

YULE TIDE

IMPROV ISA TIONS

HOLIDAY
MUSIC
REIMAGINED
FOR SAXOPHONE

**RICK
HIRSCH**

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Introduction

Here are imaginative interpretations of fifteen beloved Christmas and Chanukah songs. I believe there's a piece in here for every holiday mood, from peaceful to sugar-buzzed, sentimental to sneaky.

My intent is to reveal something new about the character of each of these melodies, and to have them sound as though the performer is improvising.

I hope this music brings much joy and warmth to you, your family, and your community.

RICK HIRSCH

Performance Notes & Tips

- Interpret this music as you wish. You can play it from a *classical* perspective, a *jazz* viewpoint, or anywhere in between.
- These pieces sound great at various tempos. Play them at the speeds(s) you like best.
- Learn and perform these pieces in any order you choose. They appear here alphabetically—not in a performance sequence or order of difficulty.
- Don't let the extended techniques get in your way of making good music. If you struggle with them, keep working at it. Or, simply disregard them.

About the Arranger

Rick Hirsch (b.1970) is an award-winning composer, arranger, educator, and saxophonist based in State College, Pennsylvania.

His music has been performed by the Capitol Quartet, US Navy Commodores, Birdland Big Band, Osland Saxophone Quartet, and countless students, amateurs, and professionals worldwide.

He studied saxophone and improvisation with Yusef Lateef, Lynn Klock, Steve Duke, Boysie Lowery, and Bill Byerly. He grew up in Delaware and has music degrees from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Northern Illinois University.

Program Notes

Adeste Fidelis is presented in a lyrical 5/4. The trick is to play it so smoothly your listeners don't notice the odd meter.

Angels We Have Heard on High is hopped-up on sweets. Good luck.

Away in a Manger is gentle, with a little bounce.

Deck the Halls keeps changing keys, and ends with a taste of the Blues.

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen is slightly abstract, but there's no doubt what tune this is.

Go Tell It on the Mountain is a joyful swinger.

Here We Come A-wassailing is a little cheeky. It's okay if it makes people chuckle.

I Saw Three Ships borrows an ornamentation technique from traditional Celtic music, and ends with a brief nod to French Impressionism. *Tres bien!*

Ma'oz Tzur (Rock of Ages) is traditionally sung when lighting the menorah. It's presented here in 3/4.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel is a haunting Advent melody in the Aeolian mode. This version begins and ends with an ostinato figure.

Oh Chanukah can't decide if it's a Klezmer romp or a funky groove tune. *Oy vey!*

Oh Tannenbaum is short and sweet, inspired in part by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Silent Night features interplay between the melody and implied counter-melodies.

We Wish You a Merry Christmas is over-excited, and uses extended techniques galore.

The Wexford Carol alternates between Mixolydian and Dorian modes. Unusual fingering techniques enhance its unique mood.

Ornamentation and Extended Techniques used in *Yuletide Improvisations*

watch detailed explainer videos at [YouTube.com/814jazz](https://www.youtube.com/814jazz)

Mordent

Swiftly play the written note, the note above it (in the key signature), then return to the written note.

Notated



Performed



Turn or Flip

Insert two quick notes that lead into the next note: the note above the written pitch, then the written pitch. The note above is usually in the key, unless a note out of the key is easier to execute.

Notated



Performed



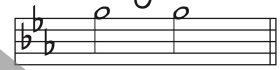
Vocal Gestures: Scoop Bend (or Dip)

Use your vocal mechanism to change the tuning, just as you would if you were to sing them. A *scoop* begins flat, then slides up into the notated pitch. A *bend* begins in tune, drops flat, then returns to pitch.

Scoop



Bend



Rhythmic Overtone

This is a way to articulate rhythm without tonguing each note. Play a low-note fingering, but produce a higher pitch. Overtone fingerings are used here to create an effect in which there's a subtle change of timbre on consecutive notes on the same pitch.

Notated



Fingered



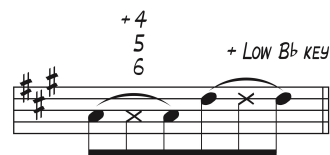
Sounds



Rhythmic Venting

This is another way to articulate rhythm without tonguing. Press additional key(s) to change the timbre of a note without changing the note itself, other than slightly changing the intonation. The notations indicate which keys to add.

In the example 4, 5, and 6 are the right-hand keys *F*, *E*, and *D*. Add these keys to your usual *A* fingering. On the vented *D*, add low *Bb* pinky key.



Slap Tongue

This is a percussive effect involving your tongue, reed, and extra air pressure. Check out one of the several good tutorials on YouTube.

Finger Pop

Create a percussive sound by firmly closing a low *D* fingering (or low *Bb*). When done properly, the sound has some *thunk*—not just *clack*.

watch videos



Adeste Fidelis

for solo saxophone

Duration :50

TRADITIONAL
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

(ESPRESSIVO) ♩ = 144

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 5/4 time signature. Starts with a double bar line. The first measure contains a half note F#4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The fourth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fifth measure contains a dotted quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The sixth measure contains a dotted quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note F#5. The seventh measure contains a dotted quarter note E5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note C5. The eighth measure contains a dotted quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The ninth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The tenth measure contains a dotted quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

mf

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Starts with a measure rest for 5 measures. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a dotted quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The fifth measure contains a dotted quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note F#5. The sixth measure contains a dotted quarter note E5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note C5. The seventh measure contains a dotted quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The eighth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The ninth measure contains a dotted quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3. The tenth measure contains a dotted quarter note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Starts with a measure rest for 9 measures. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a dotted quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The fifth measure contains a dotted quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note F#5. The sixth measure contains a dotted quarter note E5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note C5. The seventh measure contains a dotted quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The eighth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The ninth measure contains a dotted quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3. The tenth measure contains a dotted quarter note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

f *SUB. mp*

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Starts with a measure rest for 13 measures. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a dotted quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The fifth measure contains a dotted quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note F#5. The sixth measure contains a dotted quarter note E5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note C5. The seventh measure contains a dotted quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The eighth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The ninth measure contains a dotted quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3. The tenth measure contains a dotted quarter note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

mf *f*

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Starts with a measure rest for 17 measures. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a dotted quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The fifth measure contains a dotted quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note F#5. The sixth measure contains a dotted quarter note E5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note C5. The seventh measure contains a dotted quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The eighth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The ninth measure contains a dotted quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3. The tenth measure contains a dotted quarter note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 6/4 time signature. Starts with a measure rest for 21 measures. The first measure contains a dotted quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a dotted quarter note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure contains a dotted quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The fourth measure contains a dotted quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The fifth measure contains a dotted quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note F#5. The sixth measure contains a dotted quarter note E5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note C5. The seventh measure contains a dotted quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The eighth measure contains a dotted quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The ninth measure contains a dotted quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note A3. The tenth measure contains a dotted quarter note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The piece ends with a fermata over the final note.

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



Angels We Have Heard on High

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration :35

(ROLICKING) ♩ = 160

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



† play G# with low B key

Away in a Manger

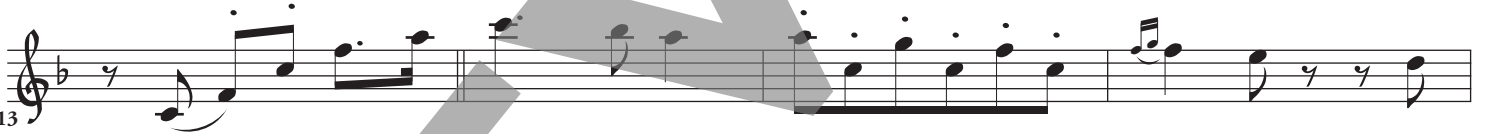
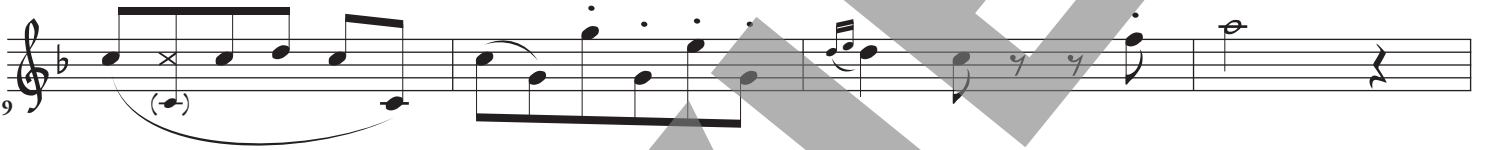
for solo saxophone

Duration :40

JAMES R. MURRAY

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

(DELICATELY) ♩ = 108



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† front F

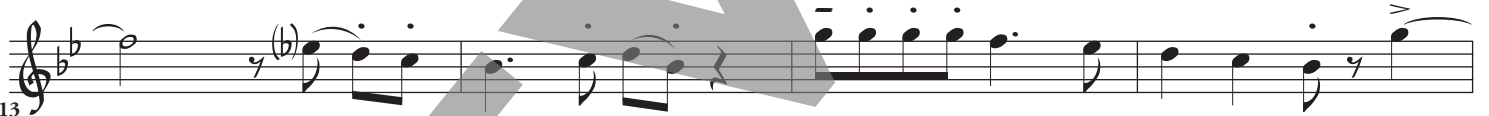
Deck the Halls

for solo saxophone

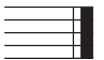
Duration :35

TRADITIONAL
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

(PLAYFULLY) ♩ = 138



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Thanks.



PREVIEW

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

for solo saxophone

Duration :40

TRADITIONAL

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

(LIGHTLY) ♩ = 132

SIM. STACCATO

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Starts with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4. Dynamics: *mp*, *p*.

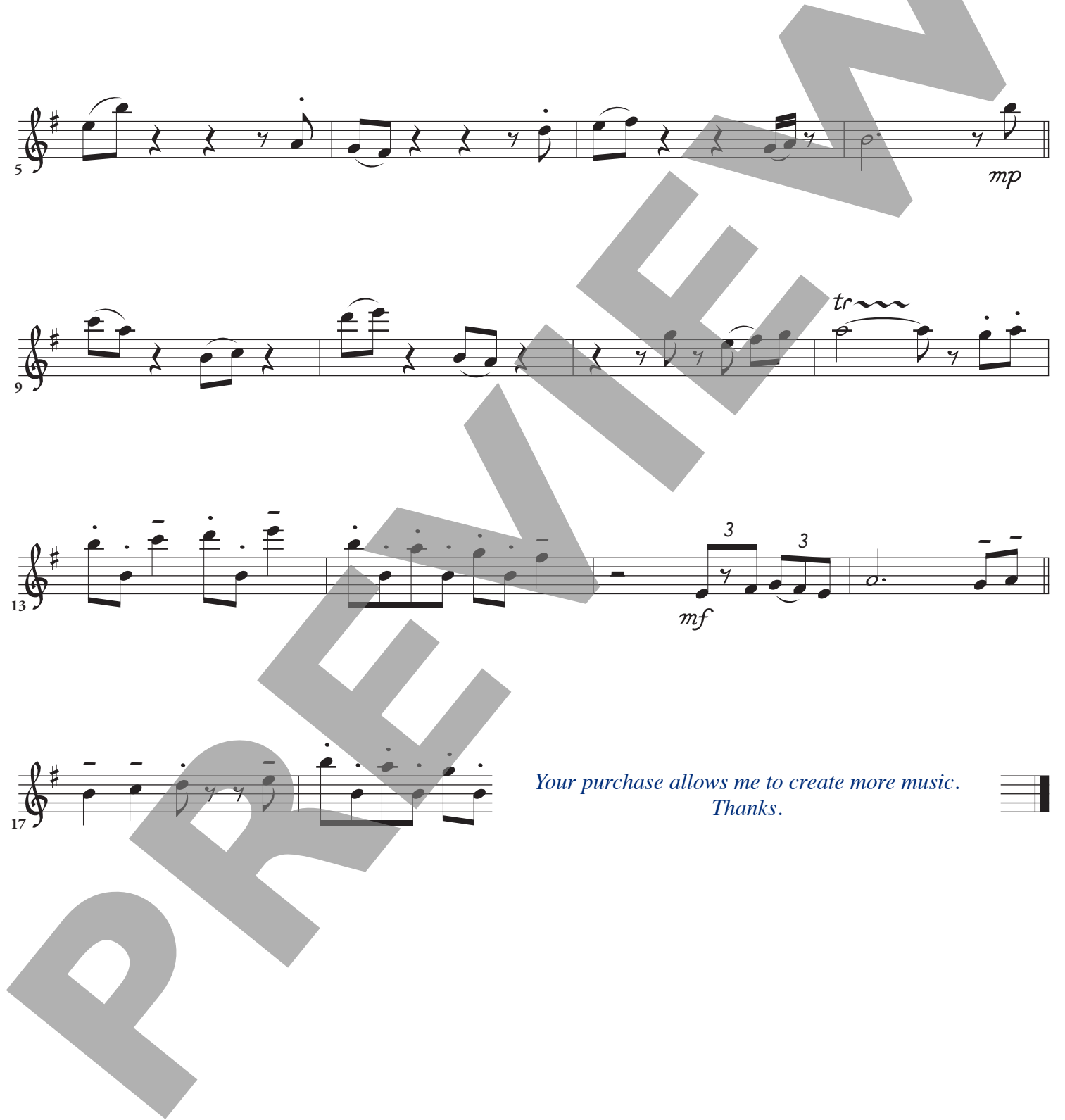
Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Starts with a quarter note G4. Dynamics: *mp*.

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Starts with a quarter note G4. Includes a trill (*tr*) over a quarter note G4. Dynamics: *mp*.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Starts with a quarter note G4. Includes two triplet markings (*3*) over eighth notes. Dynamics: *mf*.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Starts with a quarter note G4. Dynamics: *mf*.

Your purchase allows me to create more music.
Thanks.



Go Tell It on the Mountain

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL

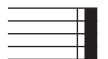
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration 1:20

(FREELY)

(GOSPEL SWING) ♩ = 152

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Here We Come A-Wassailing

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration 1:00

(CIRCUS TEMPO) ♩ = 168

(RALL.)

1. ♩ = 76 (LAZY SWING) ♩ = ♩³

♩ = 96 (EVENLY)

2. ♩ = 168 (FINGER-POPPIN' SWING)

(MOLTO RALL.)

(GRANDIOSO)

♩ = 88 + Low B^b KEY

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



I Saw Three Ships

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration :40

(LIGHTLY) ♩. = 112

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



† play grace notes before the beat.

†† use side D on this mordent (palm key only, no octave key).

Ma'oz Tzur

for solo saxophone

Duration 1:10

(WARMLY) ♩ = 160 (FEEL IN '1')

TRADITIONAL

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

LEGATO

mf

(RIGHT HAND)
+4
5
6 + LOW B \flat KEY RH

+ B \flat

13

(RIT.) 4

19 *f*

(RUBATO) W/ MOTION SLOWING

(A TEMPO) FASTER ♩ = 184

mp

24

27 + B \flat

33 *mf*

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

for solo saxophone

Duration 2:00

(EXPRESSIVO) ♩ = 76

TRADITIONAL

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

SLIGHTLY RUBATO (LET IT BREATHE)

(IN STRICTER TEMPO)

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



25

29

34

38

42

46

50

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



Oh Chanukah

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration :50

(PEPPY KLEZMER FUNK) ♩ = 138

6

11

17

22

27

33

39

45

51

SQUEEZE

TONGUE STOP

SOFT

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.

O Tannenbaum

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration :45

(RUBATO & LEGATO) ♩ = 92

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PREVIEW

Silent Night

for solo saxophone

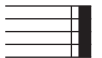
Duration 1:20

FRANZ GRUBER

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

(SWEETLY) ♩ = 76

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



We Wish You a Merry Christmas

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL
arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration :55

(MISCHIEVOUSLY) ♩ = 160+

STACCATISSIMO THROUGHOUT

5

p CRESC. POCO A POCO *mf*

5

tr *mf*

9

(RIGHT HAND)
+4
5
6
+ LOW B_b KEY
+ B_b
SUB. p CRESC. POCO A POCO *mf* RH

13

+ B_b
RH

17

+ B_b + LOW C + B_b + C
RH

KEY POP †
1
3
4
5
6
v

21

SIM. *mf* *p* *SUB. f*

25

(MOLTO RALL.) *mf* RH

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



† or slap tongue

The Wexford Carol

for solo saxophone

TRADITIONAL

arranged by RICK HIRSCH

Duration 2:00

(1ST X) FREELY
(2ND X) A TEMPO ♩ = 60

4
+ Low B \flat Key
SIM.

8
+ Low B \flat Key

11
+ B \flat

15
†

19
+ B \flat

23
+ B \flat

26

Your purchase allows me to create more music. Thanks.



† use low B \flat key to play Ab
†† use low D \flat key to play Ab