

PIANO MUSIC FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Please enjoy this sequence of music in your own way. I think that even the devotional poems connected to some pieces, and translated here, can be read in more abstract ways than were probably intended. Please consider making a donation towards the upkeep of our piano, at the symbol towards the top of the Listen page of this website. Any donation will not apply to the pieces marked with an asterisk.

PART ONE

	Ferencz / Franz Liszt	Schlummerlied (Slumber-song), from <i>Weihnachtsbaum</i> (<i>Christmas-tree</i>)
02:58	Pyotr Tchaikovsky	Christmas (December) from <i>The Seasons</i>
07:20	Pyotr Tchaikovsky	Troika (November) from <i>The Seasons</i> [I imagine that the Russian weather in November is more like the traditional snowy Christmas image we know!]
10:21	Claude Debussy	Prelude no. 6 from book 1 of <i>Preludes</i> . Debussy gave descriptive titles to these preludes, but wrote them at the end of each piece, as if leaving the listener to wonder what the music might be describing. So you can find the title of this piece right at the end of this document!
14:13	*Claude Delvincourt	Plum Pudding, from <i>Croquebouches</i> (which in this context might be translated as " <i>Melt in the mouth</i> ".)
15:23	Ferdinand Hummel	Die Mette von Marienburg (Midnight Mass at Marienburg) This is an adapted translation of Felix Dahn's German text set by Hummel. I can provide a copy of the translation to anyone who wants to try it.

Narrator: Juliet Wallace

Falk von Stauff: Patrick Sexton

PART TWO

	Carl Nielsen	Drømmen om <i>Glade Jul</i> (Dream on <i>Silent Night</i>)
02:04	Robert Schumann	Sylvesterlied (New Year's Eve song), from <i>Album for the Young</i> - St. Sylvester's Day being December 31 st .
03:50	Edward MacDowell	Winter, from Four Little Poems, op. 32 [inspired by Percy B. Shelley's poem "A widow bird sate mourning for her Love", copied below.]
06:26	Henry Balfour Gardiner	Noel
08:24, 09:32, 10:52, 11:50, 13:22, 15:14	Felix Mendelssohn	Six Pieces for the Pianoforte, composed as a Christmas present for his young friends.
16:42	*Harry Farjeon	Christ's Eve

Recited by Juliet Wallace

19:02	Gustav Holst	Chrissemas Day in the Morning
21:27	Gabriel Grovlez	Petites Litanies de Jésus (Little Litanies of Jesus), from <i>L'Almanach aux Images (The Almanac of Images)</i> [inspired by a poem by Tristan Klingsor, which you can read below.]
23:39	Franz Schubert, transcribed by Ferencz / Franz Liszt	Der Lindenbaum (The Linden-tree), from <i>Winterreise (Winter Journey)</i> . Schubert wrote this as a song: you can read the words below.
28:28	Ferencz / Franz Liszt	Hymne de l'Enfant à son Réveil (Hymn of the Waking Child), from <i>Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses (Poetic and Religious Harmonies)</i> , based on a poem by Alphonse de Lamartine, translated below.

POEMS

A widow bird sate mourning for her Love – Percy B. Shelley

A widow bird sate mourning for her Love
 Upon a wintry bough;
 The frozen wind crept on above,
 The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare.
 No flower upon the ground,
 And little motion in the air
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.

Petites Litanies de Jésus (Little Litanies of Jesus) – Tristan Klingsor

This is an abridged version, as quoted by Grovlez. The piano piece almost seems like a direct imitation of the rhythm of the French text, except that some words appear to be left out – perhaps it was imitated from memory.

Jesus of Mary and the angels,
 Little image of painted wood
 Enrobed in flowers and stars:
 smile on me.

Jesus, my poor soul is fearful
Like a divine lamb in a wood
Grazing on the spines of rose-bushes:
smile on me.

Jesus, who suffered the sweet sadness
Of the thorns in your crown of wood
After the beautiful crown of flowers,
smile on me.

Jesus of the highways and byways,
Hanging like a dead bird from crosses of wood,
With nails making roses in your hands --
Jesus of beggars and kings:
smile on me.

Der Lindenbaum (The Linden-tree) – Wilhelm Müller

At the well in front of the gate there stands a linden-tree;
In its shade I dreamt so many sweet dreams.
I carved so many loving words into its bark;
I was always drawn to it in joy or sorrow.

Today too I had to walk past in the depths of night;
Still in the dark, I shut my eyes.
And its branches rustled, as if calling to me:
“Come to me, my friend: here you will find your peace!”

The cold wind blew right into my face,
My hat flew off my head – I did not turn back.
Now I am many hours away from that place,

And still I hear rustling: "You would find peace there!"

Hymne de l'Enfant à son Réveil (Hymn of the waking child) -- Alphonse de Lamartine

Oh Father, adored by my father!

You whom we name only on our knees!

You at whose terrible and sweet name

My mother bows her head!

They say that the shining sun is

But your plaything,

A bright red lamp

Hovering at your feet.

They say that you breathe life into

The birds in the fields,

And give souls to little children

By which they may know you.

They say that it's you who create

The flowers adorning the garden,

And that without you the miserly

Orchard would bear no fruit.

The whole universe receives

Your limitless bounty;

No tiny insect is forgotten

In Nature's feast.

The lamb grazes on wild thyme,

The goat loses itself in laburnum,

And the fly on the rim of my glass

Drinks the last white drops of milk.

The lark takes the bitter grain
Dropped at gleaning-time,
The sparrow follows the winnower,
And the child clings to the mother.

And how can we claim these gifts,
Which you bring forth each day?
We claim them by speaking your name
At morning, noon and night.

My God! My lips hesitate at the name
Feared even by angels.
A mere child counts among the choir
Singing to your glory.

They say that he likes to hear
The wishes of little children,
Offered through their
Unconscious innocence.

They say that the praises of children
Rise the fastest to your ears,
That we look like the angels
Who inhabit the realms above!

Ah, since from so far away he hears
The petitions our hearts offer,
I will for ever ask
For the needs of others.

My God, let the springs gush with water,

Give feathers to the birds,
Cloak the little lambs with wool
And bring shade and dew to the plains.

Grant health to the sick,
Give to the beggar the bread he implores,
Give a home to the orphan
And freedom to the prisoner.

Grant children to the father
Who honours the Lord,
And impart to me wisdom and goodness
To gladden the heart of my mother!

I may be small, but let me be good
Like the child in the temple,
Whom I see every day
In the picture above my bed.

Place justice in my soul,
Truth on my lips,
That your word may come to fruition
In my fearful and obedient heart.

And may my voice rise to you
Like the sweet and fragrant smoke
Rising from jars
Carried by children like me.

The title of Debussy's Prelude no. 6 is Des pas sur la neige (Footsteps in the snow)