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Oh No, Not Another Christmas Song



ENTERTAINMENT FOOD

By Alexander Baron



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The Xmas season brings with it, inevitably, rampant commercialism, including in music; sadly this year is no different, except for the startling lack of originality. In 1994, Mariah Carey co-wrote and produced *All I Want For Christmas Is You*, which for some strange reason has remained popular for the past two decades. This year though it has been trumped by a song recorded by The Shins in 2012; even worse, this is a cover of a song that was written by none other than Paul McCartney, and released in 1979, before most of the people reading this were born.



Is there any new stuff in the charts, and if so, does anybody care? Well, there is *Xmas Feat* by the rapper Fetty Wap. Hmm, probably not. Having said that, not all Christmas songs are commercial, and even the commercial ones are not necessarily rubbish. Here are a few suggestions:

All I Want For Christmas (Is My Two Front Teeth) – a novelty song written by an American schoolteacher in the 1940s.

White Christmas – another song from the 1940s. Written by the dean of American songwriters, Irving Berlin, it has been not only a perennial bestseller but a world bestseller; appearing in a number of films and being recorded too many times to mention, it also won Berlin an Oscar.

Do They Know It's Christmas – the brainchild of the saintly Bob Geldof who co-wrote it with fellow Irishman Midge Ure, a song launched with the best of intentions, and a surprisingly powerful one. Unfortunately, thirty years and more on, the only thing aid to Africa has achieved is the breeding of yet more hungry mouths; not only are the starving kids still there, but they are threatening to swamp Europe, which would kill the goose that laid the golden egg, not that our rulers care.

Merry Christmas Everybody – a hit for Slade at the height of their powers, totally and unabashedly commercial but good fun nevertheless.

I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day – written by commercial songwriter and performer Roy Wood, this was performed with a kids' chorus, and again is a lot better than you'd think.

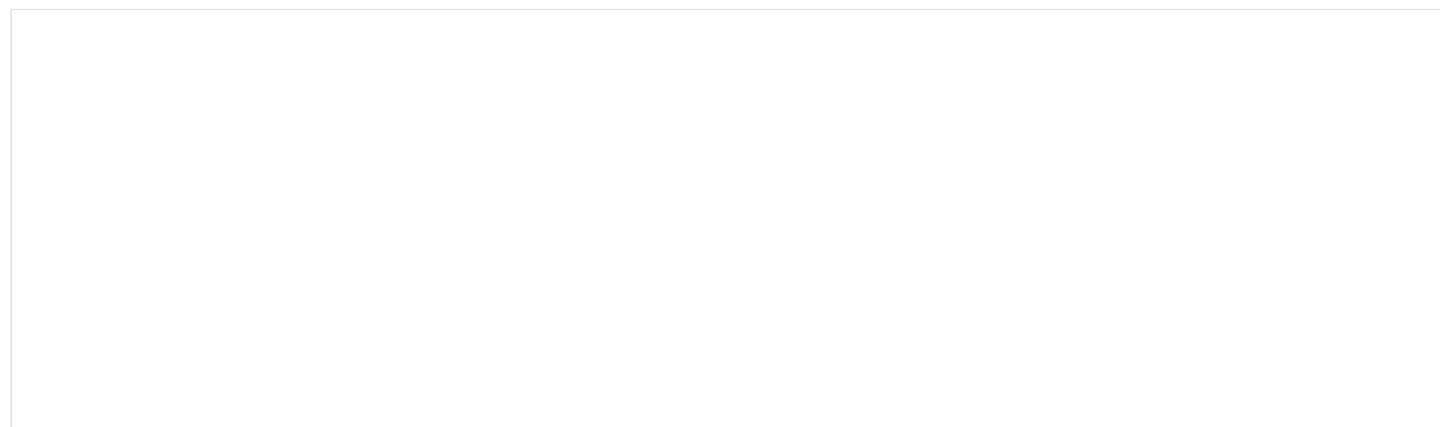
Step Into Christmas – co-written by Elton John with his original songwriting partner Bernie Taupin, commercial yes, but typically strong both melodically and lyrically. The **B Side** isn't bad either.

I Believe In Father Christmas by Greg Lake is yet another song from the 1970s, one of the more thoughtful ones.

That lot isn't at all bad, and there have been a few others, but there is one Christmas song that stands head and shoulders above every other Christmas song ever written, barring none. The

word Christmas does not even appear in the lyrics, yet it is the most thematic of all. Released in 1975, it reached a pitiful number 40 in the UK charts. It was written by Chris de Burgh, and if you haven't heard it, check out *A Spaceman Came Traveling*. It's so magnificent you'll even forgive the American spelling.

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Alexander Baron — Point taken. I think this is absolutely extraordinary. At one time the police would have shown her the door.

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