



Jingle Bells

by [Richard Gilewitz](#)

I have to admit that when I came up with my first instinctive rendition of this piece, it was intended as a joke. I had been asked to play a wedding for a friend and when the bride came walking down the aisle I was supposed to play the traditional "Here Comes the Bride". I joked with my friend that I would probably burst into "Jingle Bells" by mistake. We both laughed about the idea until the moment came and I accidentally *did!*

Actually, this well-known American Christmas tune was written by a Boston minister for his children's Sunday school class in celebration of Thanksgiving. James Pierpont composed the song in 1857 with lyrics depicting the snow, laughter, and family gatherings during the holiday. "Jingle Bells" was so well liked that it carried over into the Christmas

season and has become a standard for both children and adults. The cheerful melody and sound effects using sleigh bells have become synonymous with the arrival of Santa Clause or Father Christmas.

Over time I added my own flourishes to "Jingle Bells" and at this point this arrangement seems to have a happy bounce to it with a subtle sense of humor. The left-hand 3rd finger constantly jumps back and forth between the 3rd fret of strings 5 and 6. The right hand on occasion produces a roll with a *thumb drag* where the 'p' finger (thumb) plays strings 5 and 4 immediately followed by *i*, *m*, and *a* in quick succession. The first time this occurs is in measure 2.

The arrangement makes frequent use of a series of 16th notes creating the impression of a rapid tempo and syncopated feel which contribute to the bounce (there's that word again!)...keep it in mind.

I hope you have fun with this arrangement but use it to jumpstart your own creativity. I myself spontaneously insert minor alterations each time I play the piece as I did in the companion recording to this article. Be careful not to lose the melody (as I originally did until my friend at Mel Bay, Stephen Rekas, batted me back into place). Feel free to experiment and come up with your own version of "Jingle Bells".

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!
Richard Gilewitz

The entire tune "Jingle Bells" played by Richard Gilewitz can be heard by [clicking here](#).

8th

1 3

left hand fingers above

1 3

T
A
B

3rd finger alternating bass

roll with p p i m a

F bar position

8th

4

T
A
B

8th

7

T
A
B

10

Place bar down now Raise hinge bar 3

13

Place bar down now

16

19

4

T
A
B

22

Place bar down now

strum with p

T
A
B

25

p i m a