

Blues, Blues Christmas 1925-1955 In The Blues, Jazz, Boogie-Woogie And Gospel Spirit (2006)



1-1 –Frankie 'Half-Pint' Jaxon *Christ Was Born On Christmas Morn* 1-2 –Titus Turner *Christmas Morning Blues* 1-3 –The Cats And The Fiddle *Hep Cat's Holiday* 1-4 –Ralph Willis *Christmas Blues* 1-5 –Willie "61" Blackwell *Junior's A Jap Girl's Christmas For His Santa Claus* 1-6 –Butterbeans & Susie *Papa Ain't No Santa Claus* 1-7 –Jimmy Butler *Trim Your Tree* 1-8 –Gatemouth Moore *Christmas Blues* 1-9 –Harry Crafton With Doc Bagby's Orchestra *Bring That Cadillac Back* 1-10 –Bertha "Chippie" Hill *Christmas Man Blues* 1-11 –Cecil Gant *Hello Santa Claus* 1-12 –Bumble Bee Slim *Christmas And No Santa Claus* 1-13 –Felix Gross *Love For Christmas* 1-14 –Lonnie Johnson *Happy New Year Darling* 1-15 –Tampa Red *Christmas & New Year's Blues* 1-16 –Amos Milburn *Let's Make Christmas Merry, Baby* 1-17 –Julia Lee & Her Boy Friends *Christmas Spirit* 1-18 –Bessie Smith *At The Christmas Ball* 1-19 –Rev. A.W. Nix *How Will You Spend Christmas?* 1-20 –Harmon Ray *Xmas Blues* 1-21 –Jimmy Witherspoon *How I Hate To See Christmas Come Around* 1-22 –Joe Turner With Pete Johnson And His Orchestra *Christmas Date Boogie* 1-23 –Sugar Chile Robinson *Christmas Boogie* 1-24 –Leadbelly *The Christmas Song* 1-25 –Lightnin' Hopkins *Happy New Year* 1-26 –Rev. Edward W. Clayborn *The Wrong Way To Celebrate Christmas* 2-1 –Bo Carter *Santa Claus* 2-2 –Black Ace *Christmas Time* 2-3 –Mary Harris *Happy New Year Blues* 2-4 –Charley Jordan *Christmas Christmas Blues* 2-5 –The Johnny Otis Orchestra *Happy New Year, Baby* 2-6 –Little Esther And Mel Walker With Johnny Otis *Faraway Christmas Blues* 2-7 –Sonny Boy Williamson *Christmas Morning Blues* 2-8 –Leroy Carr *Christmas In Jail* 2-9 –Kansas City Kitty *Christmas Mornin' Blues* 2-10 –Rev. J. M. Gates *Did You Spend Christmas Day In Jail?* 2-11 –Rev. J. M. Gates *Death Might Be Your Santa Claus* 2-12 –Blind Lemon Jefferson *Happy New Year Blues* 2-13 –Smokey Hogg *New Year's Eve Blues* 2-14 –Larry Darnell *Christmas Blues* 2-15 –Sons Of Heaven *When Was Jesus Born* 2-16 –J. B. Summers With Doc Bagby's Orchestra *I Want A Present For Christmas* 2-17 –Sonny Parker With Lionel Hampton Orchestra *Boogie Woogie Santa Claus* 2-18 –Roy Milton & His Solid Senders *New Year's Resolution Blues* 2-19 –Sonny Boy Williamson *Sonny Boy's Christmas Blues* 2-20 –Roosevelt Sykes *Let Me Hang My Stocking In Your Christmas Tree* 2-21 –Elzadie Robinson *The Santa Claus Crave* 2-22 –Walter Davis *Santa Claus* 2-23 –Victoria Spivey *Christmas Morning Blues* 2-24 –Boll Weevil *Christmas Time Blues* 2-25 –Floyd Dixon *Empty Stocking Blues* 2-26 –Mabel Scott With Les Welch And His Orchestra *Boogie Woogie Santa Claus*

Christmas and the blues might seem at first like a strange combination, given that the music of the holiday season is usually joyful, hopeful, and bright, but no other time of the year is so good at showing you what you don't have, and what you can't get, and if you have the blues at Christmas, well, it's going to be a pretty heavy dose. This generous two-disc set from Document Records features 52 tracks of vintage African-American Christmas-themed blues and gospel pieces (with a couple of street sermons thrown in) recorded between 1925 and 1955, ranging from down-and-out laments and jailhouse moans to surprising (and occasionally risqué) requests for what Santa can bring down the chimney. Highlights on the first disc include the opening track, the joyous "Christ Was Born on Christmas Morn," recorded in 1925 by comedian and female impersonator Frankie "Half Pint" Jaxon; Harry Crafton's "Bring That Cadillac Back" (a Cadillac might not be the best gift if your girlfriend likes to ramble) from 1947; Tampa Red's amazing, ringing slide guitar tone on "Christmas and New Year's Blues" from 1936; and the bizarre, disturbing field recording of "Junior's a Jap Girl's Christmas for His Santa Claus," sung by Willie Blackwell for Alan Lomax in Arkansas in 1942. Other high points include the charming "Christmas Boogie," recorded in 1950 by piano prodigy (he was only ten years old when this recording was made) Frankie "Sugar Chile" Robinson and the intense, bottled-up street-corner sermon "The Wrong Way to Celebrate Xmas," recorded by Rev. Edward Clayborn in 1928. The second disc yields even more holiday gems, including the bottleneck guitar attack of Black Ace (Babe Karo Lemon Turner) on 1937's "Christmas Time Blues (Beggin' Santa Claus)"; Leroy Carr's stark and brilliant "Christmas in Jail" from 1929; a breezy, bouncing "When Jesus Was Born" by gospel harmony quartet the Sons of Heaven (who were really the Selah Jubilee Singers doing a little moonlighting -- which they did often, also recording as the Jubilators, the Southern Harmonaires, and the Larks) from 1948; and the sparse, stunning "Christmas Time Blues" by the mysterious Boll Weevil (Willie McNeil), also from 1948. A marvelous collection, Blues, Blues Christmas is a refreshing addition to the more standard holiday material that prevails during the season. ---Steve Leggett, Rovi

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