Christmas Songs for Oboe

Fourteen easy carols, easiest first. Most are written in B♭ major; Silent Night is in F major. The last page shows the fingering for every note used, B♭3 to B♭5.

How to read it: each box is one note, with the letter on top, its octave number beside it and the word underneath. A gold bar under a box marks a long note (two beats or more). A dash means hold the word over another note. Hear every carol, slow or full speed, at thefingeringchart.com/oboe/christmas-songs/

1 Jolly Old Saint Nicholas

EASY B♭ major · 6 notes, F4 to D5 · 2/4 time

1	D5 Jol-	D5 ly	D5 old	D5 Saint	C5 Nich-	C5 o-	C5 las,	B♭4 lean	B♭4 your	B♭4 ear	B♭4 this	D5 way!
2	G4 Don't	G4 you	G4 tell	G4 a	F4 sin-	F4 gle	B♭4 soul	A4 what	B♭4 I'm	C5 go-	D5 ing to	C5 say;
3	D5 Christ-	D5 mas	D5 Eve	D5 is	C5 com-	C5 ing	C5 soon;	B♭4 now,	B♭4 you	B♭4 dear	B♭4 old	D5 man,
4	G4 Whis-	G4 per	G4 what	G4 you'll	F4 bring	F4 to	B♭4 me;	C5 tell	B♭4 me	C5 if	D5 you	B♭4 can.

Tip: Each line opens with the same note four times. Players tend to rush repeated notes, so keep them even and let the last note of each line ring for its full length.

Words: Emily Huntington Miller (1865). Music: attributed to James R. Murray (1874).

2 Good King Wenceslas

EASY B♭ major · 8 notes, F4 to F5 · 4/4 time

1	B♭4 Good	B♭4 King	B♭4 Wen-	C5 ces-	B♭4 las	B♭4 looked	F4 out	G4 on	F4 the	G4 Feast	A4 of	B♭4 Ste-	B♭4 phen,
2	B♭4 When	B♭4 the	B♭4 snow	C5 lay	B♭4 round	B♭4 a-	F4 bout,	G4 deep	F4 and	G4 crisp	A4 and	B♭4 e-	B♭4 ven;
3	F5 Bright-	E♭5 ly	D5 shone	C5 the	D5 moon	C5 that	B♭4 night,	G4 though	F4 the	G4 frost	A4 was	B♭4 cru-	B♭4 el,
4	F4 When	F4 a	G4 poor	A4 man	B♭4 came	B♭4 in	C5 sight,	F5 gath'-	E♭5 ring	D5 win-	C5 ter	B♭4 fu-	E♭5 —	B♭4 el.

Tip: Nearly every note is a quarter note or longer, so the rhythm is the easiest on this page. Play it like a sturdy march and give each half note its full two beats.

Words: John Mason Neale (1853). Music: "Tempus adest floridum", from Piae Cantiones (1582).

3 Up on the Housetop

EASY B♭ major · 6 notes, B♭3 to G4 · 4/4 time

1	F4 Up	F4 on	G4 the	F4 house-	D4 top	C4 —	B♭3 rein-	D4 deer	F4 pause,	G4 out	G4 jumps	F4 good	D4 old	C4 San-	F4 ta	F4 Claus;
2	F4 Down	F4 through	G4 the	F4 chim-	D4 ney	C4 with	B♭3 lots	D4 of	F4 toys,	G4 all	G4 for	G4 the	F4 lit-	F4 tle	D4 ones'	C4 Christ-	F4 mas	B♭3 joys.
3	E♭4 Ho,	E♭4 ho,	G4 ho!	F4 Who	F4 would-	F4 n't	D4 go!	C4 Ho,	E♭4 ho,	E♭4 ho!	D4 Who	F4 would-	F4 n't	B♭3 go!				
4	F4 Up	F4 on	G4 the	F4 house-	D4 top,	E♭4 click,	F4 click,	G4 click,	F4 down	F4 through	G4 the	F4 chim-	F4 ney	D4 with	C4 good	F4 Saint	B♭3 Nick.	

Tip: Pairs of quick notes ("on the", "lit-tle") sit in the middle of the verse lines. Tongue them lightly without speeding up, then give the three "Ho, ho, ho" notes their full length.

Words and music: Benjamin Hanby (1864).

4 Away in a Manger

EASY B♭ major · 8 notes, F4 to F5 · 3/4 time

1	F5 *A-*	F5 *way*	E♭5 *in*	D5 *a*	D5 *man-*	C5 *ger,*	B♭4 *no*	B♭4 *crib*	A4 *for*	G4 *a*	F4 *bed,*	
2	F4 *The*	F4 *lit-*	G4 *tle*	F4 *Lord*	F4 *Je-*	C5 *sus*	A4 *laid*	G4 *down*	F4 *his*	B♭4 *sweet*	D5 *head.*	
3	F5 *The*	F5 *stars*	E♭5 *in*	D5 *the*	D5 *bright*	C5 *sky*	B♭4 *looked*	B♭4 *down*	A4 *where*	G4 *he*	F4 *lay,*	
4	F4 *The*	E♭5 *lit-*	D5 *tle*	C5 *Lord*	D5 *Je-*	C5 *sus,*	B♭4 *a-*	C5 *sleep*	G4 *on*	A4 *the*	B♭4 *hay.*	

Tip: It is a slow waltz with a long note at the end of every line. Hold those for all their beats and breathe after them, never in the middle of a line.

Words: anonymous (1880s, American). Music: "Mueller" by James Ramsey Murray (1887).

5 Auld Lang Syne

MEDIUM B♭ major · 7 notes, F4 to G5 · 4/4 time

1	F4 *Should*	B♭4 *auld*	B♭4 *ac-*	B♭4 *quain-*	D5 *tance*	C5 *be*	B♭4 *for-*	C5 *got,*	D5 *and*	B♭4 *nev-*	B♭4 *er*	D5 *brought*	F5 *to*	G5 *mind?*
2	G5 *Should*	F5 *auld*	D5 *ac-*	D5 *quain-*	B♭4 *tance*	C5 *be*	B♭4 *for-*	C5 *got,*	D5 *and*	B♭4 *days*	G4 *of*	G4 *auld*	F4 *lang*	B♭4 *syne?*
3	G5 *For*	F5 *auld*	D5 —	D5 *lang*	B♭4 —	C5 *syne,*	B♭4 *my*	C5 *dear,*	G5 *for*	F5 *auld*	D5 —	D5 *lang*	F5 —	G5 *syne,*
4	G5 *We'll*	F5 *take*	D5 *a*	D5 *cup*	B♭4 *o'*	C5 *kind-*	B♭4 *ness*	C5 *yet,*	D5 *for*	B♭4 *auld*	G4 —	G4 *lang*	F4 —	B♭4 *syne.*

Tip: The tune uses only five pitch names (a pentatonic scale), so nothing falls outside the key. The long-short dotted rhythm comes back in almost every bar; keep the short note crisp and late.

Words: Robert Burns (1788). Music: traditional Scottish.

6 The First Noel

MEDIUM B♭ major · 8 notes, B♭3 to B♭4 · 3/4 time

1 *The first Noel the angel did say*

D4 C4 B♭3 C4 D4 E♭4 F4 G4 A4 B♭4 A4 G4 F4

2 *Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;*

G4 A4 B♭4 A4 G4 F4 G4 A4 B♭4 F4 E♭4 D4

3 *In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,*

D4 C4 B♭3 C4 D4 E♭4 F4 G4 A4 B♭4 A4 G4 F4

4 *On a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

G4 A4 B♭4 A4 G4 F4 G4 A4 B♭4 F4 E♭4 D4

5 *Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,*

D4 C4 B♭3 C4 D4 E♭4 F4 B♭4 A4 G4 G4 F4 F4

6 *Born is the King of Israel.*

B♭4 A4 G4 F4 G4 A4 B♭4 F4 E♭4 D4

Tip: Every second line ends on the same note, so it is easy to lose your place; follow the words. The two quick notes that start most lines are a pickup: play them lightly into the strong beat.

Words and music: traditional English (Cornish), first printed in the 1820s.

7 O Come, All Ye Faithful

MEDIUM B♭ major · 8 notes, F4 to F5 · 4/4 time

1	B♭4 *O*	B♭4 *come,*	F4 *all*	B♭4 *ye*	C5 *faith-*	F4 *ful,*	D5 *joy-*	C5 *ful*	D5 *and*	E♭5 *tri-*	D5 *um-*	C5 *phant!*
2	B♭4 *O*	B♭4 *come*	A4 *ye,*	G4 *O*	A4 *come*	B♭4 —	C5 *ye*	D5 *to*	A4 *Beth-*	G4 —	F4 *le-*	F4 *hem;*
3	F5 *Come*	E♭5 *and*	D5 *be-*	E♭5 *hold*	D5 *him,*	C5 *born*	D5 *the*	B♭4 *King*	C5 *of*	A4 *an-*	F4 *gels;*	
4	B♭4 *O*	B♭4 *come,*	A4 *let*	B♭4 *us*	C5 *a-*	B♭4 *dore*	F4 *him,*					
5	D5 *O*	D5 *come,*	C5 *let*	D5 *us*	E♭5 *a-*	D5 *dore*	C5 *him,*					
6	D5 *O*	E♭5 *come,*	D5 *let*	C5 *us*	B♭4 *a-*	A4 *dore*	B♭4 *him,*	E♭5 —	D5 *Christ*	C5 —	B♭4 *the*	B♭4 *Lord.*

Tip: The three "O come, let us adore him" lines each start a little higher than the one before. Save some air and some volume for the third.

Words: Latin hymn "Adeste Fideles", English by Frederick Oakeley (1841, current wording printed 1852). Music: attributed to John Francis Wade.

8 Joy to the World

MEDIUM B♭ major · 8 notes, B♭3 to B♭4 · 2/4 time

1	B♭4 *Joy*	A4 *to*	G4 *the*	F4 *world!*	E♭4 *the*	D4 *Lord*	C4 *is*	B♭3 *come;*
2	F4 *Let*	G4 *earth*	G4 *re-*	A4 *ceive*	A4 *her*	B♭4 *King;*		
3	B♭4 *Let*	B♭4 *ev'-*	A4 —	G4 *ry*	F4 —	F4 *heart*	E♭4 —	D4 —
4	B♭4 *pre-*	B♭4 *pare*	A4 —	G4 *Him*	F4 —	F4 *room,*	E♭4 —	D4 —
5	D4 *And*	D4 *heav'n*	D4 *and*	D4 *na-*	D4 *ture*	E♭4 —	F4 *sing,*	
6	E♭4 *and*	D4 —	C4 *heav'n*	C4 *and*	C4 *na-*	C4 *ture*	D4 —	E♭4 *sing,*
7	D4 *and*	C4 —	D4 *heav-*	B♭4 *en,*	G4 *and*	F4 *heav-*	E♭4 —	D4 *en*	E♭4 *and*	D4 *na-*	C4 *ture*	B♭3 *sing.*

Tip: The first line walks straight down the scale, one note at a time, which makes it a good test of clean finger changes. Later the repeated "and heaven and nature sing" notes need light, even tonguing.

Words: Isaac Watts (1719). Music: "Antioch", arranged by Lowell Mason.

9 O Christmas Tree

MEDIUM B♭ major · 8 notes, F4 to G5 · 3/4 time

1	F4 *O*	B♭4 *Tan-*	B♭4 *nen-*	B♭4 *baum,*	C5 *o*	D5 *Tan-*	D5 *nen-*	D5 *baum,*	D5 *wie*	C5 *treu*	D5 *sind*	E♭5 *dei-*	A4 *ne*	C5 *Blät-*	B♭4 *ter!*
2	F5 *Du*	F5 *grünst*	D5 *nicht*	G5 *nur*	F5 *zur*	F5 *Som-*	E♭5 *mer-*	E♭5 *zeit,*	E♭5 *nein,*	E♭5 *auch*	C5 *im*	F5 *Win-*	E♭5 *ter,*	E♭5 *wenn*	D5 *es*	D5 *schneit.*
3	F4 *O*	B♭4 *Tan-*	B♭4 *nen-*	B♭4 *baum,*	C5 *o*	D5 *Tan-*	D5 *nen-*	D5 *baum,*	D5 *wie*	C5 *treu*	D5 *sind*	E♭5 *dei-*	A4 *ne*	C5 *Blät-*	B♭4 *ter!*

Tip: The long-short dotted rhythm at the start of each line gives the carol its lilt. Make the short note quick and light so it does not turn into two even notes.

Words: Ernst Anschütz (1824), shown in the original German. Music: traditional German.

10 We Wish You a Merry Christmas

MEDIUM B♭ major · 8 notes, F4 to F5 · 3/4 time

1	F4	B♭4	B♭4	C5	B♭4	A4	G4	G4	G4	C5	C5	D5	C5	B♭4	A4	F4
2	F4	D5	D5	E♭5	D5	C5	B♭4	G4	F4	F4	G4	C5	A4	B♭4		
3	F4	B♭4	B♭4	B♭4	A4	A4	B♭4	A4	G4	F4						
4	C5	D5	C5	B♭4	F5	F4	F4	F4	G4	C5	A4	B♭4				

Tip: It moves quickly in three, with a jump of a sixth at the start of the second line and a drop of a full octave in the last line. Think of the landing note before you leave the first one.

Music: English traditional (West Country). Words not shown.

11 Deck the Halls

HARDER B♭ major · 10 notes, A4 to B♭5 · 4/4 time

1	F5 *Deck*	E♭5 *the*	D5 *halls*	C5 *with*	B♭4 *boughs*	C5 *of*	D5 *hol-*	B♭4 *ly,*	C5 *Fa*	D5 *la*	E♭5 *la*	C5 *la*	D5 *la,*	C5 *la*	B♭4 *la*	A4 *la*	B♭4 *la!*
2	F5 *'Tis*	E♭5 *the*	D5 *sea-*	C5 *son*	B♭4 *to*	C5 *be*	D5 *jol-*	B♭4 *ly,*	C5 *Fa*	D5 *la*	E♭5 *la*	C5 *la*	D5 *la,*	C5 *la*	B♭4 *la*	A4 *la*	B♭4 *la!*
3	C5 *Don*	D5 *we*	E♭5 *now*	C5 *our*	D5 *gay*	E♭5 *ap-*	F5 *par-*	C5 *el,*	D5 *Fa*	E5 *la*	F5 *la,*	G5 *la*	A5 *la*	B♭5 *la,*	A5 *la*	G5 *la*	F5 *la!*
4	F5 *Troll*	E♭5 *the*	D5 *an-*	C5 *cient*	B♭4 *Christ-*	C5 *mas*	D5 *car-*	B♭4 *ol,*	G5 *Fa*	G5 *la*	G5 *la*	G5 *la*	F5 *la,*	E♭5 *la*	D5 *la*	C5 *la*	B♭4 *la!*

Tip: The third line climbs to the highest note of the carol in one long run of fa-las. Take a full breath before it and play it as one phrase.

Words: Thomas Oliphant (1862), as revised in 1877. Music: Welsh traditional ("Nos Galan").

12 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

HARDER B♭ major · 9 notes, F4 to G5 · 4/4 time

1	F4 *Hark!*	B♭4 *the*	B♭4 *her-*	A4 *ald*	B♭4 *an-*	D5 *gels*	D5 *sing,*	C5 —	F5 *"Glo-*	F5 *ry*	F5 *to*	E♭5 *the*	D5 *new-*	C5 *born*	D5 *King;*
2	F4 *peace*	B♭4 *on*	B♭4 *earth,*	A4 *and*	B♭4 *mer-*	D5 *cy*	D5 *mild,*	C5 —	F5 *God*	C5 *and*	C5 *sin-*	A4 *ners*	A4 *rec-*	G4 *on-*	F4 *ciled!"*
3	F5 *Joy-*	F5 *ful,*	F5 *all*	B♭4 *ye*	E♭5 *na-*	D5 *tions,*	D5 *rise,*	C5 —	F5 *join*	F5 *the*	F5 *tri-*	B♭4 *umph*	E♭5 *of*	D5 *the*	D5 *skies;*	C5 —
4	G5 *With*	G5 *th'an-*	G5 *gel-*	F5 *ic*	E♭5 *host*	D5 *pro-*	E♭5 *claim,*	C5 *"Christ*	D5 *is*	E♭5 —	F5 *born*	B♭4 *in*	B♭4 *Beth-*	C5 *le-*	D5 *hem!"*	
5	G5 *Hark!*	G5 *the*	G5 *her-*	F5 *ald*	E♭5 *an-*	D5 *gels*	E♭5 *sing,*	C5 *"Glo-*	D5 *ry*	E♭5 —	F5 *to*	B♭4 *the*	B♭4 *new-*	C5 *born*	B♭4 *King!"*	

Tip: It is long, with five lines and no rests to speak of. Breathe at the commas in the words, and save air for the last two lines, which sit highest.

Words: Charles Wesley (1739), altered by George Whitefield. Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1840).

13 Angels We Have Heard on High

HARDER B♭ major · 7 notes, F4 to G5 · 4/4 time

1	D5 *An-*	D5 *gels*	D5 *we*	F5 *have*	F5 *heard*	E♭5 *on*	D5 *high*	D5 *sweet-*	C5 *ly*	D5 *sing-*	F5 *ing*	D5 *o'er*	C5 *the*	B♭4 *plains,*
2	D5 *And*	D5 *the*	D5 *moun-*	F5 *tains*	F5 *in*	E♭5 *re-*	D5 *ply*	D5 *ech-*	C5 *o-*	D5 *ing*	F5 *their*	D5 *joy-*	C5 *ous*	B♭4 *strains.*
3	F5 *Glo-*	G5 —	F5 —	E♭5 —	D5 —	E♭5 —	F5 —	E♭5 —	D5 —	C5 —	D5 —	E♭5 —	D5 —	C5 —	B♭4 —	C5 —	F4 *ri-*	F4 *a*
4	B♭4 *in*	C5 *ex-*	D5 *cel-*	E♭5 *sis*	D5 *De-*	C5 *o!*												
5	F5 *Glo-*	G5 —	F5 —	E♭5 —	D5 —	E♭5 —	F5 —	E♭5 —	D5 —	C5 —	D5 —	E♭5 —	D5 —	C5 —	B♭4 —	C5 —	F4 *ri-*	F4 *a*
6	B♭4 *in*	C5 *ex-*	D5 *cel-*	E♭5 *sis*	D5 *De-*	C5 —	B♭4 *o!*											

Tip: The Gloria run is the hard part: 16 notes on one syllable. Slur it, learn it slowly in groups of four, and take a full breath just before it starts.

Words: James Chadwick (1862), after the French carol “Les Anges dans nos campagnes”. Music: “Gloria”, French traditional.

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14 Silent Night

HARDER F major · 11 notes, F4 to B♭5 · 6/8 time

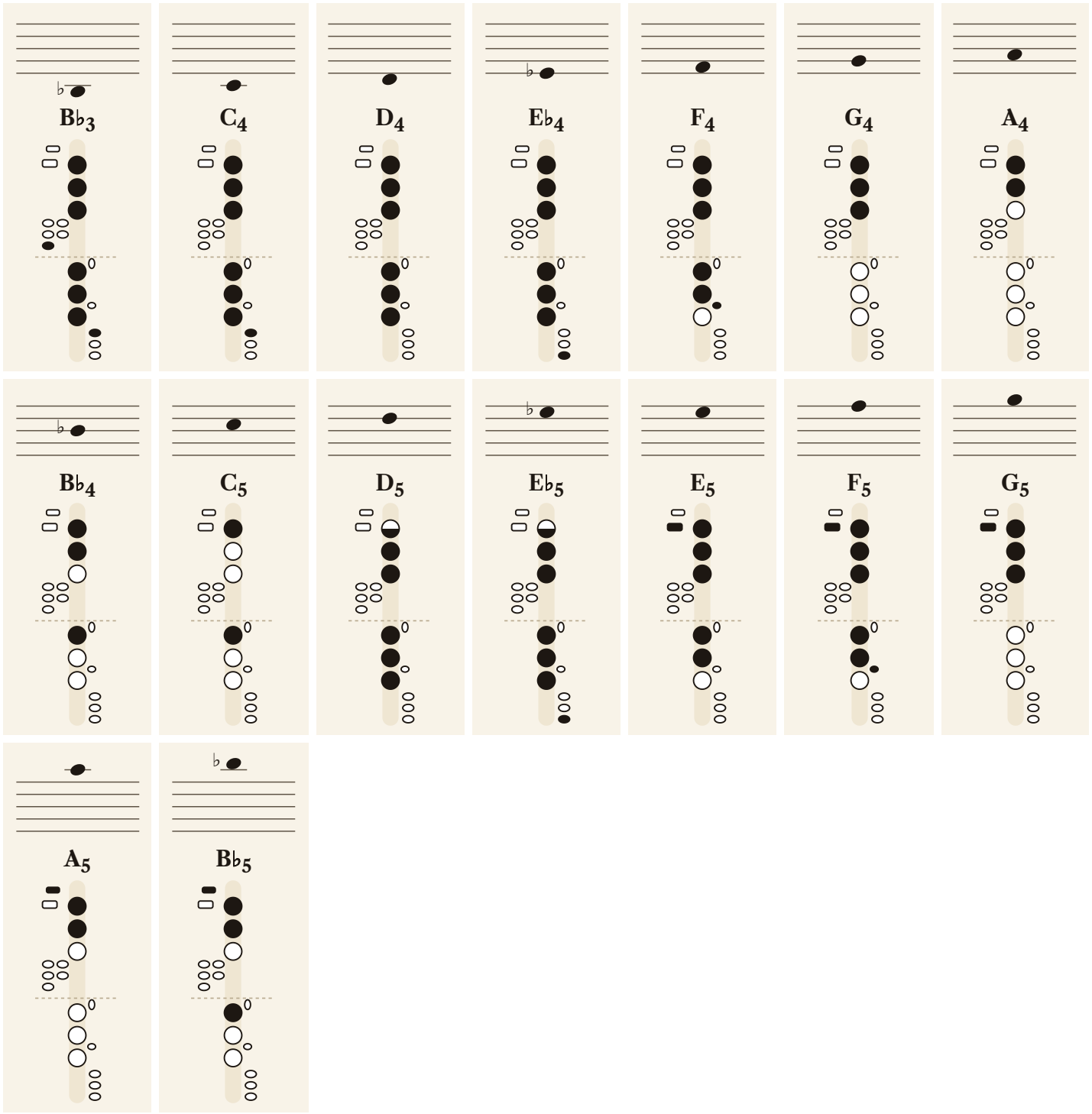
1	C5 *Si-*	D5 *lent*	C5 *night,*	A4 —	C5 *ho-*	D5 *ly*	C5 *night,*	A4 —		
2	G5 *All*	G5 *is*	E5 *calm,*	F5 *all*	F5 *is*	C5 *bright,*				
3	D5 *'Round*	D5 *yon*	F5 *vir-*	E5 *gin*	D5 *moth-*	C5 *er*	D5 *and*	C5 *child,*	A4 —	
4	D5 *Ho-*	D5 *ly*	F5 *in-*	E5 *fant*	D5 *so*	C5 *ten-*	D5 *der*	C5 *and*	A4 *mild,*	
5	G5 *Sleep*	G5 *in*	B♭5 *heav-*	G5 *en-*	E5 *ly*	F5 *peace,*	A5 —			
6	F5 *Sleep*	C5 —	A4 *in*	C5 *heav-*	B♭4 *en-*	G4 *ly*	F4 *peace.*			

Tip: This has the widest range on the page and the slowest tempo. The work is in the air, not the fingers: play each line in one breath and keep the long notes steady to the very end.

Words: Joseph Mohr (1816), English by John Freeman Young (1859). Music: Franz Xaver Gruber (1818).

Fingerings for every note in these carols

16 notes, from B♭3 up to B♭5. Oboe is a concert-pitch instrument: it sounds the note that is written. Filled keys are pressed; open keys stay up.



Free to copy for students. The full oboe chart, scales and easy songs are at thefingeringchart.com/oboe/