

Steve Lukather - Santamental (2003)

Written by bluesever

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1 Joy To The World 3:07 2 Greensleeves 6:58 3 Jingle Bells 2:19 4 Carol Of The Bells 4:42 5 Broken Heart For Christmas 4:09 6 Angels We Have Heard On High 4:55 7 Winter Wonderland 4:05 8 Look Out For Angels 5:19 9 Silent Night 4:33 Bonus Cut 10 The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting) 2:16

Musicians:

Steve Lukather: guitars, voacals

Trevor Lukather: guitar power chords (4)

Eddie Van Halen: guitar (1, 2nd & 4th solo)

Slash: guitar (5)

Steve Vai: guitar (4, 3rd solo)

Mike Landau: guitar (8, 1st solo)

Edgar Winter: vocals, sax(7)

Jeff Babko: keyboards, trombone, organ, rhodes, horns

John Pierce: bass

Scott Hamilton: sax

Walt Fowler: trumpet

George Shelby: sax

Greg Bissonette: drums, trumpet

Lenny Castro: percussion

Simon Phillips: tambourine (1)

In June 2002 Lukather started the recordings for a solo album with jazz-rock style covers of classic and brand new Xmas songs, (re)arranged by Luke himself and Jeff Babko. The album (almost entirely instrumental) also contains two new songs as a surprise gift. It's not the first time Luke recorded Xmas songs. In 1997 and 1998 Luke contributed to The carols of Christmas 2 and Merry Axemas 2 (produced by Steve Vai).

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Lukather in June: "Well... I am starting June 17th for 7 days at the Steakhouse. It's tentatively titled A Lukey Xmas. The arrangements are awesome. Mostly instrumental stuff with a few vocals. I am having a few guests as well. Edgar Winter, Slash, Mike Landau. My son Trevor confirmed so far. There will be more and few big surprises. Elliot Scheiner is producing and engineering for the new label that he and Al Schmitt started and I think I am the first act on the label. The CD will be out late September for Xmas. A nice stocking stuffer for sure! Hahaha."

After the recordings Lukather decided to change the album title in Santamental. One of the special guests on the album is Eddie Van Halen. Lukather in July: "Ed and I have been friends for 24 years or so. I got him out of seclusion to come rip on one of the Xmas tunes." Van Halen joins Lukather on a rendition of the standard Joy to the world that Lukather tells will sound a bit different than what most people are used to: "I did a version of Joy to the world that sounds like it's Hot for teacher or Space boogie. It's that tempo, that groove, and we re-arranged the voicings around the melody. Me and him go back and forth on some solos."

Lukather in 2005: "I don't have any Christmas records. My next door neighbor is a lawyer. I walked over and said "hey man, you got any Christmas records?" He comes back with 25 of them. He lays them on me. Originally, they are all just major scale happy little songs; really cheesy. The challenge was how to retain what it is, so it's recognizable to people, but still try to hip it up musically. Then we wrote solo sections. We took a lot of liberties. As they were public domain, we were allowed to do that."

Santamental was originally released in October 2003 by the new record label Bop City, started by Elliot Scheiner, Al Schmitt and Ed Cherney. In 2005 it was re-released on Steve Vai's record label Favored Nations.

Lukather about the essence of the album in Gitarre & Bass, November 2002: "Actually it's a pretty funny album, with traditional standards that we really mixed up. I sampled, for example, the vocals of Sammy Davis Jr. and made a duet with him (Jingle bells). The album sounds like a Big Band based on Weather Report, Frank Zappa and Van Halen."

Lukather in December 2002: "I did my new Christmas record in six days - all analog on a 24-track, no click. Old school. Ninety percent of the solos were live, except for the guests who played on it."

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Lukather about Van Halen (Toto99.com August 2003): "Eddie and I, and Alex for that matter, are very good pals. We hang and talk all the time. They have an amazing record in the can and they are still lookig for THE lead singer. I have sung backgrounds on a few of there records and yes, they asked me to help out on the new one at some point. I dont know WHEN that will be and they are candid about it all so I dont want to say too much but even IF they did ask me I don't think I am the right guy nor would I want the media heat and hate that would come my way IF such a thing actually happened. It is sometimes very difficult to mix business and friendship. I would rather stay friends. Ed and I play together on my Xmas record that is coming in Octobe, and I will always jam with the guys when asked and vice versa. I am a HUGE VH fan!"
---stevelukather.com

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