

***The Donnelly Music Studio
Holiday Recital***

***Sounds of the
Season!***

Saturday, December 20th, 2025

4:00 pm EST/3:00 CST/1:00 pm PST



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



Students

Kieran V.

Paz V.

Jamie CS.

Adam CS.

A.J. A.

Adrian CS.

Clare VH.

Raquel R.

Evan Y. (Ken Chen Studio)

Luke W.

Eliora A.

Orel L.

Progyanam D.

Music Titles

“We Wish You a Merry Christmas”

Duet: “Go Tell It On the Mountain”

“Greensleeves”

Duet: “Up on the Housetop”

Medley: “Joy to the World” &

“Silent Night”

Medley: “You’re a Mean One, Mr.

Grinch” (*Grinch*) & “Noël Nouvelet”

“Lo, How a Rose is Blooming”

“Let It Go” (*Frozen*)

“Star of Bethlehem” (*Home Alone*)

Duet: “Lullaby” (*Firebird*)

Duet: “Zum Gali Gali”

“Sweden” (*Minecraft*)

“I Saw Three Ships” (in two keys)

“Do You Hear What I Hear?”

“Little Children, Wake and Listen”

“Circle of Life” (*Lion King*)

Medley: “Children of Christmas”

“Jingle Bells” – with Kieran, Adrian, and Jamie as rhythm section



PROGRAM NOTES

Popular Holiday Songs and Carols

“*Children of Christmas*” is a popular operatic composition has its lyrics and song written and performed by Placido Domingo (1941-), a Spanish-born singer, conductor, and opera administrator whose resonant, powerful tenor voice, and dramatic ability made him one of the most popular tenors of his time. He was one of the “Three Tenors” along with Jose Carreras (1946-) and Luciano Pavarotti (1935-2007). Recently, he recorded this piece with Michael Bolton, Ying Huang and the Vienna Orchestra.

“*Do You Hear What I Hear?*” is a song composed in 1962 by Noël Regney and Gloria Shayne Baker, a husband-and-wife songwriting team. It is a call for world peace and a message of hope. The first major recording was by the Harry Simeone Chorale in 1962, but it was Bing Crosby’s 1963 version that propelled the song into the mainstream. Since then, it has been covered by dozens of artists across genres, from Whitney Houston to Carrie Underwood, each bringing their own interpretation.

“*Jingle Bells*” is an 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!

“*Joy to the World*” is an 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.

“*Little Children, Wake and Listen*” is a 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*) is a 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.

“*Up on the Housetop*” was 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*.”



Film Music

Holiday films bring us together for the holidays. These films usually have themes of peace, joy, and goodwill. They often show a character who engages in a heroic journey or one who transforms into a better version of him or herself. We all have our favorites! Below are a few recent holiday films that warm our hearts and bring us together- now and anytime of year!

“*The Lion King*” is a popular animated film with music by Elton John and Tim Rice, with Hans Zimmer (scoring). The versions are: ‘*The Lion King*’ (1994) – the original movie; ‘*The Lion King II: Simba’s Pride*’ (1998) – takes place after the events of the first movie; ‘*The Lion King 1½*’ (2004) – set both before and during the original movie; and ‘*The Lion King*’ (2019) – a remake of the original movie

“*Circle of Life*” is a song found in Disney’s epic adventure “*The Lion King*,” the story of Simba, a lion cub who wants to grow up and be King - right away!. One day he is led astray by his jealous Uncle Scar. Simba adopts a carefree lifestyle with his hilarious companions, Timon and Pumbaa, and forgets his regal responsibilities. But destiny calls and he must decide when the time is right to return to the Pride Lands and reclaim his place in the “*Circle of Life*.”

“*The Grinch*” is a 1966 television movie with music by Albert Hague adapted from Dr. Seuss’s 1957 book “*How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*” This first adaptation was for television, produced by Chuck Jones and narrated by Boris Karloff. Grinch films since then include “*The Grinch*” (2000) directed by Ron Howard, starring Jim Carrey. This version features the song “*Where Are You Christmas?*” written by Mariah Carey, James Horner, and Will Jennings, later recorded by Faith Hill. Illumination Entertainment also released a new animation “*The Grinch*” narrated by Pharrell Williams, featuring Benedict Cumberbatch as the Grinch, and music by Danny Elfman (2018). It features the hit rap song “*I Am the Grinch*” sung by Tyler, the Creator.



“*You’re A Mean One, Mr. Grinch*” is one of the most popular songs from “*The Grinch*,” the lyrics were written by Theodor “Dr. Seuss” Geisel, the music was composed by Albert Hague, and the song was originally performed by Thurl Ravenscroft. The original and updates remain popular today, including versions sung by Jim Carrey, k.d. lang, and the cast of *Glee*.

“*Frozen*” is a film released in 2013. It is a Walt Disney Animation Studios picture. The film synopsis is as follows: Fearless optimist Anna sets off on an epic journey, teaming up with rugged mountain man Kristoff and his loyal reindeer Sven, to find her sister Elsa, whose icy powers have trapped the kingdom of Arendelle in eternal winter. Encountering Everest-like conditions, mystical trolls and a hilarious snowman named Olaf, Anna and Kristoff battle the elements in a race to save the kingdom. *Frozen II* is a 2019 sequel in which Elsa goes on a journey of self-discovery. *Frozen III* is intended for release in 2026, though no specific date is set.

“*Let it Go*” is a song performed in its original show-tune version in the film “*Frozen*” by American actress and singer Idina Menzel in her vocal role as Queen Elsa. It was written by husband-and-wife songwriting team Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez. “*Let It Go*” is an anthem of self-acceptance, the story of somebody learning to embrace the thing that makes them different – including magical powers.

“*Home Alone*” is a film with music by John Williams. The movie was first released November 16th, 1990, *Home Alone 2*, 1992; *Home Alone 3*, 1997; *Home Alone 4*, 2002; *Home Alone 5*, 2012; *Home Alone 6*, 2021; *Home Alone* was inducted into the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress in 2023.

“*Star of Bethlehem*” is an American hymn, written by John Williams with lyrics by Leslie Bricusse and was first performed in 1990 as an orchestral soundtrack for the blockbuster “*Home Alone*.” It has since become a popular choral piece. “*Star of Bethlehem*” beautifully articulates a longing for hope and divine guidance amidst the challenges of life.



Online Gaming Songs

Online gaming music has evolved significantly since it moved out of the arcades and into our homes. The changes reflect significant technological advancements and with at-home gaming there are also changing player preferences.

Brief History

Early Beginnings – Nintendo (1970s-1980s)

- The first video games featured simple, synthesized sounds and melodies.
- Notable examples include the iconic theme from "*Pong*" (1972) by Atari and the 8-bit music of the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in the 1980s.

MIDI and CD Audio (1990s)

- The introduction of MIDI technology allowed for more complex compositions and orchestration.
- CD-ROMs enabled games to include full audio tracks, enhancing the gaming experience with soundtracks in titles like "*Final Fantasy VII*" (1997). (The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra features highlights from *Final Fantasy XIV* and *XVI* in January 2026!)

Advent of Streaming and Digital Distribution (2000s)

- Online platforms like iTunes and Spotify began to host video game soundtracks.
- Games like "*World of Warcraft*" (2004) featured expansive scores that contributed to immersive environments.

Integration of Music in Gameplay (2010s-Present)

- Modern games often incorporate dynamic music that changes based on player actions, enhancing engagement.



- Titles like "*Journey*" (2012) and "*Celeste*" (2018) showcase how music can be integral to storytelling and emotional impact.

Current Trends

- The rise of indie games has led to diverse musical styles, often featuring original compositions by independent artists.
- Live performances and orchestral concerts of video game music have gained popularity, celebrating the cultural significance of gaming soundtracks.

“*Minecraft*” is an online game for children and adults. The original version of *Minecraft*, which is the Java Edition of the game, began development in 2009 with various Alphas and Betas leading through 2010 to the beginning of 2011. The full version, titled “*1.0 - Adventure Update*” released on November 18th, 2011.

“*Sweden*” is a song written for *Minecraft*. In Early 2011, Daniel Rosenfield is contracted by Markus Persson to produce an original soundtrack for a new, rather unique video game. Rosenfield would produce two tracks, one in 2011, known as *Volume Alpha*, and the other in 2013, known as *Volume Beta*. Both volumes are very interesting in their instrumentation and the open-ended narrative they manage to convey. *C418* “*C-Four Eighteen*” is the pseudonym of Daniel Rosenfeld, a German musician and sound designer known primarily for his work on the video game *Minecraft*.

“*Sweden*” is the eighteenth song of Volume Alpha by *C418*.

Orchestral and Ensemble Arrangements

“*The Firebird*” is a ballet and orchestral work by the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). It was written for the 1910 Paris season of Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes company. The story is based on the Russian fairy tales of the Firebird and the blessing and curse it possesses for its owner.

“*Lullaby*” is an orchestral piece written for the ballet *The Firebird*,” It is one several that are together called the “Firebird Suite.” The ballet opens in ‘Kashchei the Immortal’s’ magical realm; Prince Ivan enters and soon spots the luminous Firebird. He observes thirteen captured princesses, who are dancing, and, of course, immediately falls in love with one of them. The evil Kashchei rebuffs the Prince’s request for his chosen one’s release, and a fracas ensues, with Kashchei’s grotesque minions in the attack on the Prince. The Firebird intervenes, casts a spell over Kashchei’s followers, and they are compelled to dance frenetically. They ultimately collapse into sleep to a lullaby, but soon Kashchei awakens and another dance ensues. The Firebird tells the Prince how to slay Kashchei by destroying the giant egg in which his soul resides. He does so; the whole evil kingdom, Kashchei, and his magic all disappear. The sun breaks forth, and a general celebratory apotheosis triumphs.

“*Zum Gali Gali*” is a traditional Hebrew song that praises one’s work when done for the benefit of others. It is a popular song for children with a joyous upbeat tempo and spirit. It can be sung anytime of year.



***Congratulations to all students performing and
recording for the Donnelly Music Studio holiday recital
“Sounds of the Season!”***

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!



*Sounds
of the
Season*