



CHRISTMAS
SONGS

in the
PUBLIC DOMAIN

(AND THOSE THAT AREN'T)

cdbaby

THE HOLIDAY SEASON — a time for family, tradition, peace on earth, good will towards men, and ridiculously ballooning music sales figures.

Yep, that's right. **Between October and December, millions of people are searching for new holiday songs — and they could be purchasing YOUR music!**

Recording a few holiday tunes is one of the best ways to connect with new listeners who might not have otherwise heard your music. But before you choose which Christmas, Chanukah, Solstice, Kwanzaa, Festivus, and New Years songs you're going to tackle, **you should know ahead of time whether or not you need to pay a publisher/songwriter for the right to record their composition.**

To make things a little simpler for you, [CD Baby](#) has created these two handy lists of popular holiday tunes:



POPULAR HOLIDAY SONGS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

This is a list of tunes for which the initial intellectual property rights have expired. Generally composed before 1923, "Public Domain" works are NOT considered cover songs and do NOT require mechanical royalties be paid to the original composer or publisher.

Angels We Have Heard On High

Auld Lang Syne

Away In A Manger

Coventry Carol

Deck The Halls

For Unto Us

Go Tell It On The Mountain

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Good King Wenceslas

Hallelujah Chorus

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Here We Come A-Caroling (Wassail Song)

I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day

I Saw Three Ships

In The Bleak Midwinter

It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Jingle Bells

Jolly Old St. Nicholas

Joy To The World

O Come All Ye Faithful

O Come O Come Emmanuel

O Holy Night

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Once In Royal David's City

Silent Night

The First Noel

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Up On The Housetop

We Three Kings

We Wish You A Merry Christmas

What Child Is This

POPULAR HOLIDAY SONGS THAT ARE NOT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Believe it or not, these songs (as old and ubiquitous as some of them are) have not yet passed into the Public Domain. The rights for these compositions are still administered by publishers, and a mechanical royalty would need to be paid in order to record and release cover versions of these songs.

A Holly Jolly Christmas

by Johnny Marks

All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth

by Donald Yetter Gardner

*Carol Of The Bells**

by Peter J. Willhousky and Mykola Leontovich

**The lyrics and title of Carol of the Bells are copyrighted. The music, a Ukrainian folk song called "Shchedryk," is in the public domain. In order to avoid paying a mechanical royalty, your recording would need to be an instrumental version of the composition, and you could NOT call it "Carol of the Bells".*

Do You Hear What I Hear?

by Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne Baker

Feliz Navidad

by Jose Feliciano

Frosty The Snowman

by Steve Nelson and Walter E. Rollins

Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas

by Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin

Here Comes Santa Claus (Right Down Santa Claus Lane)

by Gene Autry and Oakley Haldeman

I'll Be Home For Christmas

by Walter Kent, Kim Gannon, and Buck Ram

It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year

by Edward Pola and George Wyle

Jingle Bell Rock

by Joseph Carleton Beal and James Ross Boothe

Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!

by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne

Little Drummer Boy

by Katherine K. Davis, Henry V. Onorati, and Harry Simeone

Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree

by Johnny Marks

Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer

by Johnny Marks

Santa Claus Is Coming To Town

by Fred Coots and Haven Gillespie

Silver Bells

by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans

Sleigh Ride

by Leroy Anderson and Mitchell Parish

The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire)

by Mel Tormé and Robert Wells

White Christmas

by Irving Berlin

Winter Wonderland

by Felix Bernard and Richard B. Smith

Want to cover one of these copyrighted songs? You can easily obtain the required mechanical licenses from CD Baby's partner [Limelight](#), a service that helps independent artists clear the rights for cover songs.

Please note: This information is correct to the best of our knowledge, but you are ultimately responsible for securing the rights for any copyrighted material you cover. In other words — this isn't legal advice, so make sure you do your homework before selling songs you didn't write.

Sources:

<http://www.pdinfo.com/>

<http://www.copyrightsolver.com/>

<https://www.songclearance.com/>

About CD Baby:

CD Baby, the world's largest digital distributor of independent music, is a company run BY musicians FOR musicians. We've paid out more than \$250 million to DIY artists all over the world. From our humble beginnings in 1998 as a small, one-man operation in a garage, to our current standing as one of the most trusted names in independent music, we've developed a host of services to help artists, including physical and digital distribution, warehousing and shipping of CDs, DVDs, and vinyl, promotional tools including our MusicStore on Facebook and Music Store widget, affordable web-hosting and design, download cards, and disc duplication.

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