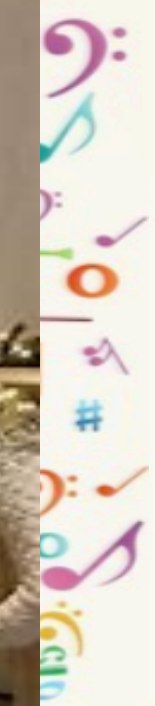




Christmas Music

Composer of the Week





Carols were originally sang in Pagan times, (before Christianity) during the Winter Solstice. Revellers would usually dance around stone circles while singing.

Christmas carols, as we know them, are hymns based on the story of the birth of Jesus, the Nativity. Christmas carols were introduced in to church services by St Francis of Assisi in the 12th century.

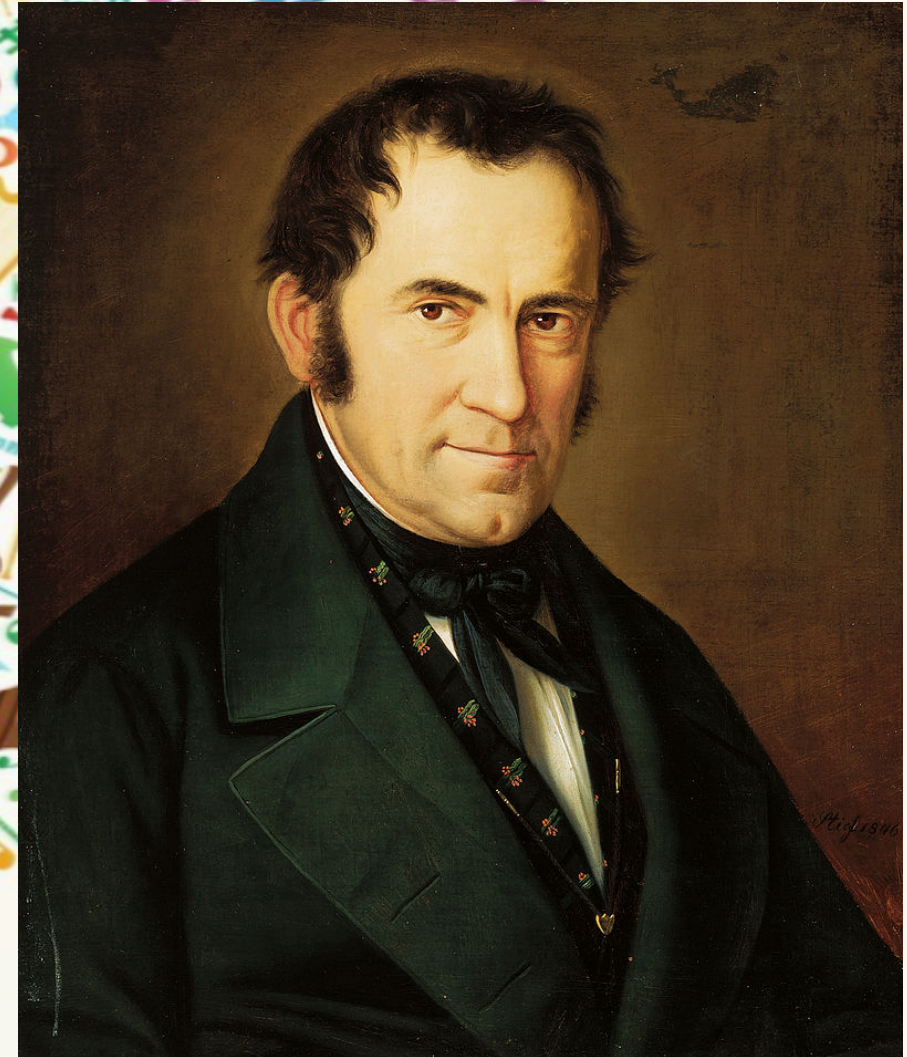
It is still traditional for groups of people to travel around singing carols at Christmas and they often collect for charity.



One of the most famous Christmas Carols is **Silent Night**.

The music was written by Franz Gruber. The parish priest, Fr Joseph Mohr, gave him the words, which he himself had written, and asked him to write a carol for that evening's Mass.

It had to be with guitar accompaniment, as the river had flooded and damaged the church organ.





It was written on Christmas
Eve, 1818 in Oberndorf,
Austria.

In December 1914, a German soldier in the WW1 trenches began singing the carol.

Soon, British troops joined in, and both sides left their trenches and met in No Man's Land where they sang together, exchanged some gifts, and even played a game of football.



The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols which takes place each year in the Church of King's College Cambridge has become the most famous Carol Service in the world.



There are nine bible readings, with traditional carols as well as new ones, especially composed for the service. Traditional carols are often sung with a **descant**. This is a new line of music, higher than the tune, used as a decoration.

Listen to **O Come All Ye Faithful** with **descant**.



It is also traditional to perform
The Messiah at Christmas.
This **oratorio** tells the story of
Jesus' birth, death and
resurrection.

Can you remember who
composed it?

George Frideric Handel



WHITE CHRISTMAS



The most famous Christmas song ever; **White Christmas** was composed by Irving Berlin and sung by Bing Crosby in the 1942 film of the same name.

More than 50 million copies of this single have been sold. It is widely believed to be the world's best selling single of all time.

It became very important to have a Christmas No.1 – that's the top selling song at Christmas.

However this did not always mean the songs were about Christmas

Often, the winner of shows like X Factor became the Christmas No.1

In 2015 our very own Lewisham Hospital Choir (the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Choir) had the Christmas No.1
The song was **A Bridge Over You**

One of the most famous Christmas songs ever, **I Wish it Could Be Christmas Every Day** didn't even make No.1 Sung by Wizzard, it has been played continuously at Christmas since 1973.



Christmas is always a time for thinking about others and in 1984 Bob Geldorf and Midge Ure wrote **Do They Know It's Christmas?** in response to the famine in Ethiopia.

Many of the most famous singers of the time came together to perform with **Band Aid** and at the time it was the fastest selling single in history.

The song raised £8 million for famine relief.

Newer versions of the song became Christmas No.1's in 1989 and 2004 while a version was recorded in 2014 to fund the Ebola crisis in Africa.



1984

2014

