

Seasonal Songs in Perfect Harmony

"Winter Wonderland"

"Up on the Housetop"

"Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah"

"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"

"Grown-Up Christmas List"

The Sounds of the Season



Just as the sparkle of lights and the chill in the air signal the start of the season, music has a unique way of making the holidays come alive. This December, Perfect Harmony is embracing the joy, warmth, and wonder of seasonal songs that have become part of our most cherished traditions.

The sounds of the season—whether playful, nostalgic, or heartfelt—set the tone for gatherings with loved ones, quiet moments of reflection, and celebrations of the holidays. Music brings us together, capturing the magic of this special time and reminding us of the connections we share in perfect harmony.



Song: "Winter Wonderland" (1934)

Songwriters: Felix Bernard and Richard Bernhard Smith

Brief Context: "Winter Wonderland," written by composer Felix Bernard and lyricist Richard Bernhard Smith, was inspired by Smith's view of Honesdale, Pennsylvania's snow-covered Central Park. Though first recorded by Richard Himber and His Hotel Ritz-Carlton Orchestra, Guy Lombardo's rendition became one of the biggest hits of 1934. Originally a romantic winter ballad, a 1947 revision added a playful children's lyric, broadening its appeal. The song has been interpreted by over 200 artists, including Ella Fitzgerald, Elvis Presley, and Ringo Starr. In 2023, Chlöe's Amazon Original version became the first to chart on the Billboard Hot 100, continuing the song's enduring legacy.

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Winter Wonderland" video**
- **Perfect Harmony "Winter Wonderland" lyrics**

Fun fact:

Did you know "Winter Wonderland" started as a poem? In 1934, Richard Smith wrote a poem while he was in the West Mountain Sanitarium being treated for tuberculosis. While being treated, he entered contests for jingles and ads for companies. He was inspired by the beauty of the freshly fallen snow in the park when he wrote the "Winter Wonderland" poem. Later, his friend Felix Bernard set the poem to music.





The Songbook Library & Archives houses the original published sheet music for “Winter Wonderland,” including this cover art depicting a winter scene. “Winter Wonderland” is one of over 34,000 pieces of sheet music housed in the Robert Grimes Collection donated in 2009. (Bob Grimes Collection, Songbook Library & Archives)



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Winter Wonderland

**Sleigh bells ring, are you listening,
In the lane, snow is glistening
A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight,
Walking in a winter wonderland.**

**Gone away is the bluebird,
Here to stay is a new bird
He sings a love song, as we go along,
Walking in a winter wonderland.**

**In the meadow we can build a snowman,
Then pretend that he is Parson Brown
He'll say, "Are you married?"
We'll say, "No man,"
But you can do the job when you're in town.**

Winter Wonderland - Continued

**Later on, we'll conspire,
As we dream by the fire
To face unafraid, the plans that we've made,
Walking in a winter wonderland.**

**In the meadow we can build a snowman,
And pretend that he's a circus clown
We'll have lots of fun with mister snowman,
Until the other kiddies knock him down.**

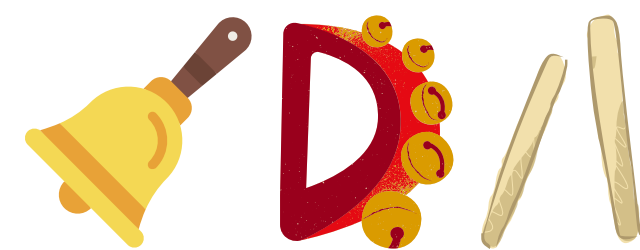
**When it snows, ain't it thrilling,
Though your nose gets a chilling
We'll frolic and play, the Eskimo way,
Walking in a winter wonderland.**

Song: "Up on the Housetop" (1864)

Songwriters: Benjamin Hanby

Brief Context: "Up on the Housetop," written by Benjamin Hanby is considered the second-oldest secular Christmas song, following "Jingle Bells" (1857). Thought to be the first holiday tune to focus primarily on Santa Claus, its imagery was likely inspired by Clement C. Moore's 1822 poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Over the years, the song has been recorded by numerous artists, with Gene Autry's 1953 rendition among the most iconic. In 2005, Kimberley Locke's version brought renewed popularity, breaking records on Billboard's Adult Contemporary chart. The song remains a Christmas classic, celebrating Santa's sleigh landing on rooftops as a central holiday image.

Activity: Instruments



What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Up on the Housetop" video**
- **Instruments including handbells, jingle bells and rhythm sticks,**
- **If instruments are not available, hand clapping is a suitable alternative to rhythm instruments.**

Suggested Seated Music-Making

Choose an instrument (handbells, jingle bells or rhythm sticks) and follow Perfect Harmony leader Donna and the appropriate section leaders to join the handbell choir or rhythm players!

For additional music-making, repeat the activity several times and switch instruments each time you hit play!



Song: "Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah" (1912)

Songwriter: Mordkhe (Mark) Rivesman

Brief Context: "Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah" is an English version of the Yiddish song "Oy, Chanukah." It is one of the most well-known English Hanukkah songs, along with "I Have a Little Dreidel." It is an upbeat and playful song, often sung by children. The lyrics are about eating latkes, dancing the hora, lighting candles, playing dreidel and singing happy songs.

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- **Perfect Harmony "Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah" video**

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Idrienne or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- **Swing arms backwards and forwards in a curved position**
- **Raise hands together and fan out fingers like the eight candles on a menorah**
- **Dance the *horah** (seated) - alternate crossing one leg forward and back (like jumping or running) and raising arms to the sky**

****The hora, or horah, is a traditional Jewish dance typically done in a circle or line.***



Song: "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" (1943)

Songwriters: Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane

Brief Context: "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," written by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane in 1943, was introduced by Judy Garland in the musical film *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944). Originally more somber, its lyrics were softened to uplift audiences during wartime, resonating deeply with troops. Frank Sinatra's 1957 version added a brighter tone with revised lyrics, including "Hang a shining star upon the highest bough." Covered by countless artists, it remains one of the most cherished holiday classics.

Activity: Singing and Discussion

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" video
- Perfect Harmony "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" lyrics

Suggested discussion prompt:

This song is all about making the holidays bright. Tell someone about your favorite holiday tradition.

Suggestions, if needed:

- Decorating the tree with ornaments
- Baking holiday cookies or treats to share with loved ones
- Watching a favorite holiday movie with family or friends
- Singing carols or listening to holiday music together
- Creating handmade gifts or cards for someone special
- Visiting a festive display of lights or a holiday market
- Wrapping presents with care and adding creative touches
- Setting up stockings by the fireplace or another special spot
- Preparing a holiday meal or dish that everyone looks forward to



Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Let your heart be light

From now on, your troubles will be out of sight

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Make the Yuletide gay

From now on, your troubles will be miles away

Here we are as in olden days

Happy golden days of yore

Faithful friends who are dear to us

Gather near to us once more

Through the years, we all will be together

If the fates allow

Hang a shining star upon the highest bough

And have yourself a merry little Christmas now

Song: "Grown-up Christmas List" (1992)

Songwriters: David Foster and Linda Thompson-Jenner

Brief Context: "Grown-Up Christmas List," written by David Foster and Linda Thompson-Jenner, was first performed in 1989 as a duet with Foster and Natalie Cole for *A David Foster Christmas Card*. After a 1990 solo release by Cole, Amy Grant's 1992 version on *Home for Christmas* brought the song widespread popularity. Grant added a verse reflecting on the deeper meaning of Christmas, which has since become part of many covers. The song has been recorded by numerous artists, including Kelly Clarkson and Michael Bublé, and remains one of Foster's most beloved Christmas songs.

***Activity:* Listening**

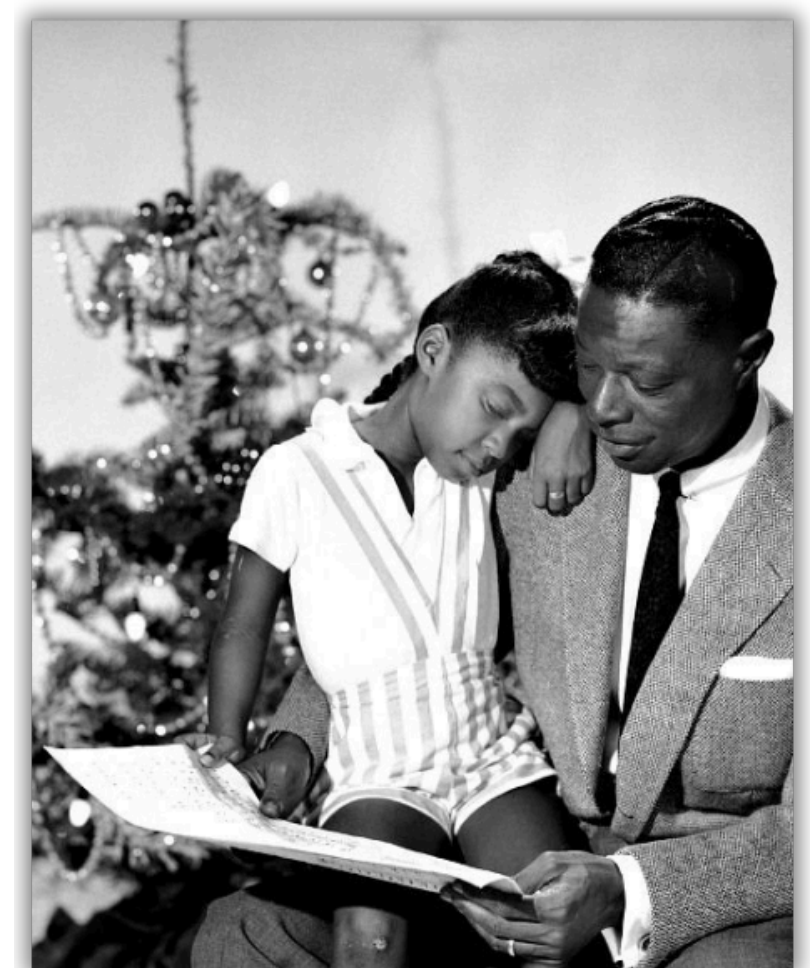
What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Grown-Up Christmas List" video

Additional learning

"Grown-Up Christmas List" is not the only notable holiday song released by Natalie Cole. Cole's Christmas album *The Magic of Christmas* included a host of holiday classics including a special duet with Cole's father, Songbook Hall of Fame member Nat King Cole, using samples from his popular recording.

The Songbook Library & Archives houses Natalie Cole's musical arrangements in the Foundation's vast music library including the arrangement for "The Christmas Song" from *The Magic of Christmas*.





Orchestral arrangements of "The Christmas Song" for Natalie Cole's album *Holly & the Ivy* (1994). Arranged by Johnny Mandel. (Natalie Cole Collection, Great American Songbook Foundation Library & Archives)