

O TANNENBAUM

Traditional

Brad Hansen
arranger

PROGRAM NOTES

About the Music

Initially, *O Tannenbaum* was a 16th-century German folk song about evergreen trees, and in 1824 Ernst Anschütz adapted it into *O Christmas Tree*. The arrangement begins with a simple tune in the piano over a thoroughly reharmonized chord progression. This tune becomes a countermelody to the first verse, sung by the choir. After a brief solo by the tenor, the choir returns to complete the stanza. Next, a ragtime piano solo breaks out in the style of Fats Waller, with the choir punctuating in a breathy fashion. Things then slow down, with an a capella verse sung in German. The piano arpeggiates an accompaniment to the last verse, sung by the choir. The original piano solo puts a little bookend on the arrangement. In rehearsal we addressed some German diction, along with some tight harmonies in the choral parts on the altered chords. The beauty in the music is uplifting!

It is drawn from Hansen's *Medley of Carols*. All arrangements in the medley feature the piano as an equal partner with the choir. The harmonic language is jazz oriented, cast in asymmetrical and mixed meters, with swing and Latin rhythms. Suitable for High School, College, Church, and Community choirs.

Vocal Ranges S: Eb4 – F5 A: C4 – Bb4 T: Db3 – F4 B: F2 – C4. **Duration** approx. 6' 00".

Lyrics

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How lovely are your branches!
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How lovely are your branches!
Not only green in summer's heat,
But also winter's snow and sleet.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How lovely are your branches!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!
Wie oft hat schon zur Winterszeit
Ein Baum von dir mich hoch erfreut!
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
You bear a joyful message:
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
You bear a joyful message:
That faith and hope shall ever bloom
To bring us light in winter's gloom.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
You bear a joyful message

(Translation of German verse)
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How much I love to see you!
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How much I love to see you!
How often in the wintertime
A tree like you has brought me joy!
O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree,
How much I love to see you!

About the Composer

Brad Hansen is a pianist, composer, and Professor Emeritus at Portland State University where he teaches Theory and Composition. He previously taught at Ole Miss, Humboldt State (CA), and Ball State (IN). Hansen studied at Berklee, Grinnell, Cincinnati Conservatory, Northern Colorado, and the University of Oregon. His instrumental and choral works have been performed worldwide. The Oregon Regional Arts and Culture Council awarded him a grant to stage the *Medley of Carols* in 2025, sung by the PSU Chamber Choir accompanied by Darrell Grant.

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Arranged by Brad Hansen
for SSATTB voices and Piano

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Andante ♩ = 84

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

mp *dolcissimo*

p

Red. _____

5

Solo mp

O Tan - nen - baum,

p

pp

Red. _____

10 *cresc.*

— O Tan-nen - baum, — How love - ly are your

p

15 *All mp*

bran - ches! — O Tan - nen - baum, — O Tan-nen - baum,

O Tan nen baum, O Tan-nen - baum, Tan-nen - baum,

Tan - - nen - baum, —

p

pp