

## Al Jarreau - Christmas (2008)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 19 December 2013 16:56 - Last Updated Thursday, 19 December 2013 17:03

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1. *Winter Wonderland* 2. *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* 3. *White Christmas* 4. *Carol of the Bells* 5. *O Come All Ye Faithful* 6. *The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)* 7. *I'll Be Home for Christmas* 8. *Gloria in Excelsis* 9. *Christmas Time Is Here* 10. *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* 11. *Some Children See Him* 12. *The Little Christmas Tree*

Musicians: Al Jarreau (vocals, background vocals) Chris Walker (vocals, bass instrument, bass guitar, background vocals) Claude McKnight, Dave & Ian Thomas, Joey Kibble, Mark Kibble, Alvin Chea, Take 6, Cedric Dent (vocals) Ross Bolton (guitar) Michael O'Neill (guitars, electric guitar, nylon-string guitar) Michael Thompson (acoustic guitar, electric guitar) Ramón Stagnaro (nylon-string guitar) Dan Higgins (flute, wooden flute, pennywhistle, clarinet) Larry Williams (flute, clarinet, tenor saxophone, piano, Fender Rhodes piano, keyboards, synthesizers, vibraphone, bells) Phil Ayling (oboe) Joe Turano (tenor saxophone, piano, sleigh bell, background vocals) Jerry Hey (flugelhorn) David Witham (Fender Rhodes piano) Larry Goldings (organ) Dave Carpenter (acoustic bass) Bob Wilson & His Orchestra, Mark Simmons (drums) Lenny Castro (tambourine, percussion) Alyncia Mack, Montina Cooper (background vocals) Larry Turtle - stick

If ever there was a singer suited for a holiday album it was Al Jarreau, whose friendly, honeyed croon always felt warm and welcoming. Those traits are evident on his 2008 seasonal album Christmas but so are his scatting roots, perhaps a little bit too much so for this to be the kind of soothing soundtrack to a Christmas party that it might initially seem to be, particularly as the first section of the album is loaded with just a little bit too much syncopation and swing. As Christmas rolls on, things settle down into a smooth quiet storm groove, never pushing too hard on either the vocal or arrangement front, which is a bit of a relief after the slightly overcooked first half. This back-end -- containing a silken "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," a light "The Little Christmas Tree" and a mildly funky "Gloria in Excelsis" -- is what Jarreau fans would hope, even expect, from an Al Jarreau Christmas album and it's the reason to give this a seasonal spin. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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