

Silent Night

words by JOSEPH MOHR

music by FRANZ XAVER GRUBER

arr. by JUSTIN PYNE and TREBUCHET

Peace (♩ = 92)

mp Sleep in heav - en - ly Peace

drone cont.

Detailed description: This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is in a piano (*mp*) dynamic. The vocal line begins with a whole rest in the first measure, followed by the lyrics 'Sleep in heav - en - ly Peace'. The piano accompaniment features a drone bass line with dotted half notes and chords in the right hand. The text 'drone cont.' is written below the bass line.

"Oo" synth
Si - lent night, Ho - ly night.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 5-8. The vocal line has the lyrics 'Si - lent night, Ho - ly night.' The piano accompaniment continues with the drone bass line and chords. A 'synth' effect is indicated above the first measure of the vocal line.

All is calm, All is bright.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 9-12. The vocal line has the lyrics 'All is calm, All is bright.' The piano accompaniment continues with the drone bass line and chords.

Round you virgin, Mo - ther and child.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 13-16. The vocal line has the lyrics 'Round you virgin, Mo - ther and child.' The piano accompaniment continues with the drone bass line and chords.

Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild.

Detailed description: This system contains measures 17-20. The vocal line has the lyrics 'Ho - ly in - fant so ten - der and mild.' The piano accompaniment continues with the drone bass line and chords.

Sleep in heav - en - ly Peace (ee) (ee) (-eace)

Sleep in heav - en - ly Peace

bell

Sleep in heav - en - ly Peace.

A Child is Born

Immanuel

(God with us)

*In the winter of 1792, while an infant state in North America
is blinking its eyes under a new Bill of Rights composed by a self-determined people,
having fought free from the strangles of colonial imposition and control,*

*A baby is born across the ocean, in the mountains of Austria.
His mother, Anna, works with her hands in embroidery.*

*Anna's kinfolk, the people
of the salt mines in Hallein,
wield pickaxes and pulleys
in the great halls of
crystal and limestone,
carved long, in the entry
to the mountain's Deep*



*The boy carries the patrilineage
of Franz Mohr, a soldier
whose name he bears, owing to tradition – like his father in turn;
yet, this man did not stay with the army's fight, but deserted that cause,
and also did not return to see his son.*

*At the infant's baptism, the recorded godfather of the boy
is the last town executioner in Salzburg, who
sends a representative to confer.*

*Anna cares for the lives and souls of her 4 children, though she is not married,
and the boy Joseph grows up a witness to poverty.
Affected by the wars of Napoleon, the people long for peace and any comfort.*

*A ray of hope and purpose enters Joseph's life
when a Catholic vicar takes him under his wing,
brings music into his life, and secures the boy's education.
At age 23, he graduates the seminary and sets out
to provide relief in the war-torn village of Ramsau.*

*Soon after, he will proceed to his first assignment –
in the town of Franz Mohr's family, called Mariapfarr.
(The parish of Mary)*

*In this setting, as assistant priest,
Joseph composes his poem –
as a realization! A praise; as a blessing
amid the people's appeal for peace and comfort.*

A New Carol for the People

*In poor health, Joseph returns home to his mother Anna's care
before he accepts another call, to help the money-poor parish
of St. Nicholas at Oberndorf.*

*As the great European wars settle,
The small town of Oberndorf, under the Archbishopric of Salzburg,
falls now under the Austrian empire,
while sister city Laufen, across the river Salzach,
remains the Kingdom of Bavaria.*

*With no home for priests,
Joseph sleeps in the church caretaker's house
and takes his meals at the Gasthof.*

*Here, among the common German people,
he comes to see that Mass and the hymns should be sung
in the language of the people, and not only in Latin.*

*Joseph and the good vicar, Father Kessler, know
this will raise church fellowship.*

*The church and government and officials do not like the change,
nor the lax of authority.*

*A replacement vicar, Georg Heinrich Nöstler,
relegates the church to sing exclusively in Latin;
no Germanic speech allowed.*



*The church organist, named Franz Xaver Gruber,
is a schoolteacher in a nearby town
and has a dream of becoming a composer.
He is sympathetic to the feeling of the people.
They form a German choir which allows both men and women to join,
singing at once together –
bucking the hardline reaction
by the establishment.*

On December 23, Joseph hears the performance of a traveling family singing group, who present the story of the nativity. Taking the long way home, Joseph soaks in the stillness of the frigid mountain valley and the inspired effects of the shared music, and he is reminded of his simple poem from two years before, at Mariapfarr.

Christmas Eve 1818

Joseph's preparations for the Midnight Mass music service are kaput. River rats needing dry homes from floods have damaged the large but delicate pipe organ installed above the altar.

With his poem in hand, he sets out for Franz Gruber's house in nearby Arnsdorf. Joseph asks Franz to help him compose a melody and chords for a song they can sing with the people.

Returning together to the church in time to teach the new refrain to the choir, the two young gentlemen sing a new song for the midnight assembly using only their voices and guitar.



In their own language, with simple accompaniment They reach a shared moment of gratitude and awe with a lilting melody in the uplifting Siciliana style.

A new carol for the people which sings a sure peace, reifying the gift of the birth of the Lamb

