

It was first performed and released by Bobby Helms in 1957, and later covered by Chet Atkins, Billy Idol, kd lang, Neil Diamond, and – naturally – the Chipmunks. Jingle Bell Rock features in many films, such as A Muppet Family Christmas, Lethal Weapon, Home Alone 2.

<p>Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell rock Jingle bells swing and jingle bells ring Snowing and blowing up bushels of fun Now the jingle hop has begun.</p>	<p>What a bright time, its the right time To rock the night away Jingle bell time is a swell time To go gliding in a one-horse sleigh.</p>
<p>Jingle bells chime in jingle bell time Dancing and prancing in Jingle bell Square In the frosty air.</p>	<p>Giddy-up jingle horse, pick up your feet Jingle around the clock Mix and a-mingle in the jingling feet That's the jingle bell rock.</p>

Jingle Bells

James Lord Pierpont (1822 – 1893)

Arr. Alexander L'Estrange

Jingle Bells was first published in 1857 under the name „One Horse Open Sleigh“. It is not a Christmas carol, but a song about sleigh races in Massachussetts where James Pierpont was born.

Pierpont led a wild and unsettled life. At 14, he ran away to sea (aboard a ship called „Shark“); later, he joined the gold rush in California where he worked as a photographer. He lost all his possessions in a fire. After that, he returned to Massachusetts. In 1853, he followed his brother John to Savannah, Georgia, where he took up a post as organist. By 1860, John was back in the North, but James stayed, fighting for the confederacy and writing battle songs such as We Conquer or Die.

Jingle Bells is often parodied, and it was the first song broadcast from space. In December 1965, Gemini 6 astronauts Tom Stafford and Wally Schirra reported seeing a command module with eight smaller modules in front, with a pilot in a red suit, and then played Jingle Bells to their mission control.

Dashing through the snow
In a one horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go
Laughing all the way
Bells on bob tails ring
Making spirits bright
What fun it is to laugh and sing
A sleighing song tonight

Chorus

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh

A day or two ago
I thought I'd take a ride
And soon Miss Fanny Bright
Was seated by my side
The horse was lean and lank
Misfortune seemed his lot
We got into a drifted bank
And then we got upsot (Chorus)

Now the ground is white,
Go it while you're young,
Take the girls tonight
And sing this sleighing song;
Just get a bob tailed bay
Two forty as his speed
Hitch him to an open sleigh
And crack, you'll take the lead. (Chorus)