



# Easy Christmas Carols on the 17-Note Kalimba

This is a DEMO Version of the  
Easy 17-Note Christmas Book.

You can [purchase the full download](#)  
... or the [60 page hard copy book](#).



Mark Holdaway

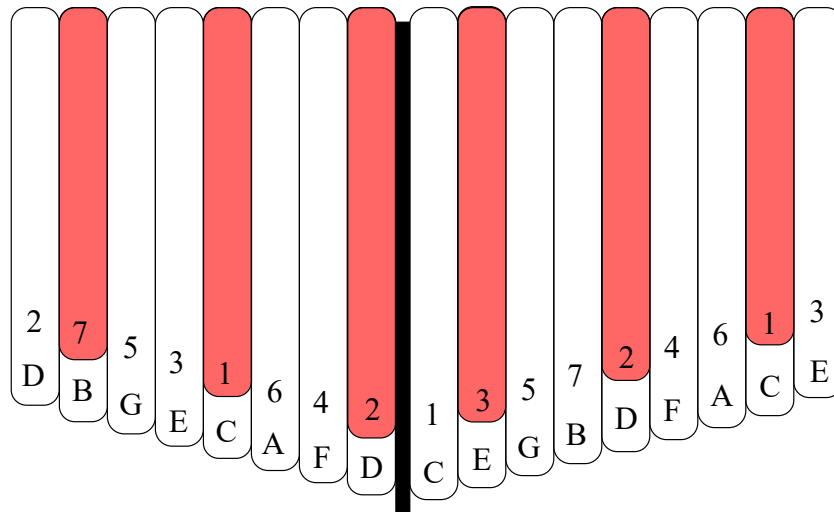
# DEMO Version

## Brighten Your Holidays With Christmas Carols on the Kalimba!

Christmas carols coming from the kalimba is one of my favorite things! The kalimba's sweet, soft and soothing sounds, like a nostalgic music box... carrying the tradition of beautiful Yuletide songs we all remember from our childhood. Add a little bit of your own expressive mojo, you have a music so simple, so pure, so beautiful, so delightful, that it can move hearts, heal minds and souls, and lift them up in joy.

Christmas music on the kalimba is quickly becoming a new holiday tradition for many around the world. This book brings remarkably full arrangements to the common 17-Note Kalimba tuned to the key of C.

The music in this book was written for the 17-Note kalimba in C, with tuning and painted tines as indicated below:



You can use this book for other kalimbas too. The Bb Treble can read the tablature in this book, but the recordings will be a whole step higher than the kalimba.

The Alto kalimba can read this tablature, but it will be missing the high D and high E (which are not used that often in these arrangements), and the recordings will play a 4th higher than the kalimba. For a book specifically for the Alto, check out “Easy Christmas Carols for the Alto Kalimba.”

We don't recommend using this book for the standard Hugh Tracey Treble Kalimba in G, but “Easy Christmas Carols for the Treble Kalimba” is available just for the Treble in G.

# DEMO Version

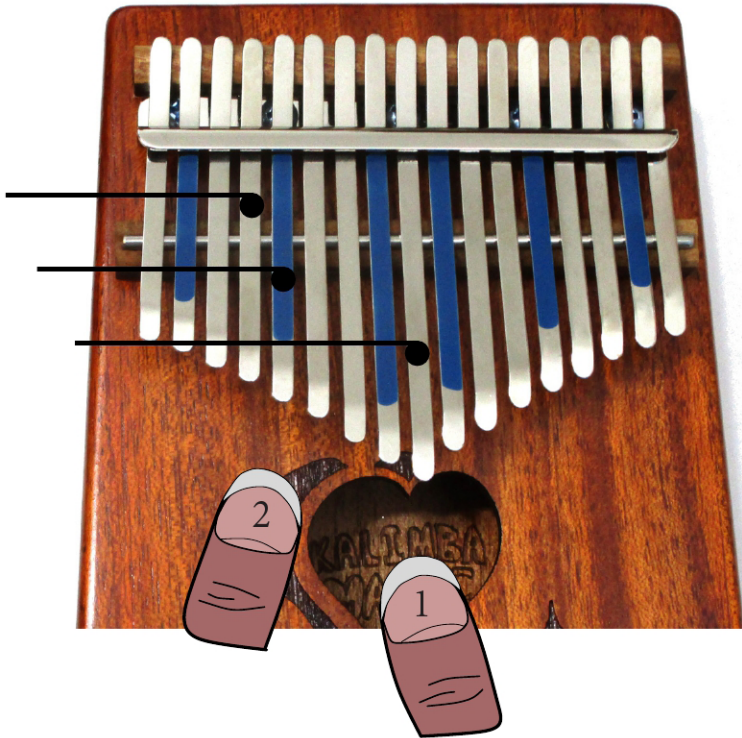
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has intro material and just these two songs.

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# DEMO Version



## Painted Tines

Six painted tines on the 17-Note kalimba are guideposts that help you navigate the kalimba and remember which tines to play.

The tablature below also shows the same painted tines, and this will help you transfer the notes from tab to kalimba.

If your kalimba's tines are unpainted, you can use a Sharpie marker to mark your tines. Sharpie marker comes off with alcohol wipes if you want a "clean" look.

## Kalimba Tablature

Kalimba tablature is a map of the kalimba, stretched up the page, with note symbols placed on the tines to show you which tines to play to accomplish a particular song.

**Note:** kalimba tab reads from bottom up, and starts on the left-most column of the page.

The black vertical line in the tablature between low C and D divides the kalimba into left and right sides, which means the low C is usually played by the right thumb.

Different note symbols indicate how long to wait before playing the next note. The three notes here are quarter notes and each gets a beat.

If you need some help understanding all this, learn more here:

**Keep your kalimba in tune:**

[kalimbamagic.com/tuning](http://kalimbamagic.com/tuning)

[kalimbamagic.com/tablature](http://kalimbamagic.com/tablature)



# DEMO Version



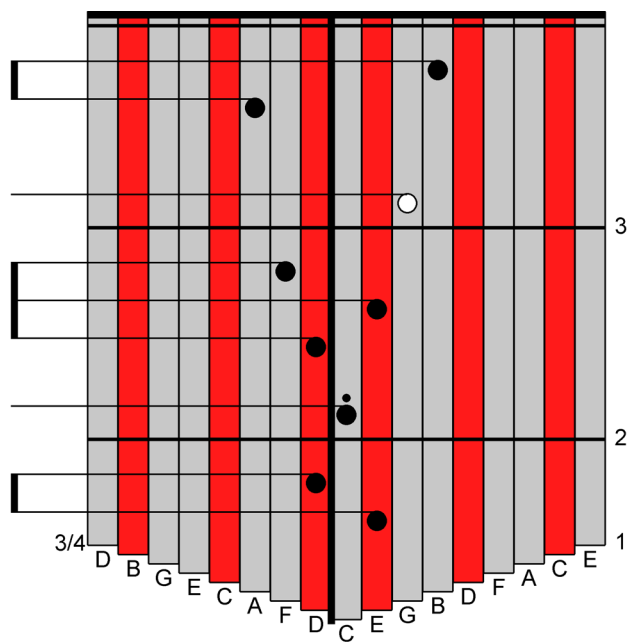
The Sound Icon

## Listen to How the Music Goes

Most people can correctly play the notes they see in the tablature. But without a lot of experience reading music notation, some people have trouble with the rhythm (the exact timing of the music), which is what makes a song a song.

If you have difficulty making a song work from the tablature, click on the sound icon next to the tablature to hear a live rendition (by yours truly) of that song with all of its familiar notes, spaces, and emphasis. It can really help!

## Notice These Things in the Tablature



- \* The tablature starts from the bottom - you can tell from the measure numbers to the right of the tablature.
- \* The note each tine is tuned to is indicated at the bottom.
- \* The fraction “3/4” in the lower left indicates “3/4 time” or that there are a total of three beats in each measure and quarter notes get one beat.
- \* In this case “The First Noel” has less than three beats in measure 1. Why? You can do this at the very start of the music - it is called a “pickup,” and here it is the first word of the song.
- \* The different sorts of notes - eighth notes, a dotted quarter note, and then a half note in measure 3 - have the same lengths as in standard music notation. If you need some review on that, visit:

[kalimbamagic.com/tabature](http://kalimbamagic.com/tabature)

## Each Song is Rated by Difficulty - See Page 3

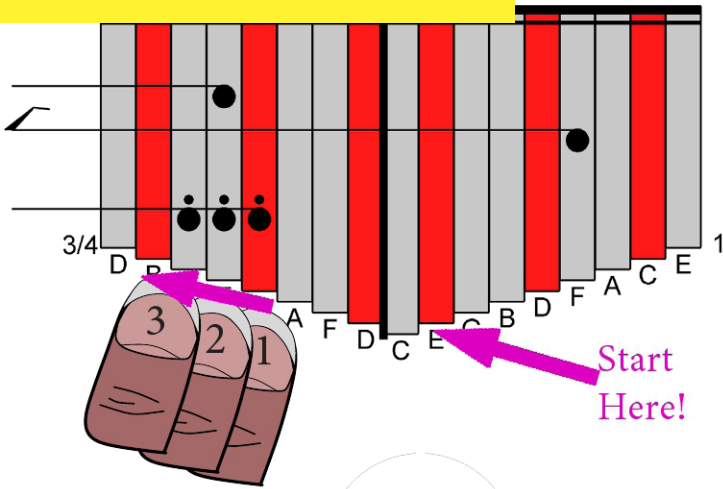
Level 1 - Generally has just the melody notes.

Level 2 - Harder melodies, and rhythms, two note harmonies.

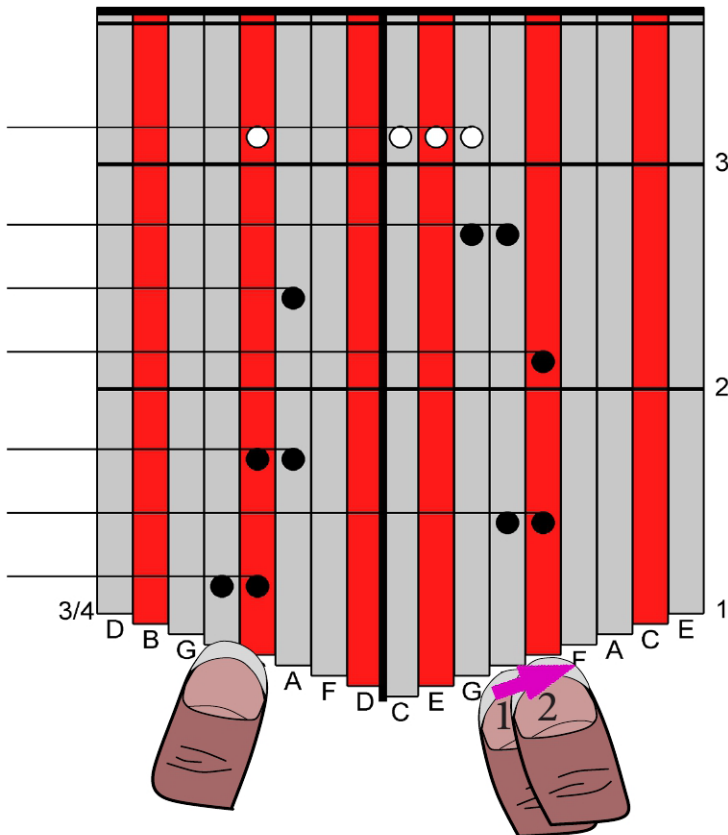
Level 3 - More complex rhythms, melodies with three note chords.

Level 4 - Songs with four note chords, more complex melodies, and counterpoint (two melodies).

# DEMO Version



Click to watch  
video demo



Method 1

Method 2

## The 3-Note Glissando

The kalimba's tuning is such that any three adjacent notes on the left side or the right side will make a beautiful chord. The problem is: how do you play those three tines all at once?

The answer is to touch the lowest tine you are to play with your thumb nail, and gracefully slide it over and outward to lightly pluck the other two tines you need to play to accomplish the chord.

This is the *glissando* technique. It is a good technique to master,

## The 2-Note Glissando

Any two adjacent tines on this kalimba will make a "third" interval. Sometimes a major third, sometimes a minor third - it doesn't matter, as they both sound beautiful.

There are two ways to make these 2-note chords:

- 1) Place your thumb nail right between those two adjacent tines, catching the ends of both, and pluck straight down.
- 2) My preference is to do a little 2-note glissando, and slide the thumb outward, from the lower to the higher note of the pair. This causes a slight delay between the low note and the high note, but I feel this gives a charming feeling to the music, making it sound like an old-fashioned music box.

## More Help

If the 17-Note kalimba is overwhelming to you, just concentrate on the lower, central 10 notes and use these instructional downloads:

[Fun and Games on the 10-Note Kalimba](#)  
[Everything...About the 10-Note Kalimba](#)

# DEMO Version History of the Kalimba

The first kalimbas were thought to have been made in Western Africa, around present-day Cameroon, about 3000 years ago. These earliest kalimbas were made with bamboo bodies and raffia tines (from palm fronds). These instruments were easily tunable and had a rather earthy sound.

The Iron Age started some 3000 years ago in the Middle East, and it spread out into the ancient world in a wave of innovation. When the Iron Age revolution met up with the wave of bamboo kalimba innovation that was also spreading across the continent, one happy result was the creation of metal tines for kalimbas, about 1300 years ago in the great Zambezi River Valley, which is in the vicinity of modern-day Zimbabwe.

The metal-tined kalimbas spread out across Africa over the centuries, and each group of people would alter the kalimba's design and tuning to match their own music. The kalimba was an incredibly flexible instrument in that way. Each new instrument was given a new name in a different language.

Meanwhile, back in the Zambezi Valley, the birthplace of the metal-tined kalimba, the Shona people created a huge instrument, the *mbira dzavadzimu*. Made with an 8-note scale (similar to the underlying scale of your 17-Note kalimba), with between 20 and 25 tines, the *mbira* was capable of very complex and beautiful music that could put a listener into a trance, often intended to attract the spirits of the ancestors. This is the most famous traditional kalimba, and is now played by more people than ever before.

In 1920, a young English lad named Hugh Tracey went to Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe) to learn farming. He would often hear field workers playing the *mbira* and was strongly drawn to it. Thus began his life-long fascination with, and drive to discover and preserve, traditional African music. He traveled tens of thousands of miles across Africa, recording and documenting the music and the instruments played in rural areas, before the reach of western popular music could weaken and replace African music that had evolved over millenia.

In 1954, Hugh Tracey started to build the "Hugh Tracey Kalimba" and market it around the world. Inspired by design elements of many different traditional kalimbas, the Hugh Tracey kalimba played a western scale and made beautiful western harmonies.

The 17-Note kalimba in your hands is an intellectual child of the Hugh Tracey kalimba, just as the Hugh Tracey kalimba is a descendant of the traditional African instruments.







# I Saw Three Ships

Level 1

Trad. English

A guitar fretboard diagram showing the first 9 frets. The strings are labeled D, B, G, E, C, A, F from top to bottom. A 3/4 time signature is indicated at the bottom left. A vertical line is drawn between fret 4 and fret 5. Fingering dots are placed on various strings and frets: fret 1 (D, G), fret 2 (C, A), fret 3 (E, C), fret 4 (B, G), fret 5 (D, F), fret 6 (A, F), fret 7 (C, A), fret 8 (E, C), and fret 9 (D, G). Some dots are solid black, and some are hollow white.

A guitar fretboard diagram showing frets 10 through 17. The strings are labeled D, B, G, E, C, A, F from top to bottom. A vertical line is drawn between fret 12 and fret 13. Fingering dots are placed on various strings and frets: fret 10 (D, G), fret 11 (C, A), fret 12 (E, C), fret 13 (B, G), fret 14 (D, F), fret 15 (A, F), fret 16 (E, C), and fret 17 (D, G). Some dots are solid black, and some are hollow white.

Start Here!

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... or the [hard copy book](#).



# Away in a Manger, American version

James R. Murray

Level 3

Musical score for the first system (measures 1-9). The score is written on a grand staff with a 3/4 time signature. The notes are as follows:

- Measure 1: D4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)
- Measure 2: C4 (quarter), A3 (quarter), F3 (quarter)
- Measure 3: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)
- Measure 4: G4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), D4 (quarter)
- Measure 5: F4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), C5 (quarter)
- Measure 6: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)
- Measure 7: G4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), D4 (quarter)
- Measure 8: F4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), C5 (quarter)
- Measure 9: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)

Musical score for the second system (measures 10-17). The score is written on a grand staff. The notes are as follows:

- Measure 10: D4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)
- Measure 11: C4 (quarter), A3 (quarter), F3 (quarter)
- Measure 12: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)
- Measure 13: G4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), D4 (quarter)
- Measure 14: F4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), C5 (quarter)
- Measure 15: D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), E4 (quarter)
- Measure 16: G4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), D4 (quarter)
- Measure 17: F4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), C5 (quarter)



## About Kalimba Magic

Kalimba Magic is a business dedicated to the proposition that the kalimba is a real instrument capable of amazing music. Kalimba Magic has the broadest collection of kalimbas for sale in the world. The videos on the Kalimba Magic YouTube channel have had several million views.

We specialize in creating instructional guides and resources to help you get the most out of your kalimba. Our website has the best info on playing your kalimba and keeping it sounding good.

To help you get the most out of your kalimba, we have created 26 hardcopy kalimba books and 44 ebooks, most based on our ingenious and flexible kalimba tablature, which shows you exactly which tines to play to accomplish each song.

Kalimba Magic has been selling high quality kalimbas, kalimba books, and kalimba music online, and repairing, retuning, and reinvigorating your tired old kalimbas since 2005.

## About Mark Holdaway

Mark has been playing kalimba since 1986 when he met a stranger who played the Hugh Tracey Alto kalimba really well. Mark chased after the memory of that man's most excellent playing for the next 10 years, but since then has been following his own path.

Mark is a talented multi-instrumentalist and accompanist, playing guitar, bass, mandolins, recorder, marimba, percussion, kalimbas, karimbas, sansulas, and mbiras.

Mark enjoys exploring new kalimba tunings, learning and understanding traditional African music, writing music and books, improvising, teaching, performing... and dancing.

Mark has lived in Tucson since 1995, where he is an active member of the folk and world music scene. Since finishing his career as a radio astronomer in 2006, Mark has devoted himself full time to his business, Kalimba Magic. For fun, Mark loves to hike in the deserts, canyons and mountains of southern Arizona and New Mexico. And he always takes a few kalimbas with him.

Mark's mission is to spread the history, magic, pride, and joy of the kalimba around the world.

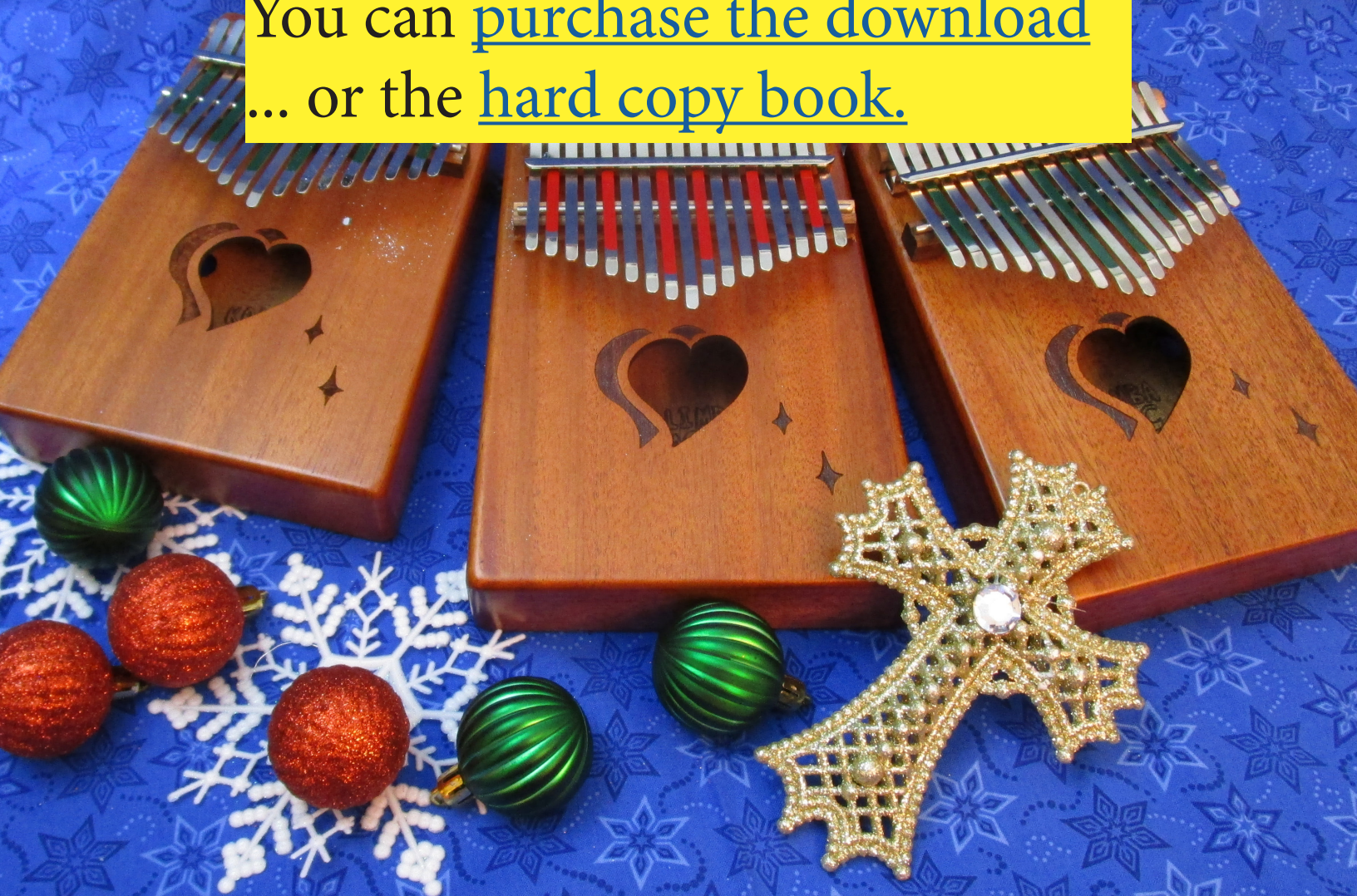


*Mark Holdaway  
Kalimba Wizard*



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You can [purchase the download](#)  
... or the [hard copy book](#).



Christmas carols on the Kalimba can be so sweet and touching. And they are not very difficult. With this ebook, you should be making beautiful sounds on your kalimba from day one.