

# new release

Boptism



Jazz Promo Services

file under: **JAZZ** RELEASE DATE: May 30, 2026

## RICH WILLEY "LAID BACK VOL. 1"

Trumpeter-composer Rich Willey introduces seven groove jazz tunes on *Laid Back Vol. 1* that feature an 11-piece group with John Swana playing innovative solos on the EVI.

The arrangements of Wally Minko blend horn lines with accessible rhythms, leaving space for many colorful solos.



**Artist:** RICH WILLEY  
**Title:** LAID BACK VOL. 1  
**Band Website:** [www.boptism.com/store](http://www.boptism.com/store)  
**Release Date:** May 30, 2026

**Label:** Boptism  
**Catalog No.:** BCD-012026  
**UPC Code:** 195269417390

### TRACK LISTING

- 1. Laid Back (Night Life)** 8:50  
*solos: Paul Mutzabaugh, John Swana*
- 2. Triple Play** 7:44  
*solos: John Swana, Rich Willey*
- 3. Relax & Take It Easy** 8:12  
*solos: Steve Duncan, Rich Willey*
- 4. Long Lost Brothers** 6:18  
*solos: John Swana, Rich Willey, Paul Mutzabaugh*
- 5. Ladies First** 7:02  
*solos: Paul Mutzabaugh, John Swana*
- 6. That's My Little Girl** 7:03  
*solos: Rich Willey, Jim Gailloro, Paul Mutzabaugh*
- 7. Hip Slick & Cool** 9:22  
*solos: John Swana, Rich Willey, Jim Gailloro*

All selections written by Rich Willey. All arrangements by Wally Minko. All selections ©2026 Boptism Music BMI

Recorded January 12-15 at Palisade Studio, Chicago IL  
Carey Deadman - Producer  
Jim Massoth - Engineer  
Bryan Clavey - Assistant Engineer  
Olivia Brash - Studio tech  
Brian Schwab - Mastering Engineer  
Cover art by Chris Kemp

**MUSICIANS:** Rich Willey - Trumpet, Tuba, John Swana - EVI, Carey Deadman - Trumpet, Jim Gailloro - Flute, Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, Geoff Bradfield - Tenor Sax, Steve Duncan - Trombone, Bass Trombone, Paul Mutzabaugh - Piano, Keyboard, B3 Organ, Chuck Webb - Electric Bass, Upright Bass, Felton Offard - Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Charles Heath - Drums, Rich Trelease - Percussion

In recording *Laid Back Vol. 1*, Rich Willey had several specific goals. He wanted to showcase the playing of the great trumpeter John Swana exclusively on the EVI (electronic valve instrument), making the case for the instrument's great potential and for Swana's artistry. Although he is a skilled arranger and contributed all seven compositions on this set, he wanted to utilize the talents of arranger Wally Minko. And, most of all, Willey wanted to create a jazz album that, in addition to being inventive, was joyful and fun; modern good-time music that a large audience would enjoy. Utilizing top-notch musicians from Chicago assembled by producer Carey Deadman, Rich Willey succeeded at all of his goals.

The groove-oriented music on *Laid Back Vol. 1* is danceable and filled with happy spirits but never predictable. There are superior solos by Swana, trumpeter Willey, Paul Mutzabaugh on organ and electric piano, trombonist Steve Duncan, and Jim Gailloro on soprano, spirited arranged ensembles from Minko, and consistently infectious rhythms by the five-piece rhythm section. The result is a memorable and easily enjoyable set whether it is the funky reggae piece "Laid Back (Night Life)," the catchy "Triple Play," the tradeoff between trumpet and EVI that launches "Long Lost Brothers," or the relaxed strut "Ladies First."

As a trumpeter, composer, arranger and bandleader, Rich Willey has long been an important part of the jazz and music scene. He attended North Texas State University, and earned a B.A. in Music Education from the University of South Florida and a Master's degree in Jazz Performance at the Manhattan School Of Music. After a long period performing and writing for many jazz and Latin groups in New York, Willey was a member of Maynard Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau in 2001. He toured regularly with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra (directed by Buddy Morrow) during 2002-07 and has taught at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, Limestone College, and Clemson University. Along the way Willey worked with such jazz greats as Mel Tormé, Hank Mobley, Cab Calloway, the Ed Palmero Big Band, Bob Haggart, Lionel Hampton, Bob Mintzer, Paquito D'Rivera, Conrad Herwig, Chris Potter, Brad Mehldau, Arturo O'Farrill, and James Moody among many others. Since he founded Boptism Music in 2001, he has led several albums (including sets by his Boptism Big Band and his Boptism Funk Band) and authored over 40 books.

*Laid Back Vol. 1*, which is filled with irresistible music, is Rich Willey's latest accomplishment, a milestone in both his and John Swana's careers.

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