Performance Notes
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Audio File 1: *What Child is This* and *Angels We Have Heard on High*
Hymn improvisations
The tune *Greensleeves* developed in England in the sixteenth century as melodic variations on Italian bass lines. This carol, however, is far more popular now in the U.S. than in the U.K.
The Christmas lyrics were written around 1865 by William Chatterton Dix, the general manager of a marine insurance company. Dix was a prolific writer of hymns and carols, including *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus* and *As With Gladness Men of Old*.
Angels We Have Heard on High started as a French carol in the 1840s. While sources already described it as "old," its earliest print source is 1842. English lyrics were written by Bishop James Chadwick in 1860.

Audio File 2: *The First Nowell*
This beloved familiar carol has surprisingly obscure origins. Its lyrics may derive from fifteenth-century verses, possibly printed on broadsides in the eighteenth century in Cornwall, and first published in 1823 as nine verses in a collection called *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*.
Its tune appeared in a collection in 1833, harmonized by John Stainer in 1871. Music historians wonder about the tune. Some say it sounds like a descant to an earlier tune that has vanished: its structure is unusual because the verse consists of a phrase repeated identically, the refrain ("Nowell, Nowell...") is a slight variant of that phrase, and every phrase ends on the third scale degree.

Audio File 3: *Joy to the World*
Hymn improvisation
One of Isaac Watts's fourteen hymns in our hymnal, *Joy to the World* is mostly drawn from Psalm 98 in Watts's 1719 collection, *Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. Various versions of the tune appeared in the 1830s—original composer unknown, though later adapters can be traced. These words were first matched to this tune in 1836 in a collection by Lowell Mason