**It’s Christmas Time!**

The history of Christmas music and the top 10 most-performed Christmas songs

Christmas music comprises a variety of genres of music normally performed or heard around the Christmas season, which tends to begin in the months leading up to the actual holiday and end in the weeks shortly thereafter. A Christmas carol is a carol whose lyrics are on the theme of Christmas or the winter season in general, and which is traditionally sung in the period immediately surrounding the holiday. Often Christmas songs introduced in theater, television, film, or other entertainment media, are typically not overtly religious. The most popular set of these titles—heard over airwaves, on the Internet, in shopping centers and lifts, even on the street during the Christmas season—have been composed and performed from the 1930s onward. "Jingle Bells", "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas", and "Up on the House Top", however, date from the mid-19th century. These songs in some way describe Christmas traditions, how Western Christian countries tend to celebrate the holiday. Celebratory or sentimental, and nostalgic in tone, they hearken back to simpler times with memorable holiday practices—expressing the desire either to be with someone or at home for Christmas. Many titles help define the mythical aspects of modern Christmas celebration: Santa Claus bringing presents, coming down the chimney etc. New mythical characters are created, defined, and popularized by these songs; Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and Frosty the Snowman were both introduced by Gene Autry a year apart (1949 and 1950 respectively.



According to the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers in 2006, the following are the Top 10 most-performed "holiday" songs:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Song | Composer |
| 1."The Christmas Song" | M.Tormé, Robert Wells |
| 2."Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" | Ralph Blane, Hugh Martin |
| 3."Winter Wonderland" | Felix Bernard, Richard B. Smith  |
| 4."Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" | J. Fred Coots, Haven Gillespie |
| 5. "White Christmas" | Irving Berlin |
| 6. "Let It Snow” | Sammy Cahn, Jule Styne |
| 7. "Jingle Bell Rock" | Joseph Carleton Beal, James Ross Boothe |
| 8. "The Little Drummer Boy" | Katherine K. Davis, Henry V. Onorati |
| 9. "Sleigh Ride" | Leroy Anderson, Mitchell Parish |
| 10. "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" | Johnny Marks |

For Americans and many others around the world, these classic lyrics and melodies are inseparable from the celebration of the holiday season.