

The history behind some beloved Christmas songs

Holiday traditions vary from family to family, but one component of the holidays that seems to be universally enjoyed is a good Christmas song. Music is piped throughout malls and stores to entertain shoppers, and favorite tunes may be on the radio or streamed through a digital music service as families decorate their homes.

Many people may love Christmas songs and carols, but not everyone shares the same favorites. Thankfully, there's no shortage of material when it comes to Christmas songs, ensuring there's something for everyone.

In 2014, Time magazine researched records at the U.S. Copyright Office to determine the most popular

and most recorded Christmas songs since 1978, when copyright registrations were digitized. The following are some of the more beloved holiday tunes and a bit of history about each song.

- "Silent Night": One of the most rerecorded songs in history (733 versions since 1978), "Silent Night," was composed in 1818 by Franz Xaver Gruber and put to lyrics by Joseph Mohr. It was first performed on Christmas Eve at St. Nicholas parish church in Oberndorf, a village in Austria. Today's version is a slow lullaby, but it's believed the original was a dance-like tune in 6/8 time.

- "O Holy Night": This popular song was composed by Adolphe Adam in 1847 to a French poem titled, "Minuit, chrétiens (Midnight, Christians)." Many notable performers, including Perry Como, Céline Dion, Josh Groban, Michael Crawford, and Lea Michele, have performed "O Holy Night."

- "Silver Bells": Now a Christmas classic, "Silver Bells" originally was written for the Bob Hope film, "The Lemon Drop Kid." Songwriter Jay Livingston wanted to title the song "Tinkle Bell," but his wife dissuaded him from using the word "tinkle."

- "White Christmas": Irving Berlin believed his song "White Christmas" would be an instant hit. His prediction was correct, especially after singer Bing Crosby recorded it.

- "Jingle Bells": Although it has become one of the more popular Christmas songs, "Jingle Bells" really was written for Thanksgiving. It's also one of the oldest holiday songs of American origin. James Lord Pierpont, the song's author, was inspired by the famous sleigh races of Medford, Massachusetts.

- "Do You Hear What I Hear": Noel Regney wrote this song as a call to peace during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The original context has long been forgotten, and "Do You Hear What I Hear" is now a staple of holiday celebrations.

- "Santa Claus is Coming to Town": James Gillespie wrote this tune while riding a subway and reminiscing about his childhood with his brother. It became a hit after being performed at the famed Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

- "The Christmas Song": This classic Christmas song was written in 1944 by Bob Wells and Mel Tormé. It's usually subtitled "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire." The song was written during a heat wave as a way to think cool thoughts. It only took 40 minutes to write the music and some of the lyrics. Nat King Cole's rendition of the song is among the more popular versions.

Christmas songs are enjoyed and performed year after year. Popular songs continue to endure and attract new fans.

Nimrod hosted Santa Days

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Blake and Alivia Magnan enjoyed Santa Days in Nimrod.



Cooper, Jessica and Parker Funk got a ride on Lester Bain's wagon.



Nimrod Royalty poses with Santa. Front row: 2nd Princess Madi Frame, Little Miss Rebecca Blackmon and 1st Princess Madison Funk. Back row: 2nd Princess Taydin Holmer, Miss Nimrod Keegan Wattenhofer and 1st Princess Moriah Frame.



Ellie Arthur and Paisley Maaninga visiting with Santa.



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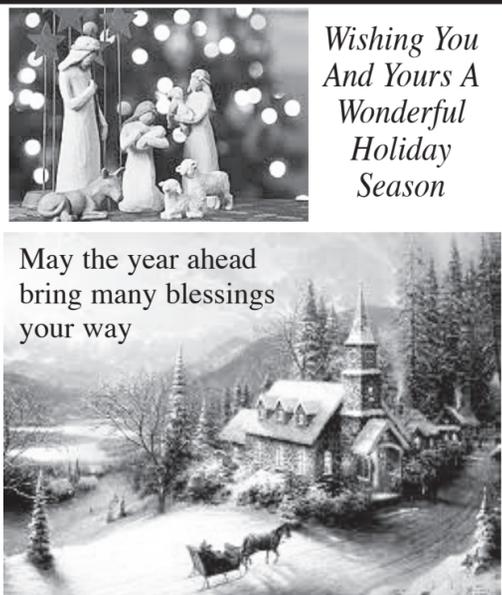
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