

Zoogobble

Kids and family music news and reviews - Kids music worth sharing.

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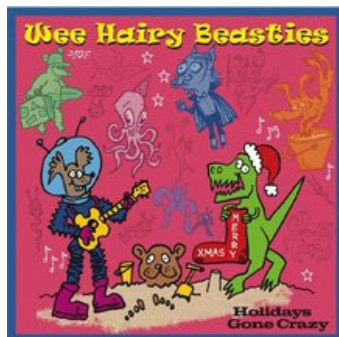
Review Basket: Another Bundle of Christmas / Holiday CDs

Well, it's that time of year when folks all across this great Interwebs of ours put together listings of Christmas and other holiday-themed lists.

And I'm no different.

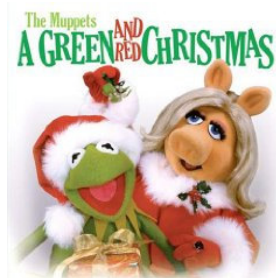
I haven't bothered to put together a "most essential" list of holiday albums -- rather, here's a list of some CDs that have crossed my desk over the past year...

If you need to see last year's list, go [here](#). You can also read a 2006 essay [here](#). (Yes, that Sufjan Stevens collection is still getting lots of airplay 'round these parts...)

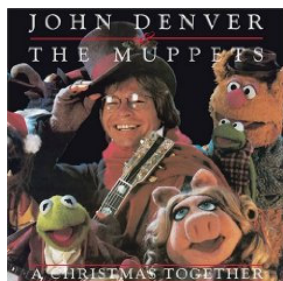


Let's start out with the clear winner of the kids' music holiday competition -- [Wee Hairy Beasties' Holidays Gone Crazy](#). This isn't really a winter holiday collection as it contains a fair number of tracks from their [Creepy Lullabies Halloween 7](#)", but it does have a few Christmas tracks -- the why-didn't-I-think-of-that "Dinosaur Christmas" (as gloriously jolly and dorky as you'd expect) and its predecessor "The Tail of the Night Before..." But it's also got non-holiday-themed tracks like "Here Comes My Shadow" and "Bury Me in the Sand." Filled with the Beasties'

trademark Americana (washboards, harmonicas, kazoos, and lap steel guitar, for example) and 5th-grade-humor (what do you expect from an album with a "Yellow Snow PSA"?), it's definitely not for the reverential times. You can get it in a physical format a lot of places, but at this late date, why not get it electronically [here](#)? But even if you get it in February, you might just listen all year long.



There was consternation in some quarters when this album won the Grammy this year for 2007's best music album for kids -- should music by animated (OK, puppet-ed) characters compete? Setting that debate aside, this album is pretty decent. A fun/sweet Kermit/Miss Piggy duet on "A Red and Green Christmas," tunes from secondary characters (Pepe the Prawn, the Swedish Chef, Floyd), and a nice mix of songs traditional and new for the album.



Whether you prefer the previous album to John Denver and the Muppets' [A Christmas Together](#), recorded nearly 20 years ago, will probably depend on a couple things. First, older listeners may prefer the original voices on this

recording to the second generation voices on the later album (the voices are close, but

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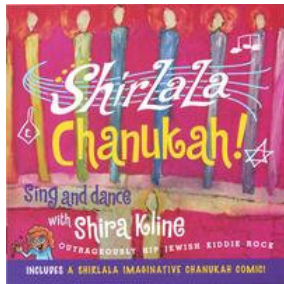
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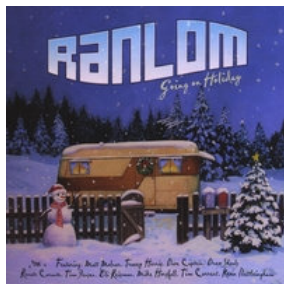
not entirely identical). Second, it's John Denver. While I like a lot of Denver's songs, I'm not wildly enthused about his songs here. On the other hand, it has two absolute classic Muppet songs, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" (Miss Piggy takes a star turn here) and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" (on which Animal still makes me smile).



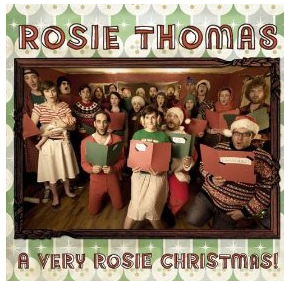
I received a couple Hanukkah CDs and while I hoped I'd be able to give a complete review, that proved beyond my abilities as a non-Jewish listener. It isn't like listening to a foreign language album - that I can handle -- rather, it's like listening to an album

about, say, microbiology in a foreign language. On *ShirLaLa Chanukah!*, Shira Kline, better known as *ShirLaLa* plays it mostly straight -- it's filled with stories mixed in with songs that occasionally veer into modern styles. *Mama Doni*, on the other hand, takes a more comedic approach on her *I Love Chanukah* EP -- if you ever wondered what "Living La Vida Loca" would sound like mashed into a song celebrating Chanukah, "La Vida Dreidel" answers that question. (If you're interested in hearing the album, the whole 4-song EP is available at her website.)

Finally, a couple for the adults.



Matt Molnar, aka *Ranlom*, provides a pop-jazzy take on mostly traditional tunes on his *Going On Holiday*. The arrangements sound modern, but they doesn't try to hide the spiritual basis for most of these songs. Except, of course, for the silly "Christmas at Grandma's House," which adds a camera-addicted grandparent to the traditional Christmas mix; your kids might relate. Samples [here](#). Fun stuff.



Rosie Thomas... When I said to someone the other day that I had the new Rosie Thomas Christmas disk, he asked, "Is it quirky?" And, yeah, it is. But, as you might expect from someone who's made music with Sufjan Stevens, it's awesome at times. There are some very jazz-mellow renditions (the secular "Christmastime Is Here," the most-definitely-not-secular "Silent Night") and some bouncy pop ("Why Can't It Be Christmastime All Year?," which somehow manages to be both sprightly and little wistful

simultaneously). But the highlight -- and goodness knows I'm surprised as anyone to write this -- is Thomas' cover of the Chipmunks tune "Christmas Don't Be Late." Thomas turns this secular novelty into a truly moving meditation on the waiting nature of Christmas. I don't think your kids will really care about the CD, but, you know, Christmas isn't *all* about the kids...

Posted by SAShepherd on December 22, 2008 05:36 AM | [Permalink](#)

COMMENTS

While I was never a fan of Sixpence None the Richer, I recently purchased their "Dawn of Grace" album for my wife. It's a great Christmas album with beautiful singing and arrangements. Best new Christmas album I've heard this season.

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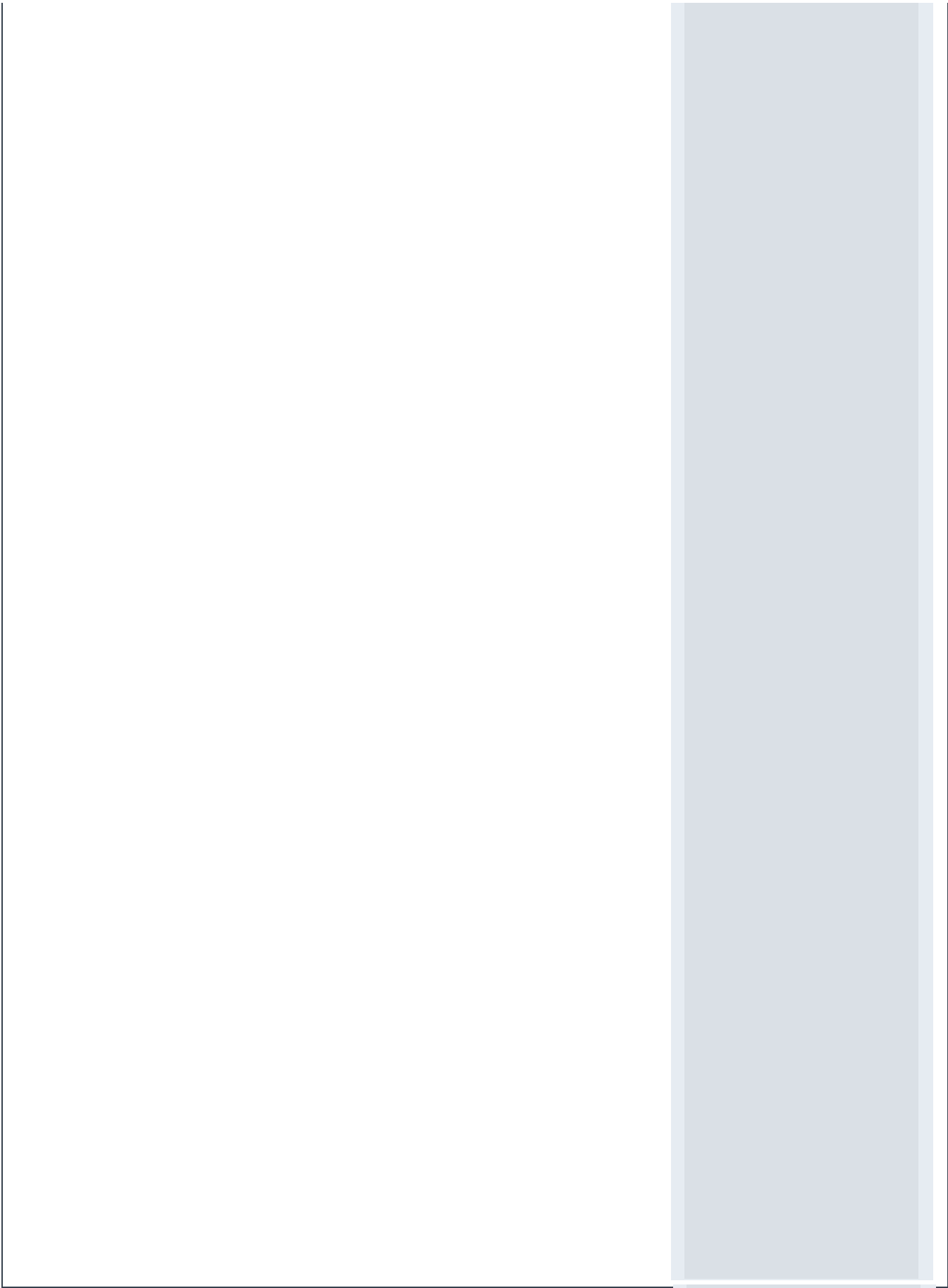
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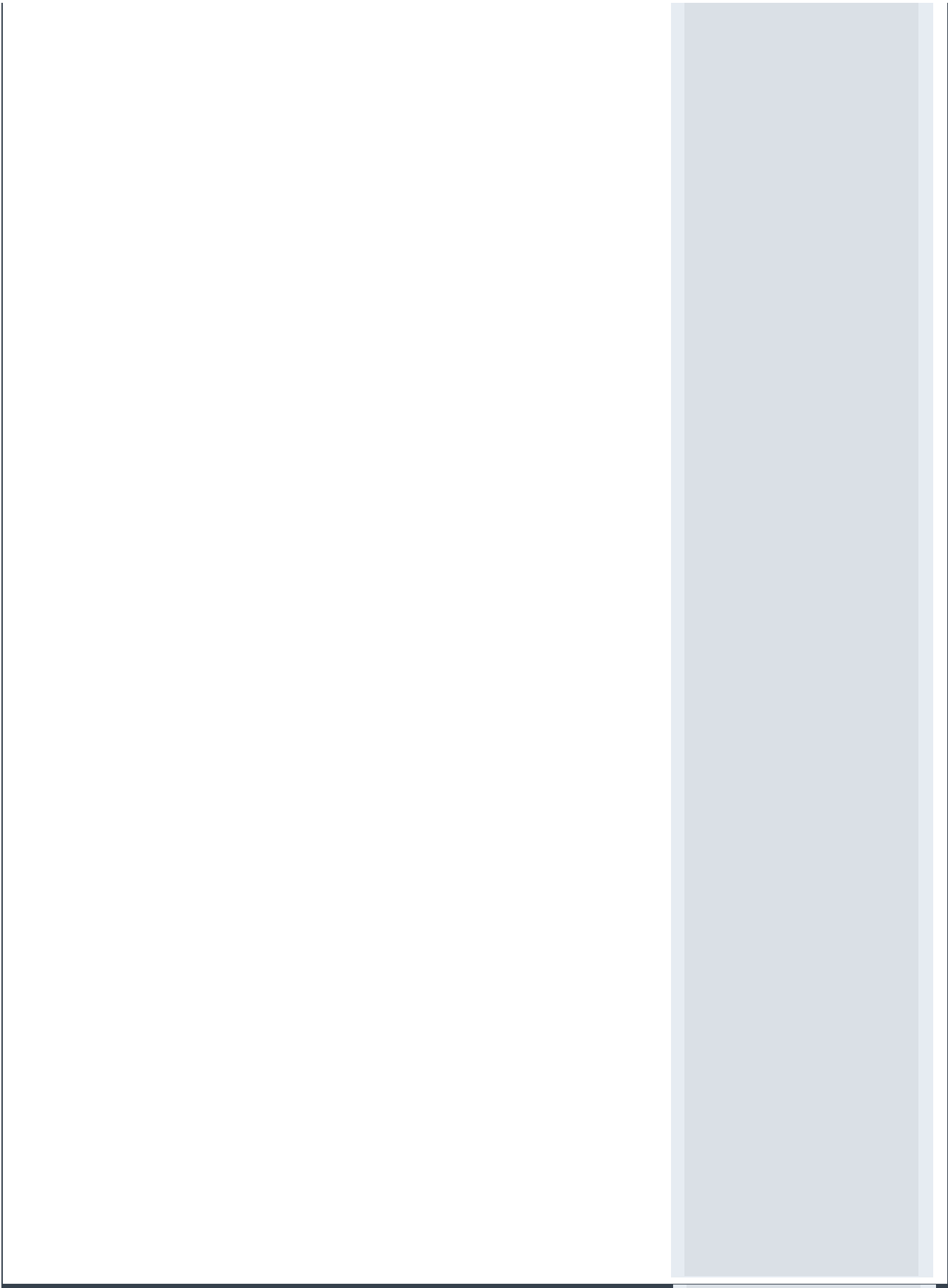
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