

86:II SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT!

II

(Christmas Night)

Anglo-American version  
after Franz Xaver Gruber (1781-1861)  
(arr. editor)

1. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
2. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight,  
3. Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light,

5  
Round you Vir - gin Mo - ther and Child; Ho - ly In - fant so ten - der and mild,  
Glo - ries stream from hea - ven a - far, Heaven - ly hosts sing: 'Al - le - lu - ia!  
Ra - diant, beams from thy ho - ly face With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

9  
Sleep in hea - ven - ly peace! Sleep in hea - ven - ly peace!  
Christ the Sa - viour is born! Christ the Sa - viour is born!  
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth! Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth!

(tr. John F. Young, 1820-85)

The well-known story of how 'Stille Nacht!' came to be written is more fable than fact. The received version is that on Christmas Eve 1818 the organ in the parish church of the little Lower Austrian (now Bavarian) town of Oberndorf had breathed its last, and the curate (Mohr) and assistant organist (Gruber) between them saved the day by quickly writing a carol to be sung at midnight mass with guitar

accompaniment. However, none of the many contemporary accounts suggests that there was any kind of emergency, and the organ remained in use for some years. 'Stille Nacht!' is in fact typical of the folk-like songs that organists in Austria and Bavaria would compose each year for the midnight service, and what Mohr and Gruber did was in no way out of the ordinary—except that they produced a

carol of Schubertian charm which from that first performance on.

There was always a strong folk mass in Austria and Catholic Cradle and shepherd-songs that medieval tradition of cradle-rock 'Nacht!' is unmistakably in this tradition. Gruber, an open, generous, untroubled copier of his carol to its early days without even troubling such copy came into the hands of folk-music enthusiast, Josef Strassinger group exploited the picturesque Tyrolean 'folk carol'. In the concert of 15 December 1832 was published the carol as the last of

(Four Authentic Tyrolean or for four voices with optional Sung by the Strasser Family. Faithfully transcribed from the Dresden, n.d.). Friese published 1833. Only after much controversy was the authorship of Mohr process that was hampered by the melody is almost identical. Inviertel, Gruber's homeland, zu an schen Haus'.

It was in the Dresden variant appeared which continued except in Germany and Austria and II), seemingly as a result Strassers from Gruber's soprano form that the carol spread and became popular. Like 'Joy to long time considered vulgar from most hymn- and carol-said to owe something to the film *The Bells of St Mary's*, 194

Gruber continued to perfect number of his arrangements solo parts to high voices. TV orchestra: in the first (dated 1832) he took up a new post in strings, flute, two clarinets, 1 the second (c.1845) is for a s