



Dear Orchestra Miami Friends,

I'm so happy to be able to bring you this year's Holiday Pops Concert! In this concert, featuring our incredible professional musicians performing alongside outstanding students from the Miami Art Studio/Zelda Glazer 6-12 school, you'll hear some classic holiday favorites, and maybe some you haven't heard that you'll love just the same. Our Education Director, Jane Allen, has created this guide to help you and your family understand some of the song's origin stories, as well as some fun facts about each song! If you'd like to sing along, the lyrics are provided in the song sheets handed out by the ushers!

Thank you for coming to this concert, and for supporting our mission of bringing high-quality classical music to our local South Florida communities. Orchestra Miami is a 501c3 non-profit professional orchestra, and your support positively impacts us and our ability to continue our programs. If you'd like more information about our upcoming concerts, or more information about our educational programs or outreach, please visit our website at [www.OrchestraMiami.org](http://www.OrchestraMiami.org) or contact Jane Allen at [jallen@orchestramiami.org](mailto:jallen@orchestramiami.org).

Have a great rest of your holiday and please enjoy the concert!

Elaine Rinaldi

Founder and Artistic Director, Orchestra Miami



# *Fun Facts and Origins*

## **It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year - Andy Williams**

- ★ Written by George Wyle and Eddie Pola for Andy Williams, with a release date of October 14th, 1963.
- ★ George Wyle also composed the very popular TV show theme song from the 1960's called *Gilligan's Island*.
- ★ This song has been featured in many different movies and TV shows, including in 1992's *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York*.
- ★ Other artists who have covered this song are Johnny Mathis, Harry Connick Jr., Garth Brooks, Amy Grant, and more!
- ★ The only time this song entered Hot 100's Top Ten was on December 29th, 2018 when it landed on #10.

## **Ding Dong Merrily on High - Thoinot Arbeau (?)**

- ★ The earliest version of this song dates back to 1588, making this song the second oldest in our program!
- ★ It was found in a book called *Orchesographie*, written by Thoinot Arbeau (original name is Jehan Tabourot - think about the anagram!).
- ★ It was not originally a holiday song, and was written as a French dance song - possibly not by Arbeau.
- ★ The lyrics of this were created 300 years after it appeared in *Orchesographie* by a priest named George Ratcliffe Woodward.
- ★ 1588 was the height of the era called the Renaissance, which in french means "rebirth." Historians think that the invention of the printing press was part of the reason for this "rebirth"!



# *Fun Facts and Origins*

## Joy To The World - Isaac Watts/Lowell Mason

- ★ The original text was adapted in 1791 as a Psalm from Isaac Watts' book *Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*.
- ★ This poem was originally called "The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom" - not an original Christmas song.
- ★ In 1836, Lowell Mason wrote the tune with Watt's text and called it *Antioch and the Modern Psalmist*.
- ★ Mason incorrectly attributes the melody he wrote to Baroque composer George Frederich Handel's oratorio *Messiah*.
- ★ It is alleged that Mason actually took the melody from an old (anonymous) English version of the song, and not from Handel.

## "March of the Toys" from *Babes in Toyland* - Victor Herbert

- ★ This operetta was written in 1903, based on characters from the popular nursery rhymes *Mother Goose*.
- ★ The first recording of "March of the Toys" was made in 1911, more than 110 years ago!
- ★ Only two of the three movies made have the original song "March of the Toys." The 1997 animated movie does not feature this song.
- ★ The other *Babes in Toyland* movies are from Laurel and Hardy (1934) and Walt Disney productions (1961). During the 1950s, there were also three television adaptations played.
- ★ A book was written from the operetta a year after it was made, 1904.



# *Fun Facts and Origins*

## The Nutcracker - Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

- ★ The original ballet was premiered in 1892 in St. Petersburg, Russia, and was not a huge success.
- ★ The book that the ballet libretto was adapted from was written by E.T.A Hoffman, a famous author. But, the adaptation is more closely related to French author Alexander Dumas' retelling of the book.
- ★ The general story for both the original and adaptation is that a nutcracker has come to life and befriended Clara, and she aids him in defeating the Nutcracker's enemy, the Mouse King.
- ★ Tchaikovsky is a well-known composer from the romantic era, where music is heavier and more dramatic. You may know the *1812 Overture*, *Swan Lake*, and *Romeo and Juliet Overture* by him!
- ★ *The Nutcracker* is still the most popular ballet in North America, not just for holidays!

## Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958) Fun Facts!

- ★ One of his composing mentors, Maurice Ravel, was a very famous composer in France at the time.
- ★ In addition to this mentorship, Vaughan Williams was a good friend of another famous composer, Gustav Holst!
- ★ Vaughan Williams would travel to the countryside to collect folk songs from different villages in England to preserve these oral traditions.
- ★ [\*Fantasia on Christmas Carols\*](#) is part of the English folk song library, in which he credits an unknown named "Mrs. Leather" and a poet named George Herbert. It was first performed in 1912.
- ★ His ashes are buried at Westminster Abbey.



# *Fun Facts and Origins*

## Greensleeves (What Child is This) - Anonymous

- ★ This song was written in 1584, making this the oldest song in our program!
- ★ There are many rumors as to who wrote this song - including that King Henry VIII wrote this for Anne Boylen. Since King Henry VIII died in 1547, it is not possible.
- ★ There is a reference to the song in play by William Shakespeare called *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.
- ★ *Greensleeves* has had many different representations in music history; it was written as a lute song originally, then became an English dance song, and eventually showed up in a book of Christmas Carols by John Strainer in 1871.

## Silent Night - Father Joseph Mohr/ Franz Xaver Gruber

- ★ The song was written in 1818, in its original language, German. The music was composed to be sung at Christmas Mass on Christmas Eve.
- ★ It was popularized by folk singers who brought it to Austria, Russia, and eventually the United States in 1839.
- ★ During World War I, soldiers from both sides did not fight each other the week before Christmas; they sang Christmas songs, including *Silent Night*.
- ★ Father Joseph Mohr, the composer, had his skull used as a model for a sculpture made of him, and then walled into a church in his hometown.
- ★ The lyrics we sing today are not the same lyrics that Father Mohr wrote!



# *Fun Facts and Origins*

## **The Trans-Siberian Orchestra**

- ★ The name of the band, “Trans-Siberian Orchestra,” is named after Trans-Siberian Railway, a train that travels from Moscow, Russia to China. This train travels all across Russia as well.
- ★ The leader of the band, Paul O’Neill, was a music producer who worked with AC/DC, Aerosmith, and more.
- ★ Though known mostly for their Christmas songs, including [Winter Palace](#) and [Christmas Eve / Sarajevo](#), they also wrote an opera about classical composer Ludwig Van Beethoven called *Beethoven’s Last Night*.
- ★ They are among the top 25 most touring bands in the world.
- ★ Some of the members of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra were in another band called Savatage from the 1980’s! They played Heavy Metal music, which means there are a lot of electric guitar solos!

## **Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer - Johnny Marks**

- ★ The story was written in 1939 as a promotional gift for the department store Montgomery Ward by a copywriter named Robert Mays - the store distributed over 2.4 million copies that year!
- ★ This story was inspired by rhythms of the poem called *The Night Before Christmas*.
- ★ “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer” was adapted into song in 1949 by Robert Mays’ brother-in-law, Johnny Marks. He was a songwriter who also wrote “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree”.
- ★ The first person to sing this song was Gene Autry, who also sang “Peter Cottontail”.
- ★ In the Thanksgiving Parade, Rudolph does not appear with Santa because Rudolph is copyrighted.



# COMPLETE SONG LIST

Here is the song list of the concert! This is for more fun listening before the concert:

- ★ It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year
- ★ Ding Dong Merrily on High/ Joy to the World
- ★ March of the Toys
- ★ *The Nutcracker:*
  - Miniature Overture
  - March
  - Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
  - Arabian Dance
  - Chinese Dance
  - Dance of the Reed Flutes
  - Waltz of the Flowers
  - Trepak
- ★ Fantasia on Christmas Carols
  - The truth sent from above
  - Come all you worthy gentlemen
  - Sussex carol
- ★ Greensleeves
- ★ Yuletide Reel
- ★ Silent Night
- ★ Winter Palace
- ★ Christmas Eve / Sarajevo
- ★ Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
- ★ A Christmas Festival: *Deck the Halls, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, Good King Wenceslas, Hark the Herald, Jingle Bells*



## Before the Concert - Listening Guide

Before the Concert, have some fun discussions with your friends and family about these topics:

- ★ Two of the songs on this list are from the Renaissance Period. What are other songs and pieces of art you recognize from this era? Hint: She's the most famous woman from the Renaissance!\*
- ★ Think about your favorite holiday song. Why is it your favorite song?
- ★ The song "Silent Night" is originally in the language of German. What are some other holiday songs that you know that are in another language?\*
- ★ The Trans-Siberian Train takes its passengers from one side of Russia to the other, and through China. It takes about 6 - 7 days non-stop! Would you take this train? Where would you go on a train?
- ★ Listen to *The Nutcracker Suite* by Peter Tchaikovsky. Where have you heard this music before?
- ★ Talk to your family and friends about your favorite Christmas movie. Does it include any of the songs in our program?
- ★ There are many different versions of the song "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer," including "Run Run Rudolph" by Chuck Berry and the instrumental version of the song by The Ventures. Find some more versions! Which version is your favorite?\*



## After the Concert - Listening Guide

After the concert, talk to your friends and family about these topics:

- ★ Before the concert, you talked about your favorite holiday song. What was your favorite song from our program?
- ★ “Greensleeves” was a lute song from the 1580’s. Then it was rebranded as a famous English dance song until it became a Christmas carol in 1871. What type of dance would you create for “Greensleeves”?
- ★ What are some holiday songs you’d like to hear an orchestra arrangement of?
- ★ “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy” from *The Nutcracker* is played on an instrument called the celesta. What are some instruments that are not common, but are in famous songs?\*
- ★ “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” was written by the same composer who wrote the very famous TV Theme for *Gilligan’s Island*. Find out the composers of your favorite holiday songs and what else they wrote!\*
- ★ If you could write a movie about this holiday season, what would it be about? Which songs from our program would you use in your movie?
- ★ And finally: Orchestra Miami wishes you and your family a very Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, a Joyous Kwanzah and a Happy New Year!



## Some Example Answers for Discussion

- ★ Some examples of famous Renaissance artists and musical works are: *Mona Lisa* by da Vinci, “The Vespers” by Monteverdi, *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli, Miserere mei - Allegri
- ★ Some other famous songs in other languages are: Feliz Navidad - Spanish, El Burrito de Belen - Spanish, O Holy Night - French, O du fröhliche - German
- ★ Other examples of Rudolph include: the song sung by Bing Crosby, The Temptations, The Chipmunks, Dolly Parton, and more.
- ★ Some examples of unconventional instruments in popular songs include: “Clint Easwood” - Gorillaz (Melodica), “Velouria” - The Pixies (Theremin), Uh Oh, Love Comes to Town - Talking Heads (Steel Drums), and Shine On You Crazy Diamond - Pink Floyd (Wine Glasses)
- ★ Johnny Marks, along with “Rudolph,” also wrote “Rocking Around The Christmas Tree,” Tchaikovsky wrote *Swan Lake*, Walter Afanasieff, who wrote “All I want For Christmas is You,” also wrote other Mariah Carey songs, including “Hero.”