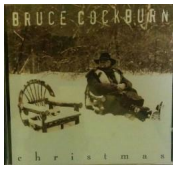
Bruce Cockburn - Christmas (1993)



[1] Adeste Fidelis [2] Early On One Christmas Morn [3] O Little Town of Bethlehem [4] Riu Riu Chiu [5] I Saw Three Ships [6] Down in Yon Forest [7] Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes [8] Go Tell It On the Mountain [9] Shepherds [10] Silent Night [11] Iesus Ahatonnia (The Huron Carol) [12] God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen [13] It Came Upon the Midnight Clear [14] Mary Had a Baby [15] Joy to the World Bruce Cockburn - Dulcimer, Guitars, Harmonica, Harmony, Percussion, Vocals, Wind Chimes Richard Bell - Accordion, Organ, Piano Eliseo Borrero - Vocals (Background) T-Bone Burnett - Humming, Voices Jenny Cockburn - Vocals (Background) Gary Craig - Drums, Percussion John Dymond - Bass Dick Heckstall-Smith - Percussion Colin Linden - Guitars, Vocals (Background) Hugh Marsh - Violectra, Violin Alberto Mirabal - Vocals (Background) Colina Phillips - Vocals (Background) Sam Phillips - Vocals (Background) Candi Sosa - Vocals (Background) Sharon Williams - Vocals (Background) Vivian Williams - Vocals (Background)

A generous 15 tracks breathing new life into well-worn standards like "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" by focusing on their potential as good songs rather than distancing them on some solemn pedestal. When Cockburn sandwiches these between such non-conventional contributions as the gospel-bluegrass of "Early On One Christmas Morn," the Spanish "Riu Riu Riu," the French/world beat of "Les anges dans nos campagnes," the Huron Indian "Jesus Ahatonnia," and the ancient, spooky "Down In Yon Forest," the disc takes on a complex flavor that can be savored any time of the year. ---Roch Parisien, AllMusic Review

Bruce Cockburn is a guitarist, singer/songwriter from Canada who has released twenty-nine albums in a career spanning forty years. In 1993, he recorded “Christmas,” his collection of

carols and obscure songs. He arranged all the songs to fit into his acoustic range and the results are remarkable for what they are not: the usual sounding songs at least one radio station per city plays 24/7 for a month.

In interviews in 1993 and in the liner notes, Cockburn expressed the desire only to sing carols and not the secular material so often heard at this time of year. It hearkens back to his childhood (born in 1945) where there was still an element of the spiritual associated with December 25. In some of the more obscure carols he selected and arranged, there's also an element of mystery present. Not a bad thing, really, considering the event celebrated at Christmas was full of supernatural power.

All throughout this disc, Cockburn and his fellow musicians rarely plays any electrical instruments. He allows the acoustic qualities of his guitar, dulcimer, and the other instruments to lend their unique tonalities to the overall feel and spirit of these carols. Cockburn often uses different tunings on his guitar to bring about different base sounds.

In all, Bruce Cockburn's "Christmas" proves a nice antithesis to the stuff you'll be hearing all season. Don't get me wrong: I love that stuff with a passion that my family constantly finds surprising. But in between, there is room for something different, something that will make you pause and think what the season is really all about. ---scottdparker.blogspot.com

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