



A Holly Jolly Studio Recital



Thursday

December 19th, 2024

7:30 pm EST/6:30 CST/4:30 pm PST



**Ms. Donnelly's Beginning through
Intermediate Piano Students**



Students

J. C.
X. T.
K. V.
A.J.
A. W. and Leslie Schneider
A. W.
C. V.

A.C.

B.T.

R.R.

C.T.

L.W. and Leslie Schneider

L.W.
P.D.

O.L.

C.T. and Guest N.T.

A.C. and J.C.

Music Titles

“For the Beauty of the Earth”
“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”
“We Three Kings”
“Joy to the World”
“Up On the Housetop”
“Carol of the Bells”
“Toyland”
“Still, Still, Still”
“Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!”
“The Holly and the Ivy”
“Silent Night”
“Ding, Dong, Merrily on High”
“Star of Bethlehem”
“Holly, Jolly Christmas”
“Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy”
from The Nutcracker Suite
“Harmonious Blacksmith” by G.F. Handel
“Winter Wonderland”
“*Noël Nouvelet*”
“Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” Arr.
by V. Guaraldi
“Once in Royal David’s City”
“Little Children, Wake and Listen”
Clementi Sonatina in C Major, Op.
36, No. 1. Spiritoso. Arranged for
Flute and Piano.
“Jingle Bells!”
with Rhythm Section

Holly Jolly Program Notes with Historical References

English, Austrian and German Songs and Hymns

“For the Beauty of the Earth.” The melody for this eucharistic hymn was composed as an Epiphany carol by English composer Conrad Kocher in 1938. F. Pierpoint wrote the lyrics in celebration of the beauty of nature. It is often sung during the Winter Holiday season and on Earth Day!

“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen.” This traditional English Christmas carol, also known as “Tidings of Comfort and Joy,” dates to the 1650s. Its origins are anonymous.

“Joy to the World.” This English Christmas carol was written in 1719 by the English minister and hymnist Isaac Watts. The carol is usually sung to the American composer Lowell Mason's 1848 arrangement of a tune attributed to George Frideric Handel. The first four notes of the carol are from “Lift Up Your Heads” in Handel's “Messiah.” The carol's lyrics interpret passages from Genesis.

“The Holly and the Ivy.” This traditional British folk Christmas carol dates to the early nineteenth century; however, the lyrics reflect an association between holly and Christmas dating as far back as medieval times. The lyrics and melody varied significantly in traditional communities, though now they are standardized.

“Still, Still, Still.” This Austrian Christmas carol and lullaby was written in 1865. The original text described the peace of the infant Jesus and his mother as the baby is sung to sleep.

“Stille Nacht (Silent Night).” This German/Austrian Christmas carol was composed in 1818 by Franz Xaver Gruber to lyrics by Joseph Mohr in Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria. It is the world's most-recorded Christmas song, with more than 137,000 known recordings.

French Hymns and Songs

“*Little Children, Wake and Listen.*” This traditional carol has a French melody and arrangement set to English lyrics. Although its central theme is Advent, it can be played and used all year.

“*Noël Nouvelet (Sing We Now of Christmas).*” This traditional French Christmas carol dates from the late 15th century. The word nouvelet has the same root as Noël, both stemming from the word for news and newness. Some sources say it was a New Year's song. The five stanzas include not only the angels' song and the visit by the shepherds but also the journey of the Magi.

“*Ding, Dong, Merrily on High.*” This French Christmas carol first appeared as a secular dance tune written by the French cleric, composer, and writer Thoinot Arbeau, pen name of Jehan Tabourot (1519–1593). The words are by the English composer and church bell ringer, George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934), and the carol was first published in 1924.

American Songs for the Holiday Season

“*We Three Kings.*” This American Christmas carol was written by John Henry Hopkins Jr. in 1857. Hopkins, a rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, wrote the carol for a Christmas pageant in New York City.

“*Jingle Bells.*” This American Christmas folk song is one of the most commonly sung Christmas songs in the world. It was written in 1850 by James Lord Pierpont in Medford, Massachusetts. It was published under the title “The One Horse Open Sleigh” in September 1857. And it is best performed with a rhythm section!

“*Hark the Herald Angels Sing.*” This English Christmas carol that first appeared in 1739. The carol, based on Luke 2:14, tells of an angelic chorus singing praises to God. It is arranged here by the American jazz composer and pianist Vince Guaraldi, using jazz chords but played without the characteristic jazz swing.

“Up on the Housetop.” Popularized in the 1950s by Gene Autry, this American Christmas carol dates back to the 19th century. It was the second-oldest secular Christmas song, outdone only by “Jingle Bells.” It is also considered the first Yuletide song to focus on Santa Claus. The idea that Santa and his sleigh land on the roofs of homes is found in Clement C. Moore’s 1822 poem, “The Night Before Christmas.”

“Holly Jolly Christmas.” Also known as “Have a Holly Jolly Christmas,” Johnny Marks wrote this American Christmas song in 1962, most famously performed by Burl Ives. It has since become one of the top 25 most-performed “holiday” songs for the first five years of the 21st century. You can find it sung by Burle Ives in the original version animation of “Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

“Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow!” Also known as simply “Let It Snow,” this American jazz swing song was written by lyricist Sammy Cahn and composer Jule Styne in July 1945 in Hollywood, California, during a heatwave as Cahn and Styne imagined cooler conditions. The song was released after Thanksgiving and became a hit! Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Michael Bublé, Carly Simon, and Glee’s cast have recorded hit versions among many other artists.

“Star of Bethlehem.” This American hymn, written by John Williams with lyrics by Leslie Bricusse, was first performed in 1990 as an orchestral soundtrack for the blockbuster Home Alone. It has since become a popular choral piece.

“Toyland.” This popular Christmas song is from the American Operetta Babes in Toyland (1903), with music composed by Victor Herbert and a libretto by Glen MacDonough. The operetta combines Mother Goose nursery rhymes into a musical extravaganza. “Toyland” is one of the most famous of the songs, recorded by Doris Day. The Operetta has also been produced by Walt Disney Studios and performed by the London Sinfonietta and London Voices featuring Rebecca Caine.

“Winter Wonderland.” This American jazz swing song was written in 1934 by Felix Bernard and lyricist Richard Bernhard Smith. Due to its seasonal theme, it is often regarded as a Christmas song in the Northern Hemisphere. It has been covered by Lady Gaga, Tony Bennett, Bing Crosby, Jennifer Hudson, and many other artists.

“The Nutcracker Suite: Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” – A Russian ballet

Russian composer Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky is world renowned for his musical scores for the ballets “Swan Lake” (1876), “Sleeping Beauty” (1889), and “The Nutcracker Suite” (1892), iconic in the ballet repertoire. “The Nutcracker Suite” ballet is based on a novella by E.T.A. Hoffmann, “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King.” Notable variations of the music include a jazz version by Duke Ellington (1960). The “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy,” from the “Land of Sweets,” is found in “The Nutcracker Suite.”

“Carol of the Bells” – The Spirit of Ukraine

The Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovich wrote “Carol of the Bells” as a work for a choir to celebrate the New Year (1914). Soon after it premiered in America at Carnegie Hall in 1922, it became a musical sensation. New versions popularized it as a song about bells ringing, based on its 4-note theme. Many variations abound today including a version by John Williams for the movie Home Alone (1990), David Foster’s 1993 version for a holiday television special, and an updated version by The St. Olaf Choir (2023).

“Once in Royal David’s City” – An English Processional

“Once in Royal David’s City” has been sung since 1919 as the opening to the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at the King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, England. You can hear it on Christmas Eve at the Maryland classical music station WBJC. Each year, a new soloist is chosen by the Kings College Choir for the soloist part.

“The Harmonious Blacksmith” – An Air and Variations for Harpsichord by George Frederich Handel

George Frederich Handel (1685-1759) was a German Baroque era composer. He wrote eight suites published for harpsichord in 1720. His Suite no. 5 in E major, HWV 430, consists of four movements: The Prelude, Allemande, Courante, and Air and Variations. This suite was written a year after Handel became Master of the Orchestra at the Royal Academy of Music, also known as the first Italian opera company in London. Handel lived the remainder of his life in London after leaving Germany to work as resident composer for Earl of Carnarvon. The Air and Variations was given the nickname “Harmonious Blacksmith” in the 19th century.

Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah!
Happy Holidays!

