



**Artist**

Kruger Brothers

**Album Title**

Christmas Magic with the Kruger Brothers

**Label**

Double Time Music

**Catalog #**

DTM-021

**Artist Description**

Jens Kruger (Banjo), Uwe Kruger (Guitar) and Joel Landsberg (Bass)



**Album Description**

At Christmas time, perhaps more than at any other time of year, we listen equally to songs that are very new and songs that are far older, perhaps, than we even know. *Christmas Magic with the Kruger Brothers* covers the whole range, from the centuries old "O Come All Ye Faithful," to show tunes from the 20s and 30s, to a song that was written just this year ("The Lights in Our Village"). There's some music trivia in here, too: a cowboy song written by a Virginian (Steve Weisberg, "Christmas for Cowboys"); a Hawaiian novelty song written by a mechanical engineer (R. Alex Anderson, "Mele Kalikimaka"); and a song about snowy weather written during a heat wave in Hollywood, California (Sammy Cahn, "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow"). From pop hits ("I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm," "Winter Wonderland") to period music ("Greensleeves"), in this collection the Kruger Brothers revisit the joy, the hopes, the humour, and the complexity of the holiday season.

Arranged by Jens Kruger, *Christmas Magic with the Kruger Brothers* includes eleven Christmas favorites and an original Kruger Brothers' composition, "The Lights in Our Village." Each is executed with the incomparable virtuosity, flair, and honesty we've come to expect from the Kruger Brothers.

**Featured tracks:**

- Track 1: "The Lights in Our Village" (vocal)
- Track 3: "Old-Fashioned Christmas" (vocal)
- Track 5: "Mele Kalikimaka" (vocal)
- Track 6: "O Come All Ye Faithful" (instrumental)

**Distribution**

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## Song notes

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### 1. The Lights in Our Village

It's an original, but seems cut from the same cloth as any great Christmas song. Peaceful, quiet ... the perfect antidote to the malls and the weather.

### 2. Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow

This song was written by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne in July 1945 in Hollywood, California, during one of the hottest days recorded for the region. So, it's fitting that the Kruger Brothers recorded it during a heatwave this past summer, during which temperatures literally topped 100°. Jens uses jazz techniques on the banjo along with the tuba bass line to create an arrangement reminiscent of New Orleans jazz of the 20s and 30s.

### 3. An Old-Fashioned Christmas

For many Christmas is about nostalgia for family, traditions, and snow, and this song has all that and automats too. Made famous by Frank Sinatra (himself a New Jersey boy of course) this song pines convincingly for things he, and indeed most of us, have never had. It's an imagined past that's being longed for and as we glide along on Jens' beautiful electric lead lines, and it's a nice dream while it lasts.

### 4. Christmas For Cowboys

Written by Steve Weisberg, "Christmas for Cowboys" reminds us that Christmas isn't just about snow and Santa Claus, and that you can find the Christmas spirit in some unlikely places.

### 5. Mele Kalikimaka

What's not to love about this?! Funny and sentimental at the same time, "Mele Kalikimaka" was made famous by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters during the craze for Hawaiian-styled music that was responsible for, among other things, the proliferation of slide guitar in North America. That slide sound is captured perfectly, yet subtly, here by Jens, creating the perfect setting for his velvety-smooth vocal delivery.

### 6. Come All Ye Faithful

The oldest tune in this collection by literally hundreds of years, "Adeste Fideles" (the Latin title for the original melody and lyric) is believed to date from the 13th century. The banjo is voiced to echo of the music of the period, perhaps best recalled today through the lute music of English renaissance composer John Dowland.

### 7. I'll be Home For Christmas

The concept of coming home for Christmas, at least as it is presented in this song, originated during the First World War—soldiers believed that the war would be short lived and therefore expected to be home by Christmas. Many who heard this song at the time it was written would have been aware of that context, thus giving extra poignancy to the phrase "if only in my dreams." Uwe keeps that poignancy, whether we know the wartime context or not. In his hands the delivery is quiet, thoughtful, and beautifully honest.

### 8. Winter Wonderland

The banjo fills and soli give a wonderful unexpected touch—again, a tenor jazz feel as also used in the arrangement for "Let it Snow."

### 9. Greensleeves

Once again, the banjo takes on yet another a role that we don't typically expect of it. This tune dates to 16th century England, and the banjo here is masterfully voiced to mimic a period instrument of centuries ago. The melody was originally written as a setting for a sonnet about a woman named Greensleeves. However, it has been associated with Christmas ever since 1865, the year that William Chatterton Dix used the melody for his carol, "What Child is This?"

### 10. I've Got my Love to Keep me Warm

Written by Irving Berlin in 1937, this was a million-selling top ten hit for Les Brown in 1949, though in an instrumental version. Here it gets the Kruger treatment, including a beautiful the solo with two lines on banjo and guitar that mirror each other. It's the kind of close playing that only brothers could do.

### 11. Silent Night

In 1818 Franz Gruber wrote a tune on guitar as a setting for some words his priest had written. Whether he was aware of it or not, he included some telltale musical elements specific to the folk music of his small corner of Austria. In the arrangement here, the Kruger Brothers give more than a nod to those musical traditions and the genesis of the song. The modern English lyric is set beside the original German text that was written and sung, high in the Alps, one winter night all those many Christmases ago.

### 12. Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring

Christmas is about family and tradition, and this piece has them both. Jens' family is featured here within a lush arrangement of a holiday classic. "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" is the English title of the 10th movement of the cantata Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147 composed by Johann Sebastian Bach in 1716.