31 Things You Didn't Know about Holiday Songs - mental_floss - List Show (Ep. 239)

List Show
https://youtube.com/watch?v=Van1ykngYBg
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/Van1ykngYBg

Hi, I'm Mike, this is Mental Floss on YouTube, and did you know that in the 50's the catholic church condemned the song "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus?" So the record label flew the 13 year old Singer, Jimmy Boyd, out to Boston to meet with the archdiocese. Afterwards, they determined that the song was okay after all.

And that is the first of many facts about holiday songs that I'm gonna share with you today. Sorry, it's gonna get pretty Christmas-y up in here, but don't worry, we'll be back to our secular ways soon enough.

(Intro Music)

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree, A Holly Jolly Christmas, and Run, Rudolph, Run were all written by the same man, Johnny Marks, who was Jewish.

The Little Drummer Boy was originally known as The Carol of the Drums. The von Trapp singers are credited with popularizing the song— yes, those von Trapps.

The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, from *The Nutcracker*, was written in 1891 for the celesta, an instrument that was invented only five years earlier. Oh hi Nutcracker! This is a great outfit. Where do you shop?

In 1906, O Holy Night became the second song to ever be broadcast on radio.

The singer of Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree might sound old, but that is Brenda Lee. Who was 13 years old at the time.

The first Christmas song to mention Santa Clause was Up on the House Top in 1864. These guys are slightly younger than that.

Do You Hear What I Hear? was written by two people with the most Christmas-y sounding names of all time Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne. It is also, as it turns out, about the Cuban Missile Crisis. So next time you listen to Do You Hear What I Hear? just keep that in the back of your mind.

Joy to the World was originally a song about Christ's resurrection and his second coming on Easter, not his birth.

And the popular New Year song, Auld Lang Syne, was never supposed to be associated with the holiday at all. One live band in New York coincidentally played it just after midnight on the radio, then it became a tradition. Not long after it also became a tradition to turn to someone next to you at the New Year's party and say, "What does Auld Lang Syne mean anyway, I don't even know".

The song It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year, mentions that there will be scary ghost stories, which doesn't seem Christmas-y but in fact it was a holiday tradition that started in Victorian England and has since died out. Spending all of that uninterrupted time with your family is scary enough so there's no need for ghost stories. Just kidding, Mom and Dad, very excited to come home for Christmas.

Thurl Arthur Ravenscroft sang "You're a Mean One, Mr Grinch". He was also the voice of Tony the Tiger for fifty years. Not going to make a grrr-eat joke.

During World War I, there was a Christmas Truce, in which the French, English, and German troops sang "Silent Night."

On the other hand, the BBC would not play the song "I'll Be Home for Christmas" during World War II because they didn't want to lower the morale of their troops.

Songwriter Meredith Wilson wrote "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" in addition to the University of Iowa fight song and "the Music Man." *That* guy had range.

The group recording of "Do They Know It's Christmas?" brought a feud between Boy George and George Michael to popular consciousness. Of George Michael's recording, Boy George said, "God, he sounded camp." But then, he is.

George Michael actually wrote the wham song "Last Christmas." he also got sued for it because of its resemblance to the Barry Manilow song "Can't Smile Without You." It was settled out of court.

Irving Berlin, who wrote "White Christmas," hated Elvis' cover of his song. In the fifties, he started a campaign to ban Presley's' version of the song from the radio. A process that proved akin to banning snow from falling.

And speaking of which, "Let It Snow" was written by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne during a 1945 heatwave in California.

Another song that was written in the heat: "The Christmas Song," also known as Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire. Apparently songwriter Bob Wells was overheating, so he wrote a list of things that reminded him of cold weather. Chestnuts roasting, Jack Frost nipping, yuletide carols, et cetera. And then, it became the star of a song.

The residents of Armonk New York believe that the song "Frosty the Snowman" was written about their town. They even hold an annual parade in honor of it.

"We Three Kings" was originally written in 1857 for a Christmas pageant at the General Theological Seminary in New York City. I imagine that's a little bit different than the one that you would find in "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

The original Yiddish version of "I Have a Little Dreidel", the dreidel is made out of bley, which means lead. It was translated to clay.

"Deck the Halls" started as a dance tune, the lyric "follow me in a merry measure" means "join me in dance."

"Silver Bells" was originally called "Tinkle Bells", then the song writer Ray Evans told his wife about it, who responded "Are you out of your mind? Do you know what the word 'tinkle' is?"

There are three, count them, three separate music videos for the Mariah Carey song "All I Want for Christmas is You", and for some reason, I'm not surprised.

When "Winter Wonderland" was written in the 30s, some people were offended by the bit about Parson Brown marrying people on a whim. The line was replaced with "In the meadow we can build a snowman, and pretend that he's a circus clown."

"Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" was originally sung by Elmo Shropshire, a veterinarian, which I guess means that there's some kind of professional expertise supporting the described results of when grandmas and reindeers collide.

Paul McCartney wrote, sang, and played every instrument for "Wonderful Christmastime". He still earns between 4- and 600,000 dollars every year in royalties for the song.

If you really received all of the gifts from "The 12 Days of Christmas", there would be 364 presents total, someone did the

math in 2013, and determined that it would cost around $114, 651.18.

Finally, I return to the salon to tell you that "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" was written for the Judy Garland film Meet Me in St. Louis, originally it contained lines like "Have yourself a merry little Christmas, it may be your last, faithful friends who were dear to us will be near to us no more," but Garland insisted that the songwriter changed them, because she was supposed to sing it to a seven year old and didn't want to seem like, I quote, "A monster".

Thanks for watching mental_floss on YouTube, which is made with the help of these nice people. My name is Mike Renetta, if you like my face, you can find more of it on YouTube at PBSIdeaChannel, and if you like my voice, you can find it on my podcast, Reasonably Sound, links to those things in the Dooblydoo, and hey, DFTBA, and happy holidays!

(mental_floss endscreen plays)