

## Laura Cheadle - I'll Have A Blues Christmas (2015)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Red Ain't Everything (The Rudolph Blues)* 2 *Blue Christmas* 3 *Giving You Me For Christmas* 4 *At Christmastime* 5 *Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer* 6 *Here Comes Santa Claus* 7 *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* 8 *Silver Bells* 9 *Christmastime Can Set Us Free* 10 *The First Noel* Laura Cheadle - Lead Vocals, Background Vocals, Acoustic Guitar, James Cheadle - Keyboard, Harmonica, Bass, Drums, Organ, Piano, Guitar, Background vocals Jimmy Lee Cheadle - Lead and slide guitar Sue Cheadle - Background Vocals Tina Young - Drums on 'At Christmastime'

Move over, "Santa Baby," the song made famous by the late, great Eartha Kitt in which the singer hits on Santa Claus – you are not the sexiest Christmas song ever anymore. That title now belongs to Laura Cheadle's "Giving You Me For Christmas," a driving blues with provocative lyrics about being ready to be unwrapped under the Christmas tree that is part of her self-released "I'll Have a Blues Christmas," and album that blends original tunes with Holiday classics like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "The First Noel."

Other highlights of the disc include "Red Ain't Everything," which tells Rudolph's story from his own point of view, and a live rendition of "Here Comes Santa Claus" (there is no information of where it was recorded, but the audience sounds responsive and enthusiastic). It is a strong disc thanks to the well-written arrangements and solid musical chemistry that Cheadle has with her family, who is present on every track.

Speaking of blues, I recently discovered Sheryl Crow's own Christmas record "Home for Christmas" (A&M), which is highly influenced by the sounds of Memphis. Recorded in the same era as her "100 Miles from Memphis," it contains mostly covers of classics like "White Christmas" and "O Holy Night" with a solid backing from a tight brass-heavy band featuring none other than Booker T (of the MGs), one of the key figures of the Memphis sound throughout

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the 1960s and 70s. I was surprised that I had never even heard about that disc for years – one of the last from her now-former label.

Among the best tracks are “The Christmas song,” played with a Jorge Benjor-like flavor. “Blue Christmas” has a nice backbeat focused on the rhythm section, great horn solos and of course Crow’s sultry voice. The inclusion of Crow’s “All Through the Night” (a track from “100 Miles from Memphis”) seems a bit out of place on the collection, but it closes the album with a funky feel. ---Ernest Barteldes, musicwhatever.wordpress.com

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