



When Swing Was King

Christmas Newsletter

Did You Know?

Originally written to honor America's military serving far from home, the beautiful song "I'll Be Home for Christmas" has become a favorite for many generations now. However, the song's final phrase ("if only in my dreams") was considered too sad and no one in the business wanted to record it.

But when songwriter Kim Gannon sang the song for Bing Crosby (while they were playing golf), Bing loved it and promised to make it a hit.

And, of course, he did. By the way, the song on the flip side of that Decca record was a lovely but sad song too – "Danny Boy."

Did You Know?

In 1957 Elvis Presley made "Blue Christmas" into a hit on the pop charts. However, it had been taken to #1 once before. And that was on the Country charts in 1950. The singer? None other than Ernest Tubb!

A Big Band Yuletide Quiz

- 1) What famous Christmas song was introduced by Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell in the 1951 film *The Lemon Drop Kid*?
- 2) Noel Regney and his wife Gloria Shayne wrote "Do You Hear What I Hear" in reaction to what early 1960s event?
- 3) "March of the Toys" from the operetta *Babes in Toyland* was a surprising hit in 1939 for which band?
- 4) Who sang "Christmas in Killarney" when it first became a hit record in 1950?
- 5) The Andrews Sisters and Guy Lombardo's orchestra teamed up in 1946 for what Christmas song?
- 6) "Mistletoe and Holly" was the theme song for the Christmas Seals in 1960. It was co-written by what singing star?
- 7) In 1950, Gene Autry recorded what million-selling Christmas song for kids?
- 8) The classic 1941 recording of "Winter Weather" featured what vocalists singing with the Benny Goodman band?
- 9) Whose recording of "Silent Night" has sold the most copies?
- 10) In what Hollywood movie was the song "White Christmas" introduced?

(Answers to this quiz on page 2.)

A Note from Denny & Claire

The blessings of Christmas have been profound and constant for us over the years, especially after becoming Christians in our early adulthood. The message of Christmas, the music, the merriment, and the memories all combine to give us great joy and comfort. But Christmas also has brought us creative inspiration which we have applied in many ways, including writing. The most ambitious of these projects is a novel I wrote 2 years ago, *The Christmas Room*, which is available through Amazon or at the Bookworm and Divine Truth bookstores here in Omaha.

One reader says of the book, "*The Christmas Room* is a book that holds your heart. Each page is full of love, compassion and joy" while another notes, "*The Christmas Room*, although great to read during the Christmas season, is not strictly a Christmas story. The author has managed to take life in a nursing home and work in mystery, love, friendship and most importantly, forgiveness."

And a third reviewer wrote, "*The Christmas Room* was a delight! A very uplifting book with a cast of characters that made it hard to put down."

However, My most recent Christmas writing projects, however, are 2 short stories: "A Freedom Train Christmas" and "The Winter in the Woods." Both of those stories are available through Amazon Kindle for only \$.99 each. And, if you're not a Kindle reader, we can print off a copy for you. Just ask us.

Happy reading. And merry Christmas!

Do We Have a Date?

Can you guess the chronological order of these popular Christmas songs?

* "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"

* "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"

* "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year"

* "Winter Wonderland"

* "Feliz Navidad"

* "Silver Bells"

* "White Christmas."

Answers to the Yuletide quiz from Page 1:

- 1) "Silver Bells"
- 2) The Cuban missile crisis
- 3) The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra
- 4) Dennis Day
- 5) "Christmas Island"
- 6) Frank Sinatra
- 7) "Frosty the Snowman"
- 8) Peggy Lee & Art Lund
- 9) Bing Crosby (1935)
- 10) *Holiday Inn*

Here's some facts about Jimmy Boyd, the fellow who, at age 13, recorded a Christmas mega-hit in 1952, a song that sold over 2.5 million records in its first week! That song was "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus."

- * Jimmy's father was a cotton picker from Mississippi who sent his family to California and, since he had run out of money, hopped a freight to get out there himself.
- * Jimmy's break came when he became a regular on the *Al Jarvis Talent Show* on KLAC-TV in Los Angeles.
- * "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" went to Number 1 at Christmas in 1952 and returned to Number 1 again the following year! The final sales for the song? 11 million and counting.
- * Jimmy did have a few other hit songs, the biggest one a duet with Frankie Laine in 1953 called "Tell Me a Story" which reached #4 on the charts. He also recorded the song "Dennis the Menace" with Rosemary Clooney which reached #25.
- * Though Jimmy's musical career stalled early, he came close to the big time again several times including connections with Sun Records, Herb Alpert, Bobby Darin, Kris Kristofferson, Nancy Sinatra, and the Bee Gees. However, he did do quite a bit of TV and movie acting in the 1950s and 1960s. And eventually he performed stand-up comedy with some success.
- * Jimmy was married twice, once to actress Yvonne Craig whose best known role was TV's *Batgirl*.



Spotlight On Jimmy Boyd



The Music Man's Christmas Song

Meredith Wilson is best remembered for his hit musical *The Music Man*.

But he also wrote other stuff including one of the most famous Christmas songs of all time. In 1963, the song was incorporated into his musical, *Here's Love* which was based on the classic holiday film *Miracle on 34th Street*.

Unfortunately, the play bombed. But the song, already very popular from recordings by Bing Crosby, Perry Como, and many others is going strong to this day. That song? You know it well -- **"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas."**

Answers to the "Date" quiz from Page 2:

- 1) "Winter Wonderland" (1934)
- 2) "White Christmas" (1940)
- 3) "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" (1944)
- 4) "Silver Bells" (1950)
- 5) "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" (1958)
- 6) "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" (1963)
- 7) "Feliz Navidad" (1970)

The "When Swing Was King" quarterly newsletter is a gift from your friends at Vital Signs Ministries.

Beautifully Phrased...



“Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection.”
(Winston Churchill)

“Christmas Eve was a night of song that wrapped itself about you like a shawl. But it warmed more than your body. It warmed your heart...filled it, too, with a melody that would last forever.”
(Nebraska author, Bess Streeter Aldrich, *Song of Years*)

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
(John 1:14)

“Christmas is not just a time for festivity and merry making. It is more than that.
It is a time for the contemplation of eternal things.
The Christmas spirit is a spirit of giving and forgiving.” (J. C. Penney)

“He who has not Christmas in his heart
will never find it under a tree.” (Roy L. Smith)

“Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fireside and his quiet home!” (Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*)

“I am not alone at all, I thought. I was never alone at all. And that, of course,
is the message of Christmas. We are never alone.
Not when the night is darkest, the wind coldest, the world seemingly most indifferent.
For this is still the time God chooses.” (Taylor Caldwell)

“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you, you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on Whom his favor rests.’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’” (Luke 2:10-15)

“We are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime.” (Laura Ingalls Wilder)