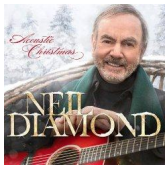
Neil Diamond - Acoustic Christmas (2016)



01. O Holy Night (2016 Version) (03:46) 02. Do You Hear What I Hear (04:04) 03. Christmas Prayers (04:31) 04. Hark the Herald Angels Sing (2016 Version) (04:14) 05. Mary's Boy Child (03:20) 06. Silent Night (2016 Version) (03:42) 07. Go Tell It On the Mountain (03:17) 08. Children Go Where I Send Thee (05:26) 09. Christmas In Killarney (02:04) 10. Christmas Medley (03:15) Neil Diamond Vocals, Guitar Paul Beasley Vocals (Background) Richard Bennett Guitar Jimmy Carter Vocals (Background) Bruce Carver Bodhran Patrick D'Arcy Uillean Pipes Eric Gorfain Conductor, Horn Arrangements, Violin John Grab Trombone Robbie Hioki Trombone (Bass) Hadley Hockensmith Guitar Nick Lane Euphonium Darrell Leonard Flugelhorn, Trumpet Lester Lovitt Flugelhorn, Trumpet Don Markese Flute, Flute Arrangement, Ocarina Eric "Ricky" McKinnie Vocals (Background) Ari Michelson Cover Photo, Inside Photo Benjamin Moore Vocals (Background) Jamie Muhoberac Keyboards Stephanie O'Keefe French Horn Kira Ott Irish Fiddle Tim Pierce Guitar Matt Rollings Keyboards Sebastian Steinberg Bass Joey Waronker Drums Julia Waters Vocals (Background) Maxine Waters Vocals (Background) Oren Waters Vocals (Background) Joey Williams Vocals (Background)

Re-teaming with Don Was and Jacknife Lee, the pair who produced his 2014 album Melody Road, Neil Diamond cut Acoustic Christmas, his fourth holiday album and first since 2009's A Cherry Cherry Christmas. The title Acoustic Christmas suggests that this 2016 LP will be sparse, but it's hazy and open, consisting of much more than a man and a guitar. Usually he's supported by a full band -- a rhythm section, another guitarist, a keyboardist, and backing vocalists -- and that gives Acoustic Christmas some spunk, which is enough to keep things lively. If Diamond isn't always original -- his version of "Children Go Where I Send Thee" follows the contours of Nick Lowe's 2013 version exactly -- he nevertheless performs with gusto, particularly on the closing "Christmas Medley." That showmanship is ultimately what gives Acoustic Christmas its personality and is the reason to return to the record: it may not align with the spirit of the season, but it's charming nonetheless. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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