

One of the miracles of songwriting is how anyone can possibly create a new effort when seemingly everything has already been expressed. Add to that notion the thought of writing a new Christmas song with something to say that feels familiar yet fresh. It's a tall order.

The Holiday season is generally regarded as a blessed and happy time of year by most, but for performers it can be a bit dicey, as listeners always seem to want to hear the same half dozen or so tried and true holiday songs ad infinitum, thus giving interpreters a genuine case of Christmas blues.

Enter William Schermerhorn with pen in hand and nimble mind at the ready. Bill has fashioned a dozen original seasonal treats that traverse the roller coaster range of holiday emotions with deft talent and deep heart. Bill is a renaissance man who understands the human condition and expresses the best of humanity in his work. He is a tireless laborer, always finding the perfect turn of phrase to fit the melody so that both glide in grateful coalescence. His musical collaborators are varied and contrasting, giving his words a wide palette of expression.

Of course, after a songwriter finishes writing a song he then has to find the vocal interpreter who can catch every nuance and bring his idea to life. There are many singers around today who are talented and have a great voice, but to have the ability to elevate a song and take it to a level that exceeds the expectations of the creator is rare. One singer who is most appreciated by writers is Ann Hampton Callaway, for no one works harder in wringing the essence out of a song than Ann. She is not only prodigiously talented as a singer but also is a pianist and accomplished songwriter herself, as heard in two of the tracks for which she supplied the melodies. Ann and Bill are perfectly matched in every way, especially with the addition of Five Play and the great Ted Rosenthal Trio, making this a musically substantial recording.

Having personally experienced the joy of collaboration with Bill, I can attest to his passion for work and the optimistic life attitude that permeates his songs. It is his personal code. Songwriting for Bill is not just a job, it is an opportunity to share that fundamental belief in the goodness of humanity and spread hope for all people. It comes through every line he writes.

Thank you Bill and Ann, for bravely enlarging the musical spectrum of holiday cheer. You have done us all a great service and for that shall always have our gift of thanks!

Michael Feinstein  
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