

the first sound of — 'God bless you merry, gentlemen, may nothing you dismay' — Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror...."

This carol is said to be one of the most popular of the early carols, sung for centuries before being published in Britain in 1833. The composer is unknown.

Scotland the Brave, danced to by Mrs. Boden, is considered by many to be the unofficial anthem of Scotland. The composer is unknown; the tune is believed to have originated around the turn of the 20th Century.

Gnossienne #1 by Erik Satie is briefly introduced by Mr. Boden. Satie coined the word "gnossienne". This piece along with two other Gnossiennes were composed around 1890. The song was, most interestingly, written without time signature or bar lines.

In the Bleak Midwinter was written as a poem by Christina Rossetti before 1872, it was published posthumously in Rossetti's Poetic Works in 1904 and became a Christmas carol after it appeared in *The English Hymnal* in 1906. The poem is paired with **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** for our production. This carol is believed to stem from a 15th Century French processional for Franciscan nuns, but it may also have 8th Century Gregorian origins.

Solace (a.k.a. *A Mexican Serenade*) was written by Scott Joplin. This piece is our one foray into the 20th Century, as it wasn't published (and likely not written) until 1909. Joplin was active in the 1890s though; in 1899, he sold the "Maple Leaf Rag" to a music publisher. It was an immediate success and was ragtime's first hit. It was also the first

instrumental to sell over a million copies of sheet music.

Christmas Everyday was written by American author William Dean Howells (1837 – 1920) and first published in 1892.

Is There a Santa Claus? was the title of an editorial appearing in the September 21, 1897 edition of the *New York Sun*.

In that year, Dr. Philip O'Hanlon, a coroner's assistant in Manhattan, was asked by his then eight-year-old daughter, Virginia, whether Santa Claus really existed. Dr. O'Hanlon suggested she write to the *New York Sun*, assuring her that "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." One of the paper's editors, Francis Pharcellus Church, who had been a war correspondent during the American Civil War, wrote the editorial. More than a century later it remains the most reprinted editorial ever to run in any newspaper in the English language.

This editorial is paired with **O Holy Night** ("Cantique de Noël") a French carol composed by Adolphe Adam in 1847.

"Evening Benediction" from the opera *Hänsel und Gretel* was written by 19th Century composer Engelbert Humperdinck. He composed the opera in Frankfurt in 1891/1892. It was first performed in Weimar on December 23, 1893. The libretto was written by Humperdinck's sister Adelheid Wette. She approached him about writing music for songs that she had written for her children for Christmas based on *Hänsel und Gretel*. After several revisions, the musical sketches and the songs were turned into a full-scale opera.

It has been associated with Christmas since its earliest performances.

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