

# God Rest Ye Merry, Gentleman

*Traditional, arranged by Phil Keaggy*

Phil recorded this tune, with Kim Hill assisting on vocals, for the 1990 Word/Reunion Records recording, *Our Hymns*, a compilation of Christmas carols recorded by various artists. For the recording, Phil created two interweaving guitar parts. This transcription reflects his live solo performance of this tune, in which elements of both parts appear. Also, the recorded version begins with a brief prelude of lightning-fast arpeggios that isn't transcribed here.

The arrangement has four parts. It begins with an instrumental Introduction (msrs. 1 to 16) that establishes the Celtic feeling of the arrangement with a rhythmic theme that recurs throughout the song. Phil takes advantage of the "double dropped D" tuning to create chord voicings without a third (D5, F5, etc.) that help establish the modal minor feeling; the many grace notes and triplets further add to the Celtic atmosphere. Throughout the entire Introduction, you can anchor your right hand ring finger on the 3rd fret of the 2nd string; this D note acts as a high drone, and you should feel free to add the open high D (the 1st string) in unison with it. In measures 9 and 10 (and again in 13 and 14 and elsewhere) Phil uses his signature right hand slapping technique. The arrowhead denotes a slap with the right hand first finger about 12 frets above the fretted (or open) note; the bar denotes a muted percussive slap with the right hand 3rd and 4th fingers. The right hand should execute a rocking motion when executing this technique. It should be used whenever this figure occurs in the piece; watch the standard notation for the percussive notes (with "x" noteheads) signifying the percussive slaps.

The vocals begin with the Verse, extending from measure 17 to 47. The guitar part begins by outlining the melody, changes to arpeggiated chords in measure 27, and finally returns to the theme by the end of the verse. Note the change the second time through in measures 30 and 31; the star denotes a harmonic slap with the right hand first finger, 12 frets above the fretted notes.

Following the Verse is the Bridge, consisting of the figure of measures 48 to 55 repeated several times as the vocalists improvise. The song ends with a return to the theme of the Introduction, ending with a 5th fret harmonic in the final measure.

I hope that playing this transcription brings you and your listeners the same sense of joyful exuberance Phil and Kim express in their recorded performance of this classic carol!

- Tom Loreda, November 1995

Tuning: DADGBD, Capo 3

D5    Csus2 G/B D5    Csus2    D5

Csus2 G/B D5    Csus2    D5

F5 E5 D5 Csus2 D5

9

3

3 0 2 3 0 2 0 2 3 0 0 0 0 3 3 0 2

F5 E5 D5 Csus2 D5

13

3

3 0 2 3 0 2 0 2 3 0 0 0 3 3 0 2 0

Am

17

0 2 2 0 5 3 2 2 0 3 0 2 3 0 13 13 0 2 0 2 3 1 0

D5 Am

22

0 2 2 0 5 3 2 2 0 3 0 2 3 0 13 13 0 2 0 2 3 1 0 2 2 0

Gm7 Am7 B♭M7 G/B C E♭6M7

F5 E5 D5 G

F5 E5 D5 D5 F5 E5 D5

Csus2 D5 F5 E5 D5

