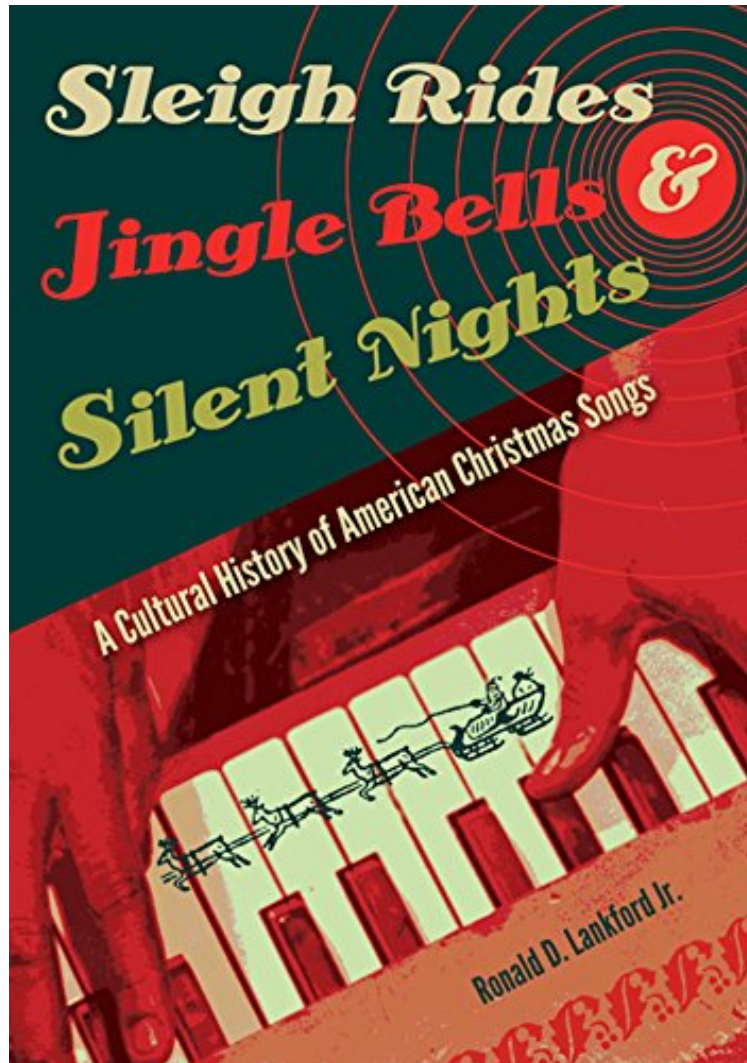


[Download] Sleigh Rides, Jingle Bells, and Silent Nights: A Cultural History of American Christmas Songs

Sleigh Rides, Jingle Bells, and Silent Nights: A Cultural History of American Christmas Songs

Ronald D. Lankford

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Ronald D. Lankford : Sleigh Rides, Jingle Bells, and Silent Nights: A Cultural History of American Christmas Songs before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sleigh Rides, Jingle Bells, and Silent Nights: A Cultural History of American Christmas Songs:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book, but...By Mark LuebkerInteresting book, but reads more like someone's thesis than the kind of popular culture history I was expecting.8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing take on an interesting subjectBy M. RitchieEvery bit of the title of this book is misleading: First of all, "Sleigh Ride," "Jingle Bells," and "Silent Night" are not mentioned in this book--certainly

Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" belongs here. Second, this is not a history of American Christmas songs, it is a quasi-academic survey of a handful of such songs; maybe 15, if that many, are written about in any detail. The "cultural" part of the title is accurate; the author does a nice job throwing a net around Christmas popular culture of the past fifty years as he sets up context for the discussion of songs, but material on the songs is weak and unfulfilling. His thesis is interesting: the genre of American Christmas pop music, which was born during World War II and largely ended in the 1960s, is not about any of the religious aspects of Christmas, but instead focuses on domesticity, nostalgia, romance, and commercial consumption. But what he leaves out could fill another book. He doesn't discuss songs such as "Jingle Bell Rock," "Holly Jolly Christmas," "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," "Little Drummer Boy," "Silver Bells," "Do You Hear What I Hear," "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)," "Please Daddy, Don't Get Drunk This Christmas," "Please Come Home for Christmas," or "All I Want for Christmas Is You." I know that he's not intending to cover British songs, but I could write several paragraphs on Elton John's "Step Into Christmas," a lyrically interesting song which was and remains popular in America, not to mention John Lennon's "Happy Xmas (War is Over)!" The academic prose style is clear, and there has been a lot of research done, but ultimately, as obvious as his points are and as much as he has left out, I doubt that this would pass muster as a dissertation in a university English department. And as it doesn't seem pitched at a average music buff reader, I'm not sure who would be satisfied by this half-baked presentation.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. American Culture and Christmas Songs By Ron Titus Ronald Lankford, Jr., does not provide a standard history of Christmas songs. He does not discuss in detail who wrote a particular song. That type of history can be found in books such as *Stories Behind the Best-Loved Songs of Christmas* by Ace Collins. Lankford instead studies how Christmas songs fit into and reflect American culture especially in relation to movies and television shows. After an introductory essay on the American Christmas song tradition, Lankford examines Christmas songs in relation to nostalgia for earlier times, Santa Claus and gift giving, Christmas as carnival time, the poor and hard times in relation to American celebratory practices, and Christmas satire songs. Lankford finishes the book with a return to nostalgia beginning in the 1980's. If you are interested in the culture of Christmas, Lankford will not disappoint. He provides plenty of evidence to back his claims, using movie stills and reference material to illustrate the book. He provides a serious, yet entertaining look at a timely topic.

Santa Claus, singing cowboys, love, hymns, satire, snow, Bing and Dean and Frank, fictional reindeer and warbling chipmunks: American Christmas music! Ronald Lankford has the rare ability to reconcile the sacred and the profane in an easy narrative that manages both to cherish and illuminate the vast contradictions that adhere to December 25th in the U.S.A.!

Karal Ann Marling, author of *Merry Christmas! Celebrating America's Greatest Holiday Thorough and well documented*. Spins interesting and novel insights into songs with which we are already familiar.

Paul Mullins, author of *The Archaeology of Consumer Culture* When Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* debuted in 1942, no one imagined that a holiday song would top the charts year after year. One of the best-selling singles ever released, it remains on rotation at tree lighting ceremonies across the country, in crowded shopping malls on Black Friday, and at warm diners on lonely Christmas Eve nights. Over the years, other favorites have been added to America's annual playlist, including Elvis Presley's *Blue Christmas*, the King Cole Trio's *The Christmas Song*, Gene Autry's *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, Willie Nelson's *Pretty Paper*, and, of course, Elmo Patsy's *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer*. Resting just beneath the surface of familiar melodies and words, jolly Santas, winter wonderlands, and roasting chestnuts both mask and represent an intricate cultural landscape crowded with the meanings of a modern American Christmas. Songs that most readily evoke those meanings, desires, and anxieties have become classics, painting a portrait of the American psyche past and present. Viewing American holiday values through the filter of familiar Christmas songs, Ronald Lankford examines popular culture, consumerism, and the dynamics of the traditional American family. He surveys more than seventy-five years of songs and reveals that the modern American Christmas has carried a complex and sometimes contradictory set of meanings. Interpreting tunes against the backdrop of the eras in which they were first released, he identifies the repeated themes of nostalgia, commerce, holiday blues, carnival, and travesty that underscore so much beloved music. This first full-length analysis of the lyrics, images, and commercial forces inextricably linked to Yuletide music hits the heart of what many Americans think Christmas is? or should be.

From the *Inside Flap* When Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* debuted in 1942, no one imagined that a holiday song would top the charts year after year. One of the best-selling singles ever released, it remains on rotation at tree lighting ceremonies across the country, in crowded shopping malls on Black Friday, and at warm diners on lonely Christmas Eve nights. Over the years, other favorites have been added to America's annual playlist, including Elvis Presley's *Blue Christmas*, the King Cole Trio's *The Christmas Song*, Gene Autry's *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, Willie Nelson's *Pretty Paper*, and, of course, Elmo Patsy's *Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer*. Resting just beneath the surface of familiar melodies and words, jolly Santas, winter wonderlands, and roasting chestnuts both mask and represent an intricate cultural landscape crowded with the meanings of a modern American Christmas. Songs that most readily evoke those meanings, desires, and anxieties have become classics, painting a portrait of the American psyche past and present. Viewing American holiday values through the filter of familiar Christmas songs,

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