

ROB McCONNELL valve trombone

& THE BOSS BRASS

MOE KOFFMAN piccolo, flute, clarinet, soprano & alto saxophones

JOHN JOHNSON flute, clarinet, soprano & alto saxophones

ALEX DEAN flute, clarinet, tenor saxophone

PAT LaBARBERA flute, clarinet, soprano & tenor saxophones

BOB LEONARD flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone

DAVE DUNLOP lead trumpet, flugelhorn

STEVE McDADE trumpet, flugelhorn

JOHN MacLEOD trumpet, flugelhorn

GUIDO BASSO trumpet, flugelhorn

KEVIN TURCOTTE trumpet, flugelhorn

ALASTAIR KAY lead trombone

BOB LIVINGSTON trombone

JERRY JOHNSON trombone

ERNIE PATTISON bass trombone

JAMES MacDONALD french horn

JUDY KAY french horn

DAVID RESTIVO piano

ED BICKERT guitar

JIM VIVIAN bass

TED WARREN drums

with

BRIAN LEONARD percussion on some selections

ROB McCONNELL
and THE BOSS BRASS



Big Band Christmas



Big Band Christmas

Produced by Rob McConnell & Phil Edwards
Executive Producer: John Burk
Recorded at DAVE, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
April 27 & 28, 1998
Engineered by Phil Edwards, assisted by
Vanya Drakul & Ben Switzer
All Arrangements: Rob McConnell
Mixed & Assembled by Phil Edwards at PER,
Hayward, CA
Mastered by George Horn
Production Manager: Kathleen Vance
Art Direction: Robert Walston
Photography: Don Vickery
Rob's copyist is still Ken Steele of
Sherman Oaks, CA



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CCD-4844-2

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1. **HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY
LITTLE CHRISTMAS / I'LL BE
HOME FOR CHRISTMAS**
(ca. 1944 - music: Ralph Blane / lyrics: Hugh Martin) /
(ca. 1943 - music: Walter Kent / lyrics: Kim Gannon &
Buck Ram)
soloists: Kevin Turcotte - trumpet /
Pat LaBarbera - tenor saxophone
2. **SILVER BELLS / IN THE
BLEAK MID-WINTER**
(ca. 1950 - music & lyrics: Jay Livingston & Ray Evans) /
(origin unknown)
soloists: Ed Bickert - guitar /
Dave Dunlop - lead trumpet
3. **WHITE CHRISTMAS / LET IT SNOW,
LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW /
WINTER WONDERLAND**
(ca. 1942 - music & lyrics: Irving Berlin) /
(ca. 1946 - music: Jule Styne / lyrics: Sammy Cahn) /
(ca. 1934 - music: Felix Bernard / lyrics: Dick Smith)
soloist: Guido Basso - flugelhorn
4. **AWAY IN A MANGER**
(ca. 1887 - music: James Ramsey Murray / lyrics: anon.)
5. **THE CHRISTMAS WALTZ**
(ca. 1954 - music: Jule Styne / lyrics: Sammy Cahn)
soloist: Guido Basso - flugelhorn
6. **THE CHRISTMAS SONG**
(ca. 1946 - music & lyrics: Mel Tormé & Robert Wells)
soloists: Rob McConnell - valve trombone /
David Restivo - piano
7. **WHAT ARE YOU DOING
NEW YEAR'S EVE?**
(ca. 1947 - music & lyrics: Frank Loesser)
soloists: Moe Koffman - alto saxophone /
Steve McDade - trumpet
8. **IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT
CLEAR / SILENT NIGHT**
(ca. 1850 - music: Richard Storrs Willis / lyrics:
Rev. Edward Hamilton Sears) / (ca. 1818 - music:
Franz Gruber / German lyrics: Joseph Mohr. English
lyrics: anon. - standard translation 1871)
soloists: John Johnson - alto saxophone /
Ed Bickert - guitar
9. **MY FAVORITE THINGS**
(ca. 1959 - music: Richard Rodgers / lyrics:
Oscar Hammerstein II)
soloists: Pat LaBarbera - soprano saxophone /
Alex Dean - tenor saxophone
10. **A CHRISTMAS LOVE SONG**
(ca. 1988 - music: Johnny Mandel / lyrics: Alan &
Marilyn Bergman)
soloist: Guido Basso - flugelhorn
11. **O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
/ JOY TO THE WORLD**
(ca. 1868 - music: Lewis H. Redner / lyrics:
Phillips Brooks) / (ca. 1839 - music adapted from
Handel by M. Lovell Mason / lyrics: Isaac Watts)
soloist: Alastair Kay - trombone

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SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM ROB —

First of all, thank you for buying so-o many of these CDs as presents for your family and friends. It has made it an international best seller! (You probably have figured it out that I couldn't possibly know this, as this is being written in April, the day *before* we recorded! I'm just trying to keep an overall positive attitude!)

There have not been many Christmas recordings by big bands, but as we are usually in the vanguard of these trends, I'm sure that every Tom, Dick and Harry with a band will be on the case soon. By that time I will have made my pile and be sitting on the beach somewhere.

A little more seriously...I have always enjoyed Christmas music and haven't done many arrangements of same until now. I grew up singing in church choirs with my family and remember that time of year with Handel's "Messiah" and all the carols with love. At one time (very early '40s), *all* of our family was in the choir at St. George's United Church in Toronto. My father Howard, my mother Sally, my two sisters Marion and Shirley and my brothers Alan and Dan. Dan and I (the youngest, referred to as the little boys) were among the sopranos in the junior choir. Very fond memories!

This CD (I'm still calling them "records" most of the time) has a mix of carols and songs from the past with the exception of Johnny Mandel's beautiful **A Christmas Love Song**. It's too bad that you're missing Alan and Marilyn Bergman's lyrics on our version, but Rosemary Clooney's version (naturally) has them (on her album WHITE CHRISTMAS, CCD-4719). A small aside regarding **A Christmas Love Song**: I was coincidentally talking to Johnny just after I had finished this arrangement featuring Guido Basso and mentioned it to him. (We

have had good luck with Guido playing his songs). Among other niceties, John said that he hoped that I had arranged it in 3/4 time, which was his original intention. (Rosemary's version, the only one that I had heard, is in 4/4.) This version is in 4/4...Sorry, I didn't know. (After hearing this news I was wondering about the feasibility of dropping one beat...no!...3/4, 4/4, who cares — it's a great song, as you will hear.

Away In A Manger has at least three different melodies. The one I used is the one I sang as a youngster. Naturally, I think that's the best one.

My approach to all the carols (probably to music in general) is quite traditional. I don't see the value in jazzing up some of this music, although I have taken some liberties harmonically which I hope is okay.

The songs seem a little more adaptable to having some jazz fun, and I had some from time to time. We seem to have slipped off the freeway a couple of times on **What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?**, but hey (as they say in Canada) it's New Year's Eve!

I had heard the carol **In The Bleak Mid-Winter** somewhere before. A very nice English lass, Susan Tylor, suggested it and presented me with a lovely CD of carols by the Kings College Choir. Susan and Toby Tylor operate a great restaurant in the city of Peterborough, Ontario where I live. (The Electric City Gardens.)

The various pairings of songs and carols was not to give you more value, (but it isn't a bad idea.) They just seemed to go nicely together musically. Besides, I had fun devising new titles for the scores:

Track #1 became Have A Home For Christmas;

Track #3 became White Snow Winter;

Track #8 became Silent Midnight, etc., etc.

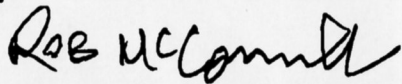
The Christmas Waltz naturally starts out as a samba...**The Christmas Song** in my circle is referred to as "Chipmunks Roasting on the Open Fire" (maybe I'm hanging out with the wrong people!) Mel Tormé, please forgive my joke on Bar 14. I couldn't resist it.

We would like to welcome Pat LaBarbera to this recording (**My Favorite Things, I'll Be Home For Christmas**). Rick Wilkins was in Europe and missed the first recording in 27 years. (It's hard to find reliable people!) Our old friend Brian Leonard added percussion to a few tunes and told us some new jokes.

I think that's about it for this ~~record~~ CD.

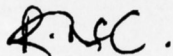
Once again, thank you so much for buying so many of them!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



PS: Regarding the cover photo — Don Vickery set this up in the studio when we had finished recording. He said that he got a good deal on the suit as he didn't need to rent the stuffing! I'm wearing *his* glasses. Don is one of Toronto's good guys. He is an excellent drummer and photographer. (When you see him at the beginning of a gig you sometimes don't know what profession he's in. Usually the suit is the clue!) It doesn't matter. He's always nice to have around, in any capacity.

I have been bulking up for 15 years for this cover shot and now can get back to my ultra-strict diet.



Also hear ROB McCONNELL & THE BOSS BRASS on:

Even Canadians Get The Blues CCD-4722

Don't Get Around Much Anymore CCD-4661

Overtime CCD-4618

Our 25th Year CCD-4559

Brassy & Sassy CCD-4508

The Brass Is Back CCD-4458

Velvet & Brass CCD-4667 (with Mel Tormé, vocals)

Mel Tormé / Rob McConnell & The Boss Brass CCD-4306

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The Concord Jazz Heritage Series CCD-4829-2

Rob also joins these fine aggregations on:

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ROB McCONNELL and THE BOSS BRASS

SEASON'S GREETINGS

There have not been many Christmas recordings by big bands, but as we are usually in the vanguard of these trends, I'm sure that every Tom, Dick and Harry with a band will be on the case soon... A little more seriously – the various pairings of songs and carols (here) was not to give you more value, (but it isn't a bad idea.) They just seemed to go nicely together musically... My approach to all the carols (probably to music in general) is quite traditional. I don't see the value in jazzing up some of this music, although I have taken some liberties harmonically which I hope is okay....

—ROB McCONNELL (see full liner notes inside)

1. HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS / I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS (7:17)
2. SILVER BELLS / IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER (3:56)
3. WHITE CHRISTMAS / LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW / WINTER WONDERLAND (6:58)
4. AWAY IN A MANGER (2:08)
5. THE CHRISTMAS WALTZ (4:56)
6. THE CHRISTMAS SONG (5:37)
7. WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEW YEAR'S EVE? (7:52)
8. IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR / SILENT NIGHT (5:28)
9. MY FAVORITE THINGS (7:14)
10. A CHRISTMAS LOVE SONG (5:07)
11. O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM / JOY TO THE WORLD (2:48)

Arrangements by Rob McConnell

Produced by Rob McConnell & Phil Edwards / Executive Producer: John Burk / Recorded & Mixed by Phil Edwards

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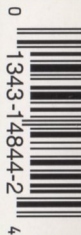
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