

## Ann Kittredge: You Sleigh Me

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### Ann Kittredge

#### You Sleigh Me

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**Reviewed by Bart Greenberg**



Ann Kittredge has brought her warm and versatile soprano to a Christmas album that both charms and disappoints. Certainly, she is in fine voice, and she brings her intelligent interpretation of lyrics to each song she approaches. The musical arrangements are both witty and emotional, and most have been kept to a simplicity that allows the singer to shine. But at 26 minutes and with seven songs spread over eight tracks, it cries out for expansion.

The selected material includes the traditional mix of religious titles, seasonal tributes, and in one instance a worthy addition to the holiday season. The title of the album, *You Sleigh Me*, promises a far more snarky approach to the topic than what is actually presented. But this certainly is a recording that will serve as an excellent background for holiday gatherings over the coming months.

The album starts with a trio of delightful seasonal numbers. "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" (Edward Pola/George Wyle) starts out as the gentlest of waltzes, with some sweet hesitations by Kittredge that add to the magic. It gradually picks up in speed and in delight, giving the track a nice dramatic build. Next comes "Snow" (Irving Berlin) with an instrumental introduction of "White Christmas," it's a cheery rendition that shows off Kittredge's range as she tackles a number originally written to be sung by a quartet. Then comes "Wonderful Christmas Time" (Paul McCartney) that's given an instrumental backing that quotes about a dozen other familiar festive songs, making it the wittiest track of the recording. An extended version of this tune at the end of the CD contains a fuller opening, and the use of a chorus to add more variations makes it great fun.

The next three selections have a decidedly more serious tone. First up is "What the World Needs Now Is Love" (Hal David/Burt Bacharach), a moving song but not really holiday material. It is also the most stylized of the choices. The following track brings us back to Christmas with the only religious material on the recording, a medley of "What Child Is This?" (William Chatterton Dix) and "Mary Did You Know?" (Mark Lowry/Buddy Greene). The touching rendition of these two numbers, written more than a century apart, blends them together perfectly and gives Kittredge a chance to show off her acting talents and her passion. Finally, comes the sweet and sentimental "Each Ornament Has a Story" (Matthew Hardy/Randy Klein), a charming song to which she brings a clear honesty, chasing away any sentimentality.

Coming back to seasonal fun, the semi-titled tune "Sleigh Ride" (Leroy Anderson/Mitchell Parish) is given a bouncy treatment that allows Kittredge to show the power and the joyful quality of her voice. This is a CD of great charm; it's just a shame there isn't more of it.

**TAGS: BUDDY GREENE, CD REVIEWS, CLUBS, COMPOSER, WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS LOVE, LEROY ANDERSON, BART GREENBERG, SLEIGH RIDE, MITCHELL PARISH, ANN KITTREDGE, CABARET REVIEWS, WHAT CHILD IS THIS?, AMERICAN SONGBOOK ASSOCIATION, ASA, WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS TIME, MARY DID YOU KNOW?, YOU SLEIGH ME, WILLIAM CHATTERTON DIX, EACH ORNAMENT HAS A STORY, MATTHEW HARDY, RANDY KLEIN, PAUL MCCARTNEY, BROADWAY, CABARET, BROADWAY MUSICALS, IRVING BERLIN, CABARET SCENES, BURT BACHARACH, HAL DAVID, AMERICAN SONGBOOK, CHRISTMAS, WHITE CHRISTMAS, CD, IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR, EDWARD POLA, GEORGE WYLE, SNOW, MARK LOWRY**