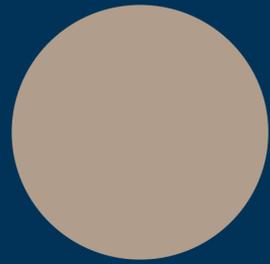


Hearth Miró Quartet



PENTATONE

HEARTH

Miró Quartet

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1. **In Dulci Jubilo** 3. 23

Original: Traditional German carol (14th century)

Arranger: Clarice Assad

2. **The First Noël** 3. 02

Original: Traditional English carol (first published 1823)

Arranger: Kevin Puts

3. **Jingle Bells** 3. 32

Original: James Lord Pierpont (1857)

Arranger: Michi Wiancko

4. **I Wonder as I Wander** 3. 17

Original: Appalachian folk song, adapted by John Jacob Niles (1933)

Arranger: Reena Esmail

5. **Deck the Halls** 5. 04

Original: Traditional Welsh tune ("Nos Galan")

Arranger: Karl Mitze

6. Ma'oz Tzur (Rock of Ages) 5.11

Original: Traditional Hebrew hymn (lyrics from 13th century; melody from 17th-century German sources)

Arranger: Sam Lipman

7. In the Bleak Midwinter 5.10

Original: Poem by Christina Rossetti (1872), music by Gustav Holst (1906)

Arranger: Alex Berko

8. Mother's Lullaby 5.28

Original Composition:
Anna Clyne

9. Wexford Carol (Carúl Loch Garman) 5.59

Original: Traditional Irish carol (possibly 12th century)

Arranger: Jeff Scott

10. halfspent (lo, how a rose...) 4. 45

Based on: "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen" (Traditional German carol, 16th century), harmonized by Michael Praetorius (1609)

Composer/Arranger: Gabriel Kahane

11. O Come, All Ye Faithful 2. 44

Original: Attributed to John Francis Wade (18th century)

Arranger: Michael Begay

12. Dejlig er Den Himmel Blå (Oh How Beautiful the Sky) 4. 45

Original: Lyrics by N.F.S. Grundtvig (1810), melody by Jacob Gerhard Meidell (1842)

Arranger: Paola Prestini

13. We Three 3. 53

Based on: "We Three Kings" by John Henry Hopkins Jr. (1857)

Arranger: Derrick Skye

14. Silent Night 3. 07

Original: Franz Xaver Gruber
(music), Joseph Mohr (lyrics),
1818

Arranger: Joel Love

15. Songs of Christmas Past 8. 23

Original Composition:
Hyung-ki Joo

Total playing time: 67. 51

Miró Quartet:

Daniel Ching, violin

William Fedkenheuer, violin

John Largess, viola

Joshua Gindele, cello



It has been a dream of ours for many years to record a holiday album as the Miró Quartet. The holiday season, whether Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or any Yuletide Celebration, has for us always meant precious time spent connecting with family and friends, with our religious traditions and with our childhood past; as well as cooking, baking and enjoying special foods and meals together, while reflecting with peace and hope by the fireside on the year past and the next one to come.

And music! The holidays are filled with so much music: singing carols at services or out in the snow, holiday songs at parties around the piano or guitar, and of course *Messiah* and *Nutcracker* performances! We all have a special holiday tune or melody that immediately makes us feel 5 years old again, or unfailingly fills us with spiritual inspiration...the music of the season has the power to evoke nostalgic memories and inspire us

all to come together and celebrate around the warm fires of the Holiday Hearth.

For this album we asked each of our composer friends to set any holiday tune that they wanted in any way they chose that would work for string quartet, and share a personal memory with us through the music. And what a delightful assortment of musical presents we received! The tunes range from medieval and renaissance melodies to "Jingle Bells", and the styles range from Texas fiddle and West African rhythms to the most contemporary composing styles you might hear on the concert stage today.

We really think the diversity and variety of voices heard and memories shared on this album will represent the many ways we all celebrate and share the holidays together, and the huge range of what the holidays can mean to each one of us...

The Miró Quartet is so grateful to all our composer friends for these precious musical gifts, and we are so pleased to share the warmth of our Hearth and our Hearts with you through music during this holiday season.

Happy Holidays to you all!

John Largess



NOTES FROM COMPOSERS

When I think of Christmas music, I'm always drawn to a few of my favorite tunes. One is the song *In Dulci Jubilo*, a piece from 14th-century medieval Europe.

I chose to begin the arrangement with a quote from the French carol *Il est né, le divin Enfant*, whose solemn melody creates a heartwarming introduction to the main piece. Then, after developing *In Dulci Jubilo*, I incorporate a short quote from *Carol of the Bells* as a transition. These three songs talk about the celebration of Christ's birth in their lyrics, and each represents a different musical journey, connecting distinct Christmas traditions — from medieval Germany to 19th century France to a Ukrainian melody (*Carol of the Bells*) transformed by American lyrics. Through this arrangement, I wanted to capture a sense of the universal joy of Christmas that connects us all across cultures and centuries.

Clarice Assad

I have loved *The First Noël* since I was a kid and never really examined why until I was asked to be part of this album! It has a melody which is almost entirely scalar; in other words, there are almost no leaps or intervals larger than a second in it. This makes it easy to sing but also lends itself to many different harmonic settings — and this is where I reveled in the possibilities with this arrangement, finding my way to some unexpected places in the harmonies which support the melody. I hope you enjoy it!

Kevin Puts

As a composer, it's a rare treat to be asked to participate in a project that centers around pure fun and celebration. For that reason I chose one of the most famous and lightest Christmas classics, *Jingle Bells*, for my arrangement. This inevitably led to a bit of research in which I discovered the lyrics to a few of the song's lesser-known

original verses, which outline a series of snow-related mishaps. (*Look it up!*) So, this fun ditty is my little love-note to snow itself, brought to sparkling fruition by the amazing Miró Quartet.

Michi Wiancko

I have always loved the plaintive quality of *I Wonder as I Wander* — I think it gets right to the heart of the meaning of Christmas, both in its vastness and its intimacy. This arrangement blends those sweeping melodic lines with Hindustani ornamentation that adds a little sparkle to the depth.

Reena Esmail

Deck the Halls is synonymous with the holiday season to me (and probably most of us that celebrate!) so this was an easy one to decide to do. I've included a few playful nods to the sorts of fiddle and Celtic music that I enjoy personally as well as a fast outro that's quite true to the original

tune. I imagine the ending as the credits music for a *Home Alone* movie in some alternate universe!

Karl Mitze

I chose Ma'oz Tzur, a traditional Hanukkah song, because of its gorgeous, meandering melody, ancient roots, and haunting, unresolved ending — something that immediately struck me as spiritually potent. My approach was to trace a journey through the history reflected in the poem's text, while honoring the melody's AAB form and expanding it into a kind of prayerful meditation that lives between vulnerability and desire, always reaching, but never fully resolving.

Sam Lipman

When thinking about a holiday song that resonates with me, I went back to some of my earliest musical memories singing in choir. I remember being drawn to the slower, icier, and harmonically rich

tunes that seemed to cast a spell on me — most notably, *In the Bleak Midwinter*. I imagined a version that emerges and fades through shimmers of lightly falling snow, capturing a single, fleeting moment in time.

Alex Berko

Coventry Carol is an English Christmas carol dating from the 16th century. I've always loved the timeless quality of this carol and its use of a picardy third to shift the music between major and minor. It also lends well to a string sound world by offering different voicings and coloration through the repetition of the verses. My retitling of the carol to Mother's Lullaby refers to the original text, which takes the form of a lullaby sung by mothers of the doomed children under Herod's Massacre of the Innocents from the Christmas Story.

Anna Clyne

In shaping this arrangement of *The Wexford Carol* for Miró, I was drawn to its quiet dignity and the gentle sorrow that lingers in the Dorian mode. I've tried to preserve the stillness at its core while allowing space for a brief moment of lift — a passing warmth — before settling again into the carol's contemplative grace. My hope is that the piece invites listeners to lean in, to find something personal in its unfolding, and to share in the ascension it leaves behind.

Jeff Scott

As South Park's Kyle Broflovski memorably quipped, "it's hard to be a Jew on Christmas." Well, perhaps — but not once you've surrendered to the wonder of caroling. Like so many other American Jewish kids, I layered up from time to time in the dead of winter to sing about Jesus. Later, as a passionate teenage chorister at Santa Rosa High School, legendary for its choral music program,

I discovered and fell in love with *Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming*, which, to this day, is my favorite carol: its text is as sublime as its harmonies are ravishing. In halfspent, a series of tentative, fragmented essays give way to a brief set of variations, culminating in a complete statement of the original carol. I'm so grateful to the members of Miró for inviting me to participate in this project.

Gabriel Kahane

Growing up in the late 80s and 90s, I was captivated by the raw energy and rebellious spirit of heavy metal. Among those influences was Twisted Sister, whose rendition of *Oh Come, All Ye Faithful* cleverly intertwined with their anthem *We're Not Gonna Take it*. This mash-up gained newsworthy attention, particularly amidst the era's debates over music rating systems. Inspired by their approach, I composed my own arrangement for the Miró Quartet. In this piece,

I weave tradition with innovation, introducing dissonance as the music unfolds. From an Indigenous perspective, these unexpected harmonies provoke thoughtful reflection and invite listeners to explore deeper emotions. This arrangement transforms the familiar into something new, echoing my musical journey and its diverse influences.

Michael Begay

This commission was inspired by *Dejlig er den himmel blaa* — an anonymous Danish tune. Several years ago I had the fortune of spending time in Copenhagen around the holidays and I entered a church where a youth chorus was singing. The scene stayed with me, the cold air, the candles, and the beautiful light voices. When writing for this commission I jumped at the opportunity to try and recreate that magic and began my research. The tune was first published in 1853 and is built on several repetitions

and sequences with several rising virtuosic figures that emulates the rising figures in the original. The feelings of the work evoke the joy and magic of that cold Danish winter night.

Paola Prestini

We Three is a transcultural reimagining of *We Three Kings*, a carol I've known since childhood. I wanted to honor the original while reshaping it through musical languages that are part of my own creative voice — Assyrian melodic ornamentation and West African rhythmic layering. The familiar melody becomes a point of departure, transformed through phrasing, texture, and form. It's a reflection of how I experience tradition: not as something fixed, but as something alive and open to reinterpretation. A transcultural approach allows me to celebrate the complexity of identity and the traditions that have shaped how I hear and create music.

Derrick Skye

When the Miró Quartet invited me to arrange *Silent Night*, I was immediately moved by the chance to reimagine my favorite Christmas carol for one of the world's great string quartets. I wanted the piece to build gradually toward an emotional climax while showcasing each player's lyrical voice. For the first chorus, I focused on simplicity and the emotional clarity inherent in the melody and harmony, while for the second chorus, I introduced a more chromatic landscape and raised the intensity with rich double stops. My hope was to honor the carol's quiet beauty while offering the quartet a songful vehicle.

Joel Love

For me, the magic of Christmas is in its music — joyful, and often tinged with melancholy, it warms like a hearth, casting light that draws people close, whether or not they celebrate. For over twenty years, I've gathered friends and family for a carol-singing party that

has, for many, become the heart of the season. Songs of Christmas Past is my musical stocking, filled with more than twenty of those carols. Time and again, Christmas has risen beyond religion and commercialism, its quiet light stilling battlefields, bridging divides, and uniting strangers — even enemies — to sing together. Perhaps all we need is a musical hearth glowing in every heart, lighting the way to peace all year round.

Hyung-ki Joo



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Acknowledgements

PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive producers

Lynne Dobson

Greg Wooldridge

Joshua Gindele

Recording & Session producer,
Recording & Mastering engineer

Da-Hong Seetoo

Additional producers

Daniel Ching

William Fedkenheuer

John Largess

Liner notes

John Largess

Photography

Barry Carlton

ARTWORK

Cover & booklet design

Marjolein Coenrady

Coordination

Karolina Szymanik

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PUBLISHER CREDITS

Anna Clyne

Boosey & Hawkes

Clarice Assad

Virtual Artists Collective Publishing

Reena Esmail

A Piece of Sky Music (ASCAP)

Gabriel Kahane

Magdeburg Music

Jeffrey Scott

Music by Jeffrey Scott (ASCAP)

Derrick Skye

Artistician Inc (ASCAP)

Michi Wiancko

Michi Wiancko Publishing

Alex Berko

A. Berko Music (ASCAP)

Sam Lipman

Sam Lipman Music, LLC

Paola Prestini

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Hyung-ki Joo

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Label Director

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Alice Lombardo

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Press

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Camilla Vickerage

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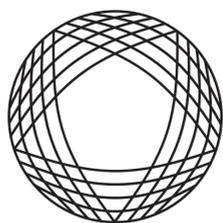
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