

# THE FIRST NOEL, THE ANGEL DID SAY

“The First Noel” is originally an English folk song. It is a special kind of folk song called a carol. Carols were sung at important times of the year, including Christmas and Easter.

Historically, a carol had a refrain in which everyone might join, and could be used for dancing. The joyous times of Christmas and Easter have for hundreds of years been occasions for singing and dancing carols. Songs with refrains have always been popular in the church. In the first place, they would allow everyone to sing, even though they might not have been able to remember the words of each stanza. Secondly, the refrain style of singing encourages people to participate creatively, making up individual stanzas with the whole group joining in on the refrains. Try to write a stanza of your very own for this carol.

Since “The First Noel” tells the story of Christmas it is known as a ballad carol. Another famous ballad carol is “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen.”

“The First Noel” was probably heard originally with lute (guitar-like instrument), recorder (flute-like instrument), and a variety of percussion instruments. The arrangement given below is intended to help you tell the story with music and words.

## THE FIRST NOEL

Traditional English Carol  
Bass Xylophone (Play for entire piece)

Arr. for Orff Instruments  
by Michael Hawn

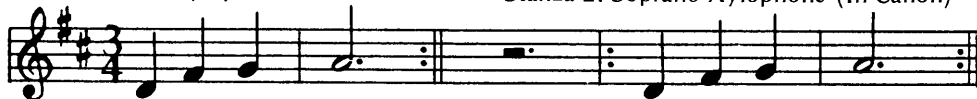
Bass Xylophone (Play for entire piece)



Parts for stanzas: Add one for each stanza until all are playing by last stanza. All drop out on refrain each time.

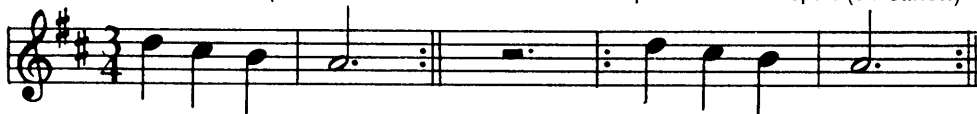
Stanza 1: Alto Xylophone

Stanza 2: Soprano Xylophone (In Canon)



Stanza 3: Alto Glockenspiel

Stanza 4: Soprano Glockenspiel (In Canon)



Stanza 5: Alto Metallophone

Stanza 6: Tamborine (Continue on last refrain)



Refrains: Oboe, Soprano Recorder or Flute (Refrain 1 – tacet)

Refrain 2:



Refrain 3:



Refrain 4:

