



Holiday Music



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Do you love singing holiday songs at this time of year? Hundreds of years ago, traveling musicians spread holiday music from village to village. Other holiday songs, written in modern times, have become hits through movies, radio and TV.



Music with a message

Until about 800 years ago, people did not sing many religious songs. Most Christian music was serious and sung in Latin, an ancient language that many people did not understand.

Then some Catholic Church leaders such as St. Francis of Assisi began urging people to sing joyful religious songs in their own languages.

The Catholic Church began putting on religious plays with music. Much of that music, such as "The First Noel," is still popular today.

Until about the 1500s, most winter holiday music written in Europe was about the birth of Christ. Some holiday songs were also written about feasting and celebrating.



The 1800s

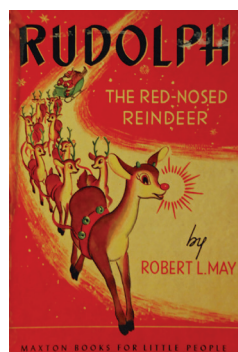
In the mid-1800s, an Anglican priest translated more than 400 hymns into English and changed the music to make them easier

to sing. Many of these hymns are sung as Christmas carols today. They include "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," "Good King Wenceslas" and "Good Christian Men, Rejoice."

Some of our favorites

• The words to the much-loved carol "Silent Night" were written by Joseph Mohr, an Austrian Catholic priest, in 1816. He wrote the words one winter night while he was out walking to attend to church duties. A schoolteacher and organist, Franz Gruber, wrote the music two years later for the Christmas Eve midnight services at Father Mohr's church.

• "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was written in 1939 by Bob May, an ad writer for a department store, Montgomery Ward. Experts believe he first made up the story of Rudolph for his 4-year-old daughter, Barbara.



Many of these newer Christmas songs do not have a religious meaning, including "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" and "Frosty the Snowman."

• Composer Jay Livingston and writer Ray Evans wrote "Silver Bells" in 1951 for a movie starring comedian Bob Hope.

Hanukkah songs

The eight-day Jewish celebration of Hanukkah usually comes in December. This year it begins the evening of Dec. 24 and continues through Jan. 1.

During this time, people sing many traditional songs. Children sing the "Dreidel Song" about a dreidel (DRAY-dle), a special toy top with four sides.



Another song both adults and children might sing is "Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah." It is more about the pleasure of gathering with family and friends during this holiday rather than about the religious services.

Modern composers have written Hanukkah music for children and young adults that connects the old traditions with modern experiences.

For example, "Light One Candle" was written by Peter Yarrow and performed by his singing group, Peter, Paul & Mary. It tells of the long Jewish fight to create a better world.



Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/2diBaJt
- bit.ly/2fVoA2H

At the library:

- "Michael Hague's Treasury of Christmas Carols"
- "Hanukkah Songs and Games Activity Book" by Don Cooper

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of holiday songs are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



CHRISTMAS, DREIDEL,	L F K S B S S O N G S F Q P L
FAVORITE, FROSTY,	A S S U O I G I L E R A E R E
HANUKKAH, HIT,	N I A O P J O Y F U L V R I R
HOLIDAY, JOYFUL,	G N U M T O A I C D C O E E U
LANGUAGE, LATIN,	U I W H T D P D M Q I R T S D
MUSIC, PLAYS,	A T O C I S Y U L I S I N T O
POPULAR, PRIEST,	G A K L N T I K L C U T I P L
RELIGIOUS, RUDOLPH,	E L O Y T S O R F A M E W D P
SONGS, WINTER.	A H A K K U N A H W R I M O H
	L D R E I D E L F C S Y A L P

Cook's Corner

Christmas Streusel Squares

You'll need:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup flour, sifted

- 2 tablespoons red colored sugar
- 2 tablespoons green colored sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup pecans, chopped



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Mix together sugar and butter until creamy. Add vanilla and egg, then gradually add flour. Spread mixture in greased 8-by-8-inch shallow baking dish.
2. Combine colored sugars and cinnamon and press lightly over batter. Sprinkle nuts on top, pressing down lightly.
3. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 30 minutes. Cut into small squares and serve warm. Makes about 16 squares.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. rabbit food (6) _____
2. it goes with a key (4) _____
3. first meal of the day (9) _____
4. room for cooking (7) _____
5. bad guy (5) _____
6. nickels and dimes (5) _____
7. leader of a country (8) _____

BR	CRO	COI	CAR
LO	NS	ENT	FAST
KIT	PRES	EAK	ROT
CK	OK	ID	CHEN

Answers: carrot, lock, breakfast, kitchen, crock, coins, president.

Mini Jokes



Tim: Why do some dentists gain weight?

Terry: Because just about everything they do is filling!

Ted: What's the difference between a New Yorker and a dentist?

Tad: One roots for the Yanks; the other yanks for the roots!

Eco Note



Hurricane Nicole's fury around Bermuda in October appears to have stirred up a "sea monster" from the deep — a 14-pound giant spiny lobster the size of a child! A fisherman on a Bermuda charter boat inadvertently reeled in the catch after the Category 3 storm passed.

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For later:

Plan a caroling party with your family! What songs will you sing?

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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