

Byers' Choice® Ltd. Caroler Chronicle



Edition I

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Drosselmeier: A Dear Godpapa for the Nutcracker Children

It is our great pleasure to introduce to you Herr Drosselmeier, the fourth in our Nutcracker series of Caroler® figurines. The author of "Nutcracker and the King of Mice" describes the rather quirky Drosselmeier as "anything but a nice-looking man. He was small and lean, with a great many wrinkles on his face, a big patch of black plaster where his right eye ought to have been, and not a hair on his head; which was why he wore a fine white wig, made of glass..."*

Despite his vaguely sinister looks, Drosselmeier is, in truth, a dear Godpapa to the Stahlbaum children, Maria, Fritz and Louise (the first three figures in our Nutcracker series). Drosselmeier's many talents, from fixing the old hall clock to spinning elaborate tales of fantastical kingdoms, have endeared him to their hearts forever. On this Christmas, Drosselmeier brings an amazing mechanized gadget which he has invented himself, and which provides inspiration for Marie's incredible dream.

Our Drosselmeier holds a music box with an elegant couple that actually dances! With his black cape, eye patch and white wig, Drosselmeier may look a little frightful, but the gleam in his eye and merry countenance show the old man for what he truly is — a sprightly sower of the Christmas spirit.

* from "Nutcracker and Mouse King," in *The Best Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, edited by E.F. Bleier, Dover Publications, 1967

A Cast of Christmas Characters for 1996



The fifth in the series, this year's Salvation Army Drummer beats the big bass drum as he calls on holiday shoppers to open their hearts and their pocketbooks to those less fortunate. A portion of all proceeds from each of our Salvation Army Caroler figurines goes to help the Salvation Army minister to the physical and spiritual needs of men, women and children in need.

Our Actress pays homage to the theatrical players of Charles Dickens' day, who were a primary source of entertainment in an age before mass media. Dressed with just a touch more flamboyance than most of her fellow Carolers, the Actress looks as though she has slipped out the back door of the theater to attend to her holiday shopping between shows.

Joyce has assembled a colorful and lively cast of characters for 1996, sure to en



What conjures up the warm feelings of Christmas more than a cake of hot spiced gingerbread? Joyce designed our Gingerbread Peddler, sixth in our Cries of London series, after a famed vendor of gingerbread in Old London known as "Tiddy Diddy Doll, lol, lol, lol." Tiddy Diddy Doll received his unusual nickname from a song that he regularly sang at the end of his "act" of amusing nonsense. Hailed as the king of the itinerant street peddlers, Tiddy Diddy Doll dressed the part — in ruffled shirt, fashionable suit and silk stockings. Our Gingerbread Peddler comes with his own coal stove and basket of gingerbread cakes.

New in 1996 are our Teen Carolers figurines, which are created in limited editions of 100, just like our Adult, Grandparent, and Children Carolers. The Teens will be available in both Traditional and Victorian garb.

to enhance your collection or make a great gift for someone special.



Our Shoppers for 1996 are searching for special gifts for their grandchildren. The grandmother holds a large doll and carries a basket with a kitten, while grandfather is loaded down with all the trimmings for the tree.

The Puppeteer entertains young and old with his knack for bringing his wooden marionette to life. Joyce was inspired to create this Caroler during a visit to Salzburg, Austria. She and Bob were visiting the Christmas Market there when they came upon a puppeteer bringing laughter and joy to the holiday shoppers. Joyce hopes that this Caroler will remind you, as it did her, of the wonders of being a child.

Knickerbocker Santa: An American Image



"His eyes how they twinkled! His dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, His nose like a cherry". . .

Of course you know the rest of the description... the pipe clenched in his teeth, a belly that shook when he laughed, "a right jolly old elf."

Clement C. Moore, a professor of bible studies, penned "A Visit of St. Nicholas" on Christmas Eve, 1822, as a gift for his children. He never intended that it be published, but a friend submitted it to a newspaper in Troy, N.Y. in 1823. Dr. Moore's image of St. Nick still embodies all that Americans know and love about Santa Claus today.

While Dr. Moore brought St. Nick to life with his words, it took political cartoonist Thomas Nast to create the earliest visual images of an American Santa Claus. Nast drew a Santa figure based on Moore's poem, giving him an elfin stature and fur-trimmed knickers, hence the name Knickerbocker Santa. Early Dutch inhabitants of New York, dubbed Knickerbockers by the

American writer Washington Irving, often wore knee pants, which came to be called knickers. Adding to this Dutch, and hence Knickerbocker, look for the American Santa were his buckle shoes and Dutch-style pipe.

With the increasing importance of Santa as a symbol of the American Christmas, Santa's stature has grown from the gnome-like one of Nast and Moore to a full-size man who couldn't possibly fit down a chimney! Still, "jolly old elf" still seems an apt description of the Knickerbocker Santa Caroler figurine that Joyce has designed for you.

Children of the World Series Continues with St. Lucia

The latest addition to our Children of the World series is St. Lucia. While our earliest Children of the World Figurines were only available through the newsletter, we're pleased to announce that this series will now be available directly from your favorite Caroler dealer.

The feast of St. Lucia is celebrated on December 13 throughout Sweden, and indeed by those of Swedish descent the world over. On the morning of this special day, the eldest daughter in each family dons a long white robe with a red sash and fastens a wreath of seven lighted candles to her head. She then brings coffee and special raisin buns called "lussekatter" to the bed of each family member.

The origins of this custom are not entirely clear, but it is known that Lucia was a Christian martyr in 4th century Syracuse (present-day Sicily). Legend has it that she wore a wreath of candles in her hair so that her hands would be free to carry food and drink to Christians hiding in the catacombs to escape religious persecution. Swedish Vikings brought this tale of Lucia back to their homeland, thus sparking the evolution of this charming custom.



Pilgrims Look Festive for Fall



Joyce has designed a pair of Pilgrims that are sure to add warmth and a new spirit to your Thanksgiving table. This man and woman are just the first of what Joyce hopes will be a whole cast of Caroler figurines representing the earliest European settlers in America, the Pilgrims.

Byers' Choice® Ltd.

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The Actress
New in 1996