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Hey there and thanks for joining me for episode 60 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert and I'm the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy to have you join me today. A quick note before we get started -- if you're interested in piano lessons in the new year, my online piano lesson program will be open for enrollment from January 3rd-10th, which is just two weeks away. You can join the waitlist at [busykidsdopiano.com/waitlist](https://www.busykidsdopiano.com/waitlist), and that way you'll receive e-mail reminders when the program opens for enrollment, and I'll put the link to join the waitlist in this episode's show notes as well.

This episode is scheduled to air just a few days before many people around the world celebrate the Christmas holiday. Today we're going to learn about a Christmas carol that goes hundreds of years back in time -- "O Come O Come Emmanuel":

This carol is unusual because it doesn't necessarily have the celebratory tone of many Christmas carols, but has a tune that some describe using words like "haunting" or "dark". What are words you would use to describe the music you hear?

The original text, or words, of the carol is in the Latin language and we're not quite sure when it was written, though some believe it could have been as early as the 11th or 12th century -- and some believe even earlier than that. The earliest surviving evidence of the hymn's original text was published in 1710, meaning the hymn at least existed by that point. And the familiar tune that you hear linked with this text -- a tune called "Veni Emmanuel" was first linked with the hymn in 1851. The words of the original piece are a paraphrase of the O Antiphons. An antiphon is a short chant, but these antiphons were called O Antiphons because each antiphon begins with an "O" in the original language. The O Antiphons were used at vespers -- which were evening worship services -- on the last seven days of Advent, the season leading up to Christmas. Each

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antiphone is a name of Christ -- one of his attributes from the Bible. So each verse opens with this attribute or name of Christ -- Emmanuel, Wisdom, Lord, Root of Jesse, Key of David, etc. The first letter of each of these words in Latin forms an acrostic poem, which, when translated from Latin in reverse, means "I will be with you tomorrow." Can you see why these words would have special meaning during the Advent season, which is a season of waiting?

Many bands and musicians have performed this Advent carol throughout the years. You'll hear it performed as an a capella chant or sung by a choir with an organ in church. Pop singer Kelly Clarkson included it on her Christmas album, as did the punk rock band Bad Religion. Classical composers have also used the melody in sonatas or as themes in their concertos. Composer James MacMillan wrote a percussion concerto based on Veni, Veni Emmanuel -- can you pick out the carol's the melody in this excerpt from the concerto?

If you head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/60, I'm including a link to a YouTube playlist that has different performances and interpretations of this famous Advent song. As you enjoy the holiday break with your family or friends, I encourage you to have this playlist on in the background and maybe even share a little bit of what you learned about the hymn with them. Again you can find that playlist at Busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/60.

Thank you so much for joining me today. For those who will be celebrating Christmas this week, merry Christmas from my family to yours, and I look forward to connecting with you again after the holidays for more musical discoveries on the Busy Kids Love Music podcast. Bye for now!