

Children's Songs for Christmas - Intro

After many years of doing Christmas / Winter programs at my Elementary Schools, I began to get burned out on the standard "popular" songs. I reached the point where I just couldn't face doing "jingle bells" one more time.

Thankfully, my schools gave me a lot of freedom to choose the program songs. Thus after about twenty years of teaching, I began to write songs specifically for my Christmas shows. At Madras Elementary the Winter Program was made up of Kindergarten, First and Second grade classes. The Third and Fourth grades did the Spring Program. Therefore, the songs composed were deliberately simple, and accessible for younger children.

The song topics varied widely. There were songs about food, Santa, Baby Jesus, a snowman song, a snowball fight song, and others. As I continued to write these, the technology for using midi and my sound canvas arrived (see the Recorder books): now I could make arrangements with a multitude of instruments on an accompaniment track for the show. This was personally a lot of fun, and the kids enjoyed the instruments as well, contrasted with singing with piano only.

To help the children learn the songs, I would quickly record a demo of the song, then distribute CD's to the teachers in the classroom. The demos included all the songs they were singing for the program, not just my own. To help the kids sing in tune I used a female voice that was pitched exactly where the kids would sing. My voice would be an octave lower. Much of the time Shannon Zachary was kind enough to help (she loved to sing!), but I also used Jolene Spencer and Renee DeJarnatt when Shannon wasn't available.

After retiring from the public schools in the Spring of 2007, these songs have sort of lain around dormant. In 2023 I set upon a project to resurrect them, revisit and refresh the arrangements, and record the songs in a less hurried fashion. I wanted the same female voice on all the songs. At church I came across Mandy Cramer as a member of the worship teams, and we also shared an Easter choir experience in the Spring of 2023. I loved her voice and felt it would be perfect for this project.

Mandy agreed to help out! In the process I discovered that she had been a vocal major in college, and was enjoying using her voice and recording the songs. A huge “thank you” to Mandy, I’m very pleased with how the recordings turned out.

The intent is to make these available on the web site for schools and churches to use. In the spirit of Christmas, I give permission for schools and churches to use the songs and tracks if they wish. Each song has a demo track and an accompaniment track. PDF files of all the lyrics will be on the web site.

I hope you enjoy listening to these Christmas songs, they were fun to write and added a fresh level of creativity to my programs. Some of them led easily to theatrics: Snowball Fight had a small group of children throwing white puff balls at each other! The laughter from all was very infectious.

George Klos - 2023