

The Carols of Christmas: A Celebration of the Surprising Stories Behind Your Favorite Holiday Songs

Andrew Gant



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From Oxford professor and renowned British composer, a joyous account of the history behind our favorite carols. Everyone loves a carol in the end, even Ebenezer Scrooge. They have the power to summon up a special kind of mid-winter mood, like the aroma of gingerbread or the twinkle of lights on a tree. It's a kind of magic. But how did they get that magic? Andrew Gant choirmaster, church musician, university professor, and writer tells the story of some twenty carols, each accompanied by lyrics and music, unraveling a captivating, and often surprising, tale of great musicians and thinkers, saints and pagans, shepherd boys and choirboys, Readers get to delve into the history of such favorites as 'Good King Wenceslas,' 'Away in a Manger, 'and 'O, Tannenbaum,' discovering along the way how 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing' came to replace 'Hark, how all the welkin ring' and how Ralph Vaughan Williams applied the tune of an English folk song about a dead ox to a poem by a nineteenth century American pilgrim to make 'O Little Town of Bethlehem. 'A charming book that brims with anecdote, expert knowledge, and Christmas spirit, this is a fittingly joyous account of one of the best-loved musical traditions.



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