



Der Botschafter

*WIR WÜNSCHEN ALLEN EIN FROHES
WEIHNACHTSFEST.*

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL.

Issue 12/2021

Austria's Stille Nacht

The most famous Christmas song in the world, ***Stille Nacht (Silent Night)*** comes to us from Austria. This beautiful Christmas carol is now sung and enjoyed around the world in over 140 languages. The familiar melody we recognize today as ***Stille Nacht*** is not quite the same one that Franz Gruber composed. Although legend would have it that the original song was lost, the world-famous carol did take many years to become the well-known carol it is today. Around 1820 Joseph Mohr also wrote a ***Stille Nacht*** arrangement, but in 1845 new handwritten arrangements appeared by Franz Gruber— one for a full orchestra in 1845, and another for organ in 1855. By 1900 ***Stille Nacht*** had made its way around the entire globe. But let's go back to the beginning.

It was 1818, a cold Christmas Eve, when

Joseph Franz Mohr (1792-1848) walked three kilometers from his home in the Austrian village of *Oberndorf bei Salzburg* to visit his friend **Franz Xaver Gruber** (1787-1863) in the neighboring town of *Arnsdorf bei Laufen*.

Two years earlier Mohr had written a poem for which he now desperately needed a carol for the Christmas Eve midnight mass, only hours away. Mohr hoped his friend, a school teacher who also served as the church's choir master and organist, could set his poem to music. Amazingly, within just a few hours, Franz Gruber composed the melody for Mohr on that Christmas Eve Day in 1818. Due to recent flooding of the near-by Salzach River, the organ at St. Nicholas Church had been put out of commission; therefore, the music was composed for guitar accompaniment. (it is believed that this is the guitar Gruber used)



In the latter half of the 19th century, when the carol was beginning to become very popular, people assumed the melody must have been composed by a more famous composer, possibly Beethoven, Haydn, or even Mozart. Although Gruber had made a written claim as the composer prior to his death in 1863, doubts lingered on into the 20th century. Only several years ago it was officially settled when an arrangement of ***Stille Nacht*** was authenticated in **Joseph Mohr's** hand. In the upper right-hand corner of the arrangement Mohr had written the words, ***Melodie von Fr. Xav. Gruber.***



Silent Night

Chapel

Stille Nacht

Gedächtnis-
kapelle

Oberndorf

Bei Salzburg

Photo: H
Flippo

In Austria, ***Stille Nacht*** is considered a national treasure and traditionally the song may not be played publicly before Christmas Eve nor may the carol be used commercially. Contrast this with the situation in most other countries, where you are likely to hear ***Silent Night*** playing in the local shopping malls or even as part of radio or TV commercials. Nevertheless, ***Silent Night*** enjoys a revered position among Christmas carols all over the world, regardless what it may be called or in which language it may be performed.

Franz Gruber was born on 25 Nov. 1787 in the Austrian town of *Hochburg*. He became a teacher and later moved to *Arnsdorf*. The rooms where he lived and worked can still be seen on the second floor of the *Arnsdorf* schoolhouse. Obviously, he did not spend all his time composing music: he fathered a dozen children by three different wives! In 1839 the Gruber family left *Arnsdorf* for *Hallein*, south of Salzburg. His grave lies next to the family's former home; annually it is adorned with a Christmas tree.

CAPE CORAL...

CAPE CORAL: Dec 4/5-Christkindlmarkt
Dec 31 – NYE Gala with Alex Meixner

CENTRAL FLORIDA...Dec 4--Christmas
Ball--Bob Houston Solo
Dec 31 – NYE Gala – Europa Band

Alpanrose Schuhplattler...No report

Hollywood...Dec 5 Christmas Party
11-5 p.m.
Dec 31 – NYE Party

Marion County...No report

Miami & Auerhahn...Dec 4 – Amigos
de la Musica
Dec 17 – Happy Hour with DJ Mack –
drink special monthly

NAPLES...No event

PALM COAST...Dec 10 Xmas Luncheon

PALM BEACHES..Dec 12 Krampusnacht
Dec 11-12: Christkindlmarkt –

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ONLY

PINELLAS COUNTY... Dec 4 Advent Dance
Alpine Doc Matthias

Dec 11 – Heimat Abend – Heinz & Zepp
Dec 18 – Christmas Dance – Eva Adams

SARASOTA...Dec 11 – Christmas D.D. Eva
Adams-Tara Country Club, Bradenton

SPRING HILL...Dec 10 – Christmas Party
4 p.m. with Eva Adams

Dec 31 – NYE with Manni Daum 7 p.m.

SUN CITY CENTER...Dec 9 – Christmas D.D.
Eva Adams Duo

TAMPA CULTURAL CENTER...Dec 5 – noon
Nikolaus Lunch, Bon Appetit, Dunedin

Dec 12 – Florida Orchestra Concert –
Holiday Pops Concert – Ruth Eckerd Hall
Every Sunday German Church Services:
germanradioshow.blogspot.com

THE VILLAGES...Dec 16 – Christmas Event
With Eva Adams

TREASURE COAST...Dec 5 – Deutscher
Weihnachtsgottesdienst – 3 p.m.
St. Andrews Lutheran Church, P.S.L.

Dec 12 – Christmas Dinner – Eva Adams

VENICE...Dec 4 – Christmas Party @
Pelican Point C.C.

WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA...Dec 5 –
Christmas Party with Eva Adams; Citrus
Hills Golf Club



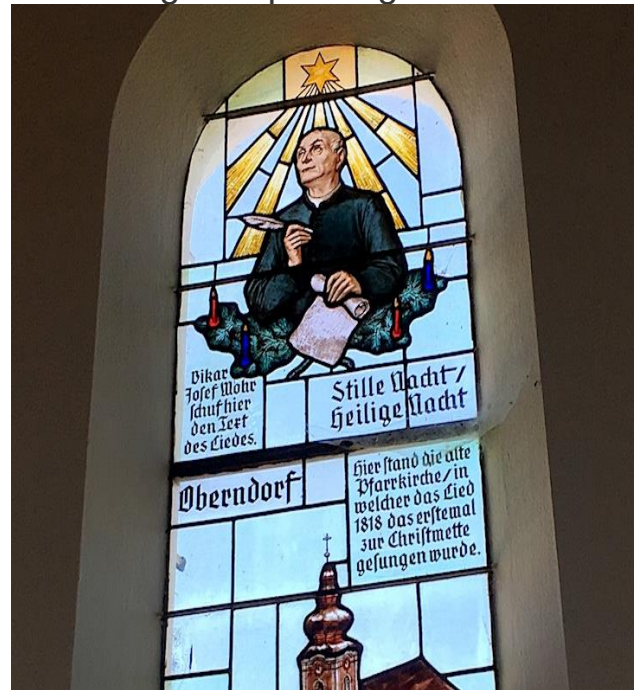
Joseph Franz Mohr, an illegitimate child, was born on 11 December 1792 in Salzburg. In August 1815, after receiving special papal dispensation required for illegitimate persons entering the priesthood, he became a Catholic priest. Mohr died penniless after having donated his modest earthly fortune for education of the children in the community. In the tiny Alpine ski resort of Wagrain, the **Joseph Mohr School** stands only yards away from his final resting place as a fitting memorial of the man who wrote the words heard round the world.

The first-known performance of **Stille Nacht** in the United States took place near the Trinity Church in New York City. The Rainer family singers of Austria included the German version of **Stille Nacht** in their repertoire during an appearance at the Alexander Hamilton Monument in 1839, 24 years before an English version of the carol would be published.

The **Silent Night** English translation which we sing today, first appeared in 1863—the year Franz Gruber died, and about 45 years after the initial performance in Austria.

John Freeman Young, an Episcopalian

priest, enjoyed translating European hymns and carols into English. It is his 135-year-old **Silent Night** text that is found today in most hymnals and Christmas carol collections published in the English-speaking world.



Interior of the **Silent Night Chapel (Stille-Nacht-Gedächtniskapelle)** in Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria. The stained-glass window depicts **Josef Mohr**, the author of the lyrics for **Silent Night**

PHOTO © Hyde Flippo



Editor: Charlotte Kappel cmk13@tampabay.rr.com