Christmas Jazz

A selection of evergreens and old favourites from the world of jazz including Christmas hits from stars such as Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and Frank Sinatra. From 'Winter wonderland' to 'Zat you, Santa Claus', the wit, charm and musicianship of these great artists shines as brightly as ever!

1 **Zat You, Santa Claus?** Louis Armstrong
2 **Picnic in the snow** The Squadronaires
3 **Winter Wonderland** Perry Como
4 **Santa Claus is comin' to town** Bing Crosby
5 **Cool Yule** Louis Armstrong
6 **Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!** Woody Herman
7 **Santa Claus got stuck in my chimney** Ella Fitzgerald
8 **It's Christmas time again** Peggy Lee
9 **Silent Night** Dinah Washington
10 **Here Comes Santa Claus** Bing Crosby
11 **The Christmas Song** Nat King Cole
12 **Have yourself a merry little Christmas** Judy Garland
13 **Christmas night in Harlem** Louis Armstrong
14 **Good Morning Blues** Count Basie and his Orchestra
15 **Christmas time in New Orleans** Louis Armstrong
16 **The Christmas Blues** Dean Martin
17 **Baby it's cold outside** Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Jordan
18 **Christmas Eve** Billy Eckstine
19 **Christmas Dreaming** Frank Sinatra
20 **Mrs Santa Claus** Nat King Cole
21 **I'm dreaming of a white Christmas** Louis Armstrong
22 **Rudolph the red nose reindeer** Bing Crosby

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Sophisticated? Yes! Sublime? Always! Sentimental? Occasionally – but the music is none the worse for it! Christmas is the time for such moods, and these great musicians show themselves to be as touched by the season as anybody else!

But the underlying core of this album is great jazz, of the traditional, old-fashioned type. So even when the arrangements are perhaps richer and fuller than the spare and angular musical textures of more modern jazz, the quality and the commitment to great music shines through again and again on these wonderful tracks.

Louis Armstrong's style is perhaps the most remarkable and personal of them all, and he probably pays the least attention to potential seasonal excess. His Christmas tracks are like all his music: witty, pacy and dynamic, but with a tremendous emotional content – and that amazing voice to boot!

The Squadronaires make music in traditional style, while the incomparable Dinah Washington brings an element of swing and a jazz groove even to a traditional Christmas carol.

Ella Fitzgerald is her usual cool, brilliant self in these tracks. Judy Garland's style seems even here to have that glossy, filmic overlay to it but the underlying musical impetus is pure jazz. Peggy Lee is old school, as are the remaining male vocalists on the album. Crosby and Cole were steeped in the jazz tradition, as was Billy Eckstine. Sinatra and Dean Martin could be 'crooners' of course, but their 'rat pack' personae always add a certain sharp edge to their music-making, and these tracks could be said to be some very fine jazz indeed! Perry Como's 'wonderland' and Woody Herman's 'snow' are both fine examples of these singers' work: technically brilliant and full of personality.