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* These carols may be played separately.

Welcome to String Time Christmas!

Who is the book for? Young string players in groups of all sizes and at different skill levels, from approximately Grades 1–2/3. The parts are all in 1st position and there are some optional 4th position notes for the cello.

What's in the book? A range of seasonal pieces, including traditional Christmas carols, carols from around the world, and Classical pieces. A medley of three traditional carols makes a longer piece, or each carol may be played separately.

How does the scoring work? Most pieces have two main parts—parts 1 and 2—which can be played by **violin, viola, and cello**. Occasionally there are small variations between the different instruments to accommodate finger patterns and ranges. To simplify the presentation of the score, both these parts are written in the treble clef, but of course the cello will play an octave lower. There's also an optional **double bass** part, and a **piano** part which is optional in some of the pieces (Nos. 3, 4, 12, and 16). Some pieces also have additional optional parts, e.g. a violin descant or separate cello part. **Percussion** can be added to any of the pieces for extra sparkle, e.g. some sleighbells in the Mozart 'Sleighride' (no. 15).

What does 'flexible ensemble' mean? The pieces can be performed in a variety of ways to suit different groups, from duets in any combination to massed strings. For example, all instruments could play the tune in unison with the piano, or cellos could take the tune with upper strings on the accompanying part 2, or all instruments could split into two parts, with or without the additional optional parts. Some sections could be taken by solo players. Most of the pieces could also serve as accompaniments to singers too. Repeat each piece as many times as you like!

How do I play 'Christmus a-come'? Choose the melody plus any of the other parts and play as many times as you like. The piece could build up, adding more parts each time, or players could keep to one part and play from the start. Or players could *swap* parts on each repeat, playing like a kind of round (e.g. imagining parts 1, 2, and 3 as a 24-bar round and played by three groups entering every 8 bars).

Are there any recordings? Yes, audio files (performance and backing tracks) are available to download from www.oup.com/stchristmas, using the code in the front of the book. The violin, viola, and cello books all contain access codes for the audio files, but these are not available for the double bass book, so teachers should feel free to share their audio downloads with the double bass pupils in their ensemble.

What books are available? This book contains the score and piano part, and there are separate books for violin, viola, cello, and double bass.

Happy Christmas!

Kathy and David Blackwell

1. We wish you a merry Christmas

English trad.
arr. KB & DB

Happily ♩ = 120

1 VIOLIN/
VIOLA/
CELLO

2 VIOLIN/
VIOLA/
CELLO

DOUBLE
BASS

PIANO

8

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

6. Christmas Medley

arr. KB & DB

While shepherds watched their flocks*

Joyfully ♩ = 104

1 VIOLIN/
VIOLA/
CELLO

2 VIOLIN/
VIOLA/
CELLO

DOUBLE
BASS

PIANO

mf

mf

mf

mf

mf

This system contains the first six measures of the piece. It features four staves: three for strings (1 Violin/Viola/Cello, 2 Violin/Viola/Cello, and Double Bass) and one for Piano. The strings enter in measure 5 with a half note G4, marked *mf*. The piano accompaniment begins in measure 1 with a half note G3 and a half note D4, also marked *mf*. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

f

f

f

f

f

f

This system contains measures 7 through 12. The string parts (1 Violin/Viola/Cello, 2 Violin/Viola/Cello, and Double Bass) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked *f*. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines, also marked *f*. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system.

* English trad., from Este's Psalter (1592)

14

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

ff

ff

ff

O little town of Bethlehem*

21

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

Gently ♩ = 92

mp

mp

mp

Gently ♩ = 92

mp legato

Ped. *con Ped.*

26

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

mf

mf

mf

mf

* English trad.

10. Cantemos a María

Let's sing to Mary

Dominican Republic trad.
arr. KB & DB

With joy ♩ = 132

vn descant (opt.)

VIOLIN DESCANT (opt.)

1 VIOLIN/ VIOLA/ CELLO

2 VIOLIN/ VIOLA/ CELLO

DOUBLE BASS

PIANO

f

f

f

pizz.

f

6

VN DESCANT

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

13. Joy to the world

G. F. Handel (1685–1759)
arr. KB & DB

Stately ♩ = 84

1 VIOLIN/
VIOLA/
CELLO

2 VIOLIN/
VIOLA/
CELLO

DOUBLE
BASS

PIANO

5

1 VN/VA/VC

2 VN/VA/VC

DB

PIANO

