

**Silent Night
Chapel in
Oberndorf**

Silent Night!, Holy Night!

Silent Night, one of the best loved Christmas carols, was first performed two centuries ago. Now sung in 300 languages around the world, it is a key part of Yuletide festivities

● **1816:** *Joseph Mohr*, young assistant priest in Mariapfarr, Austria, composes six-stanza poem, *Stille Nacht*

● **Dec 24, 1818:** Mohr, now assistant priest at St Nicolas parish in Oberndorf, near Salzburg, asks school teacher and organist *Franz Xaver Gruber* to add melody to poem

● **Silent Night** heard for first time on Christmas Eve at St Nicolas church. Mohr plays guitar and sings tenor part, Gruber sings bass



1818: *Silent Night* sung for first time at Midnight Mass

1827: *Joseph Greis*, book printer from Steyr, prints first edition of song

1832: *Strasser* family, folk singers from Zillertal valley in Tyrol, gives first proven international performance in Leipzig, Germany. They and *Rainer* family, also folk singers, spread song's fame around Europe

1839: *Rainer* family performs *Silent Night* in New York

Dec 24, 1914: Soldiers on opposing sides in World War I sing it together across trenches of Western Front

1935: Version by U.S. singer *Bing Crosby* remains third best-selling single of all time, with 30 million copies sold

2011: Song declared intangible national cultural heritage by UNESCO

Dec 24, 2018: *Silent Night* marks 200th anniversary