

The Story of "The Great Songs of Christmas" and other Christmas LP's from Goodyear

Webmasters note: This is an archive of a website which was originally hosted on Yahoo! Geocities, which has been closed down. Why am I doing this? Because someone else did a similar favor for me years ago, so I'm passing it forward.

Update - The original author has been found! The site can now be found on blogspot at: <http://goodyearchristmas.blogspot.com/>

For seventeen years, from 1961 through 1977, The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company graced each Christmas season with an LP of holiday favorites by various artists, sold both at Goodyear stores and at Richfield (later ARCO) stations. For the first nine years, the albums always had the same title: "The Great Songs of Christmas." In 1970, the album was called "The Best of the Great Songs of Christmas" and featured songs already included in prior releases. The last seven albums had different titles each year (although the "Great Songs of Christmas" title was brought back for the 1975 and 1977 releases).

Until 1975, the albums were produced by Columbia Records through its Columbia Special Products subsidiary, and most often featured artists from the Columbia stable. Whether by choice or by legal obligation, the same performances were often used on more than one album; I think most of The Barbara Streisand Christmas Album ended up spread out over several Goodyear albums. Selections were also sometimes edited down or together from their original form. The last three albums were released through RCA on the RCA Special Products label. Of course, RCA was no stranger to the Christmas album/tire company biz: they issued Christmas album series for both Firestone and B F Goodrich through the sixties and early seventies.

The first nine releases also give prominent credit to a firm called "Stanley Arnold and Associates", but I've not been able to determine who/what the firm is or what their role was in assembling the albums. They may have been responsible for getting performance rights and other legal obligations. If anyone can let me know, please do!

Webmasters Update - From New Yorker magazine Oct 29, 1960 pg 51 "They bought it!" Stanley N. Arnold of Stanley Arnold associates INC, was a marketing and sales management consultant.

The first three releases were available in mono only; the next three could be purchased in mono or stereo; and all subsequent were sold only in stereo. The RCA releases are definitely rarer than the Columbia releases and may not have been released as widely.

Although the bulk of the recordings used to make each LP were taken from existing Christmas albums by the individual artists, there were individual tracks that were commissioned especially for almost every album. It's a shame that, unlike CD releases of the separate artists' Christmas albums, many of these tracks will probably never be properly released. We can only hope that they are languishing in a vault somewhere and may turn up unexpectedly on one of those bargain bin collections that appear each year.

This website is strictly a labor of love from one who grew up with these records being part & parcel of the Christmas season, but as I've done my research, I've been amazed at the "surrounding tidbits" I've uncovered. Have a look, have a laugh, and maybe you'll even say, "Hey I remember that."

For this site, since so many of us have memories of those albums which were most likely lost long ago to a garage sale, I've tried to note where those tracks are currently available on CD. If anyone can expand the information in this regard, please let me know!

1961	The Great Songs of Christmas
1962	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Two
1963	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Three
1964	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Four
1965	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Five
1966	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Six
1967	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Seven
1968	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Eight
1969	The Great Songs of Christmas Album Nine
1970	The Best of The Great Songs of Christmas
1971	The Joyous Songs of Christmas
1972	Christmas Is
1973	The Many Moods of Christmas
1974	Carols and Candlelight
1975	Henry Mancini selects Great Songs of Christmas
1976	Mancini Moods at Christmastime
1977	The Great Songs of Christmas
1989	Goodyear Presents Christmas Favorites

(Disclaimer: all information contained herein is based on my own research. Content is not affiliated with the Goodyear, Columbia/CBS/Sony, RCA/BMG, or any other corporation referenced. Clarifications, comments, and contrary evidence is welcome in the interest of making this reference material viable to any interested party.)

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