

Bob Dylan - Christmas in the Heart [2009]

Written by bluesever

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01. *Here Comes Santa Claus* [02:36]
02. *Do You Hear What I Hear?* [03:03]
03. *Winter Wonderland* [01:53]
04. *Hark The Herald Angels Sing* [02:31]
05. *I'll Be Home For Christmas* [02:55]
06. *Little Drummer Boy* [02:54]
07. *Christmas Blues* [02:55]
08. *O' Come All Ye Faithful (Adeste Fideles)* [02:49]
09. *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas* [04:06]
10. *Must Be Santa* [02:49]
11. *Silver Bells* [02:36]
12. *First Noel* [02:31]
13. *Christmas Island* [02:29]
14. *Christmas Song* [03:57]
15. *O' Little Town Of Bethlehem* [02:18]

Amanda Barrett - Vocals Randy Crenshaw - Vocals Abby DeWald - Vocals Bob Dylan - Guitar, Harmonica, Piano (Electric), Vocals Tony Garnier - Bass Walt Harrah - Vocals Donnie Herron - Guitar (Steel), Mandolin, Trumpet, Violin David Hidalgo - Accordion, Guitar, Mandolin, Violin Robert Joyce - Vocals George Recile - Drums, Percussion Phil Upchurch - Guitar Patrick Warren - Celeste, Organ, Piano

After the initial shock fades, the existence of Christmas in the Heart seems perhaps inevitable. After all, the thing Bob Dylan loves most of all are songs that are handed down from generation to generation, songs that are part of the American fabric, songs so common they never seem to have been written. These are the songs Dylan chooses to sing on Christmas in the Heart, a cheerfully old-fashioned holiday album from its Norman Rockwell-esque cover to its joyous backing vocals. Apart from the breakneck "Must Be Santa," which barrelhouses like a barroom, Dylan doesn't really reinterpret these songs as much as simply play them with his crackerjack road band, dropping in a little flair -- restoring "we'll have to muddle through somehow" to "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," singing the opening of "O Come All Ye Faithful" in its original

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Latin -- but never pushing tunes in unexpected directions. Many would argue having Dylan croon these carols is unexpected enough and, true, there are times his gravelly rumble is a bit pronounced, but nothing here feels forced, it all feels rather fun, provided you're on the same wavelength as latter-day Bob, where the sound and swing of the band is as important as the song, where there's an undeniable nostalgic undertow to all the proceedings. And, of course, there's no better time for celebratory sound, swing, and nostalgia than the holidays, which may be why Christmas in the Heart is a bit of a left-field delight. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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