

00:00:00	Music	Transition	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs. Chill, grooving instrumentals. Theme song is overlaid with sleigh bells. Song plays for several seconds, then fades and plays quietly as Oliver speaks.
00:00:05	Oliver Wang	Host	Hello, I’m Oliver Wang.
00:00:06	Morgan Rhodes	Host	I’m Morgan Rhodes and you’re listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> . <i>[Music fades out.]</i> Normally we focus on a single album, but ‘tis the season for holiday music, so we decided to tape a special episode where Oliver, I, and our guest have all picked some of our favorite holiday albums.
00:00:21	Music	Music	“The Christmas Song” off the album <i>The Andy Williams Christmas Album</i> by Andy Williams. Slow, tender holiday music with crooning vocals. <i>Chestnuts roasting on an open fire Jack Frost nipping at your nose Yuletide carols being sung by a choir</i>
00:00:41	Oliver	Host	To join us on this holiday album roundup, we could not have asked for a better guest than film writer Alonso Duralde. Let’s not bury the lead here. He’s one of the hosts of the Max Fun movie podcast, <i>Who Shot Ya?</i> ; a show that both Morgan and I have been lucky enough to guest on. He, along with his husband Dave White, also tape the very long running <i>Linoleum Knife</i> podcast. That is a mouthful. I cannot get linoleum on the—it’s hard.
00:01:03	Alonso Duralde	Guest	<i>[Laughing]</i> I still can’t either.
00:01:05	Oliver	Host	It’s tough. Which is also about movies, and has been around since 2010, so shouts-out to that. Alonso is also the senior film critic for <i>The Wrap</i> , and—oh yeah, he wrote a book about Christmas movies a few years ago entitled <i>Have Yourself a Movie Little Christmas</i> . Nice pun there. Alonso, welcome to <i>Heat Rocks</i> .
00:01:22	Alonso	Guest	Thank you for having me. I’m a little out of my element. I’m not nearly as verbose about music as I am about movies, but I’m gonna give it my best shot.
00:01:31	Oliver	Host	Well, I won’t speak for Morgan, but I felt the same way being on <i>Who Shot Ya?</i> <i>[Alonso laughs.]</i>
00:01:33	Morgan	Host	No, no, you can speak for me.
00:01:35	Oliver	Host	So, we are actually taping this episode a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving, which means while you might have already started hearing a little bit of holiday music—and let’s be honest here, when we’re talking about holiday music 99% of what we’re talking about is

largely Christmas music, aside from the occasional token dreidel song inclusion.

[Alonso and Morgan laugh.]

Um, we have not yet, I think, crossed over into the mandatory Christmas music playlist hell that every retailer in America is somehow obliged to have to carry, but we're getting close to there. So, I want to actually start with this question for the group is, do we actually like holiday music, and if so, why? And, Alonso, since you're our guest, let's start with you.

00:02:15 Alonso Guest Well, I love it. But then, I love a lot of Christmas things, so maybe I'm not to be trusted here. But I think when people complain about Christmas music, it's because, as you say, it's retailers and mainstream, you know, terrestrial radio. A lot of places will sort of have a playlist of about 15 songs.

[Oliver responds affirmatively.]

And so yeah, of course you get tired of hearing it, if it's gonna be that limited. But, you know, if more stores, if more, you know, The Coast here in LA, and every city has that station that goes all Christmas at some point. If they would start throwing in Pearl Bailey's "Five Pound Box of Money" or something, it would kind of, it would feel like less of a sort of forced death march into the same old stuff every December.

00:02:57 Morgan Host I think if Christmas music didn't have a twist on it, for me, if it didn't have a soulful twist, I wouldn't enjoy it as much. Um, KJLH, which here in LA is 102.3, always goes through the holidays with Black Christmas music, and so that makes it good for me. I miss hearing it in the malls and in retail situations, because of late I've been doing all my shopping online.

[Alonso laughs.]

And so that's where I would typically hear it, in the malls. That said, I like Christmas music, but it has to have a soul twist on it for me.

00:03:28 Oliver Host I think someone like Amazon should just have a pop up music player that, immediately as you begin shopping after Black Friday, it just forces Christmas music.

[Alonso and Morgan laugh.]

So you can replicate the mall experience right there.

00:03:38 Morgan Host That's it. Come on, Amazon.

00:03:40 Oliver Host I certainly—I do think it is the over-familiarity with, as Alonso points out, the same 15 song playlist. And we will talk a little bit about later about the canon for holiday music in America, and how is it that new songs might be able to force their way in there.

But in general, before we get there, there's certainly certain songs that I gravitate to, but I think a lot of them are not the classics. And I

think like, Morgan, as you're pointing out, it's songs that are both familiar but with a twist. Which is, in essence, holiday cover songs are what I can get into.

Or similar to that would be songs that have become part of the alternative canon. Um, a tune that always comes to mind would be something like The Waitresses' "Christmas Wrapping" which is a song that, if you grew up here in Los Angeles, KROQ plays it every season.

00:04:26	Music	Music	<p>"Christmas Wrapping" off the album <i>Live At My Father's Place</i> by The Waitresses. Upbeat, groovy music with horns and drums.</p> <p><i>Now the calendar's just one page Of course I am excited Tonight's the night I've set my mind Not to do too much about it</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i></p>
00:04:39	Oliver	Host	<p>And because it's not something that I'm gonna hear in every Starbucks I walk into, I have a soft spot in my heart for that in a way that may not work necessarily for the umpteenth rendition of like, Jingle fucking Bells.</p>
00:04:49	Morgan	Host	<p><i>[Laughs.]</i> You know, we came down to three of our faves, but if we hadn't have picked what we had picked, were there some other albums that we might have thrown out there besides what we ended up?</p>
00:05:04	Alonso	Guest	<p>Oh, yeah. I mean, you should see my iTunes.</p> <p><i>[Morgan and Alonso start laughing.]</i></p> <p>It's a staggering array of this stuff. I don't know, you know, I hear what y'all are saying, and I do like a soulful twist. I love, you know, say the Phil Spector Christmas album. I like a lot of the covers and, you know, where people sort of switch up genres. But, you know, there's something about the traditional nest of Christmas music where I listen to people that I don't ordinarily seek out, you know? I don't really have any use for the racon of singers the other 11 months of the year, but—</p> <p><i>[Oliver laughs.]</i></p> <p>—<u>boy</u> do I want to hear their Christmas stuff. Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians, people like that. So I do like an old school Christmas jam, and I think that there is such a deep catalog that people don't know about, because again, you know, the 15 songs. Um, you know, I think even within that, there are discoveries to be made, and, you know, like "Ella Wishes You a Swinging Christmas". I mean, good heavens, that is delicious stuff, and you only get little bits of it.</p> <p>I mean, even Jingle Bells, I think if you listen to Lena Horne's version, she like, sexes that up a lot. And we'll get to a Jingle Bells</p>

in the album that I picked. So I think there's no song that can't be zhuzhed a little, even like, The Shins did a cover of "Wonderful Christmastime", which if you hate the Paul McCartney version, I feel sorry for you but I know you're out there. I think if you listen to say, what the Shins did with it, it's like, "Oh no, there is a song in here."

00:06:30 Music Music

"Wonderful Christmastime" off the album *Holidays Rule* by The Shins. Upbeat, poppy music with cheerful bells.

*The party's on
The feeling's here
That only comes
This time of year*

Simply having a wonderful Christmas time!

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:06:48 Oliver Host

I did not have an alternative. And I realized I loved the idea of this episode when we first started batting it around, and of course it makes sense. We did a summer songs episode, so why not do something that is suitable to this season?

But there are certainly holiday songs, but holiday albums are a different story, because in theory it means that you can really sit with the entire album rather than just cherry picking the tunes you like.

So the album that I chose, and of course we'll get to that in the second half of the show, was really the only thing that came to mind as something that I could actually sit down and listen to end to end without wanting to immediately start reaching for the fast forward button. And maybe that just speaks to limitations in my imagination or my desire to seek out other alternative holiday albums that I could roll with. But it was hard, because I think for me, when I think of holiday music it really is about songs. It's about individual tracks rather than entire albums.

00:07:42 Alonso Guest

I think you might find some, though, that would work for you. I mean, Tracey Thorn's uh, I think it—my god—"Snow". I forget what it's called, I'm blanking out. But she put out a Christmas album a couple years ago that is gorgeous and the individual tracks are, you know, thematic but not necessarily of a piece. And, you know, I think that's one that you could actually find yourself enveloped in and not feel antsy about it.

00:08:09 Music Music

"Snow" off the album *Tinsel and Lights* by Tracey Thorn. Slow, melancholy piano music.

*... it's all over and you're gone
But the memory lives on, although
Our dreams lie barely in the snow*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:08:29 Oliver Host

It occurs to me that there probably is a Dr. Demento holiday album out there.

[Morgan starts laughing.]

- 00:08:33 Alonso Guest Oh, there is at least one.
- 00:08:35 Oliver Host And that I could probably roll with. And again, this is a product of having grown up in Los Angeles, listening to Dr. Demento's songs on KROQ.
- 00:08:40 Music Music "I Yust Go Nuts At Christmas" by Yogi Yorgesson
- Oh I yust go nuts at Christmas
Shopping sheer drives me berserk
On the day before I rush in a store
Like a perviveval yerker
I'll look at nightgowns for my wife
Those black ones trimmed in red*
- [Music fades as Oliver speaks]*
- 00:08:58 Oliver Host How about you, Morgan? Oh, you already—sorry, you already addressed this, right?
- 00:09:00 Morgan Host No, I was gonna say in terms of individual songs, there are individual songs that I love. One is uh, Brian McKnight and Boyz II Men, a jam called "Let It Snow."
- 00:09:08 Music Music "Let It Snow" off the album *Christmas Interpretations* by Boyz II Men feat. Brian McKnight. Grooving R&B with multilayered vocals.
- Let it snow, let it snow
Outside it's cold but the fire's blazing
So, baby, let it snow*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:09:24 Morgan Host Um, it's so R&B, I mean. And it's so Boyz II Men. Of course, we had that episode on Boyz II Men, and we had been talking about George Michael. We talked about George Michael on another episode, but "Do They Know It's Christmas" is one of those that always reminds of George Michael.
- 00:09:41 Oliver Host Morgan, these are songs, not albums though, right? Unless it's like a Brian McKnight album with Boyz II Men.
- 00:09:44 Morgan Host No, no, these are songs, right, these are songs. And though normally when I listen to Christmas music, I listen to the whole package. But if I hear that particular song, and I hear the George Michael, I know that it's Christmastime and I'm getting hyped up.
- 00:09:57 Alonso Guest It's interesting that your go-to for George Michael is "Do They Know It's Christmas" and not "Last Christmas", which I think is the one a lot of people would think of.
- 00:10:02 Morgan Host Uh-uh. "Do They Know It's Christmas", that's my jammy-jam.
- 00:10:07 Oliver Host That was Live Aid?

[Everyone responds “yes” and “no” in chaotic confusion for a few seconds.]

No, Live Aid was “We Are The World”.

00:10:12 Alonso Guest No, no, no, U.S.A. For Africa was “We Are The World”. Um, I don’t know—they have a name for...?

00:10:17 Oliver Host They did.

00:10:18 Alonso Guest Band Aid!

[Everyone repeats “Band Aid” affirmatively.]

Band Aid. Live Aid was the live concert of that show, yes. Right.

00:10:24 Morgan Host He was just so sexy on that part of the song. Rest in peace, George.

00:10:28 Music Music “They Know It’s Christmas” off the album *They Know It’s Christmas* by George Michael. Slow drums and vocals.

*And in our world of plenty we can spread a smile of joy
Throw your arms around the world at Christmastime*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:10:43 Oliver Host Well, we will be back with more of our holiday album special, including our actual albums, with our guest, film critic Alonso Duralde after a word from our fellow MaxFun podcasts. Keep it locked.

00:10:53 Music Transition “Crown Ones” off the album *Stepfather* by People Under The Stairs (still with sleigh bells) plays for a few seconds, then fades into the promo.

00:10:56 Promo Promo **Music:** Upbeat rock plays in the background.

Announcer: *Dead Pilots Society* brings you exclusive readings of comedy pilots that were never made, featuring actors like Patton Oswalt—

Patton Oswalt: So the vampire from the future sleeps in the dude’s studio during the day, and they hunt monsters at night. It’s *Blade* meets *The Odd Couple*!

[Audience laughs]

Announcer: —Adam Scott and Jane Levy—

Jane Levy: Come on, Cory. She’s too serious, too business-y. She doesn’t know the hokey-pokey.

Adam Scott: Well, she’ll learn what it’s all about.

[Audience laughs.]

Announcer: —Busy Philipps and Dave Koechner.

Dave Koechner: Maybe this is family.

Busy Philipps: My Uncle Tal, who showed his weiner to Cinderella at Disneyland, is family. Do you want him staying with us?

[Light audience laughter.]

Dave: He did stay with us, for three months.

Busy: And he was a delight!

[Audience laughs harder.]

Announcer: A new pilot every month, only on *Dead Pilots Society* from Maximum Fun.

00:11:46 Promo

Promo

Music: Mid-tempo, upbeat music.

Jo Firestone: Hi, I'm Jo Firestone.

Manolo Moreno: And I'm Manolo Moreno.

Jo: And we're the hosts of *Dr. Gameshow*, which is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, regardless of quality or content, with in-studio guests and callers from all over the world!

Manolo: And you can win a custom magnet.

Jo: A custom magnet!

Manolo: Subscribe now to make sure you get our next episode.

Jo: What's an example of a game, Manolo?

Manolo: "Pokémon or Medication?"

Jo: How do you play that?

Manolo: You have to guess if something's a Pokémon name—

[Next two lines overlapping]

Jo: Or medication?

Manolo: —or a medication.

Manolo: First-time listener, if you want to listen to episode highlights and also know how to participate, follow *Dr. Gameshow* on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Jo: We'd love to hear from you!

Manolo: Yeah, it's really fun!

Jo: For the whole family! We'll be every other Wednesday starting March 13th, and we're coming to MAX FUN!

Manolo: Snorlax.

Jo: Pokémon?

Manolo: Yes.

Jo: Nice!

00:12:31	Music	Transition	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs plays briefly, then fades out.
00:12:33	Morgan	Host	We are back on <i>Heat Rocks</i> talking about our favorite holiday albums with our guest, co-host of the MaxFun movie podcast <i>Who Shot Ya?</i> , Alonso Duralde.
00:12:43	Oliver	Host	For this episode, each of us picked a favorite holiday album, and Alonso, you went with the 1963 LP by Mister Christmas himself, Andy Williams.
00:12:53	Music	Music	"O Holy Night" off the album <i>The Andy Williams Christmas Album</i> by Andy Williams. Slow, melodic, ardent singing over strings. <i>Fall on your knees Oh, hear the angel voices</i> <i>[Music fades out as Alonso speaks]</i>
00:13:11	Alonso	Guest	So, somebody on Twitter recently asked the question, "What's an album that you love because your parents introduced you to it?" <i>[Oliver responds emphatically.]</i> And my parents were older, you know, the year I was born my mother turned 40 and my father turned 47. And they were both immigrants from Spain, so they didn't really follow pop music in this country. So, their—most of what I gleaned from them was like, classical albums, but there were a few albums that they had of vocalists that they liked. And we had this handful of Christmas albums. We had, you know, Bing and Dean and the Boston Pops. But the Andy Williams one was the one that was always just kind of a personal favorite, and to me really signified that—you know, when that record hit the turntable, like, the season was on.
00:13:51	Music	Music	"Kay Thompson's Jingle Bells" off the album <i>The Andy Williams Christmas Album</i> by Andy Williams. Fast, upbeat holiday music with drums and horns. <i>Jingle bells, jingle bells Jingle all the way Oh what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh Jingle bells, jingle bells Jingle all the way</i>

Oh what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

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| 00:14:06 | Oliver | Host | We tend to think of Christmas classic songs as if they've always been with us, sometime in memorial, and the idea that someone could have originated a song seems almost alien. But it has to be said that with this album, it is when Andy Williams introduced into that aforementioned holiday song canon, his classic hit, "It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." |
| 00:14:27 | Music | Music | "It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" off the album <i>The Andy Williams Christmas Album</i> by Andy Williams. Upbeat horns and drums welcoming in cheerful vocals and a backing chorus vocalizing.

<i>It's the most wonderful time of the year
With the kids jingle belling
And everyone telling you be of good cheer
It's the most wonderful time of the year</i>

<i>[Music fades out as Alonso speaks]</i> |
| 00:14:50 | Alonso | Guest | Yeah, so this was actually written for his TV show, um. He had a variety show that was on year round but his Christmas specials very quickly became kind of legendary, you know? He would bring his brothers out, and they had been a singing act before Andy went solo. Um, he gave the Osmonds their first big national platform.

<i>[Morgan and Oliver respond emphatically.]</i>

Another brother act. And so these were big productions, and he would bring out his wife, Claudine Longet, and then their children. And then even famously after they divorced, she would still come out on the Christmas special with the kids, and sort of presented this amicable, you know, fractured but still united family front.

But yeah, so "It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" was just a song that was written for the special. There were a bunch that were written for him over the years, but that one just really hit and has become this staple. |
| 00:15:39 | Music | Music | <i>["It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" plays again]</i>

<i>When love ones are near
It's the most wonderful time
Yes the most wonderful time
Oh the most wonderful time
Of the year</i>

<i>[Music fades out again]</i> |
| 00:16:02 | Oliver | Host | Is this your favorite song off the album? |
| 00:16:05 | Alonso | Guest | It is the one that immediately makes me happy. Like, you know, uh, Dave has said that he's getting a little tired of it, because it's been so constantly rediscovered over the years and almost become kind |

of a point of irony. Like, in the horror movie *Krampus*, it opens with “It’s The Most Wonderful Time of the Year” over shots of like, you know, shoppers pummeling each other on a Black Friday.

[Oliver and Morgan both laugh.]

But I hear those opening notes and I’m just, I’m in. And I think one of the things that I love about this record as a whole is the orchestrations are so on point and so, just well crafted. I mean, you just—the more I listen to it, the more I realize how much attention is being paid to when the chorus comes in and what the strong are doing and all of that stuff. And so even as somebody as stone-eared as I am, who doesn’t really take deep dives into music, I—the repetition has made me appreciate how well crafted this is.

00:17:00	Morgan	Host	One of the things that this album reminds me of, and I was listening to it a little bit before the break and on the way over here, um, was the introduction, at least in my own knowledge, of Crooners, and Crooners singing Christmas songs. Um, my favorite song on this album that you picked is “Sweet Little Jesus Boy”.
00:17:18	Alonso	Guest	Interesting.
00:17:19	Morgan	Host	Yeah, well, you know, I’m churchy.
00:17:20	Music	Music	“Sweet Little Jesus Boy” off the album <i>The Andy Williams Christmas Album</i> by Andy Williams. Slow, tender music with gentle piano and warm, soft vocals.

*We didn't know it was you
Sweet little Jesus boy*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:17:42	Morgan	Host	I was surprised that that was one of my favorites. I’ve heard it sung many times, and in many different ways than how Andy Williams. But it’s Andy Williams, so.
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00:17:51	Alonso	Guest	Sure. No, well actually, he kind of—there are people that will give him flak about that cover, and then two years later on <i>Merry Christmas With Andy Williams</i> , he does “Mary’s Little Boy Child”.
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[Morgan responds affirmatively.]

Which was first popularized by Harry Belafonte, and he whitens them up significantly. Like the grammar even on “Sweet Little Jesus Boy”.

00:18:11	Morgan	Host	Absolutely, and like I said, I’ve heard it a lot of different ways and it was generally a part of a Christmas pageant at the church. I think I just was attracted to something that was familiar. That said, it is as white as this paper we’re looking at right now.
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[Alonso laughs and affirms.]

But it’s Andy Williams, right? Um, but I’m with you on the orchestrations. It’s big and it’s sweeping, a lot like all of The

Crooners and their band sounded back then, so.

- 00:18:36 Music Music "White Christmas" off the album *The Andy Williams Christmas Album* by Andy Williams. Slow, melodic singing over vocalizations and light drums.
- I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:18:56 Morgan Host Alright, man. So, uh, Oliver Wang has picked a heater, a true heat rock, cannot be disputed. Tell us what you chose.
- 00:19:05 Oliver Host Vince Guraldi's 1965, I think, soundtrack to *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.
- [Morgan responds emphatically.]*
- 00:19:13 Music Music "Christmas Time is Here (Vocal)" off the album *A Charlie Brown Christmas Soundtrack* by the Vince Guraldi Trio. A chorus of high voices singing over gentle, mid-tempo piano and drums.
- Christmas time is here
Happiness and cheer
Fun for all that children call
Their favorite time of the year*
- [Music fades down; instrumentals continue to play as Oliver speaks]*
- 00:19:41 Oliver Host As I said before, this was the only album that came to mind for me to fit today's theme, partly because I just can't think of another single album. I don't mean to be pedantic about that, but really, just as an album, this is something that I can really truck with. And I think for certain, part of my affection for it is really just bound up in the aching melancholy of Guraldi's arrangements and compositions, least of all in a song like, as you're hearing in the background, "Christmas Time is Here". And to quote from Charles Mudede of Seattle's *The Stranger* newspaper, "Listening to it is like watching snow through a window." And I live here in LA, so there's never snow through our windows, but yet I totally understand what he means.
- 00:20:24 Music Music "Christmas Time is Here (Instrumental)" off the album *A Charlie Brown Christmas Soundtrack* by the Vince Guraldi Trio. The same instrumentals as before, slow and melodic.
- 00:20:40 Oliver Host The music here, for me, is also inseparable from my memories and nostalgia of reading *Peanuts*, the Charles Schulz strip, that of course the television special was based off of.

And I think for people of a certain generation, probably including everybody here in this room, Schulz did something really remarkable with *Peanuts* in terms of taking this daily comic strip and imbuing it with the tone and issues, in a very subtle way, of depression and anxiety and longing, but doing it in such a gentle and kind way.

I think one of the things that makes the soundtrack that Guraldi put together so special is that he figured out how to take those themes that we see in the *Peanuts* strip and give it a musical form.

00:21:22	Music	Music	“My Little Drum” off the album <i>A Charlie Brown Christmas Soundtrack</i> by the Vince Guraldi Trio. Mid-tempo piano under a chorus vocalizing.
00:21:41	Alonso	Guest	<p>You’re absolutely right about nailing the tone of the strip. I was talking to Morgan before the show that, um, when that <i>Peanuts</i> movie came out a couple years ago, that new 3D animated feature film, Dave and I talked about a lot how it needed to be melancholy.</p> <p><i>[Morgan responds affirmatively.]</i></p> <p>You can’t do <i>Peanuts</i> without that sort of in the bone sort of sadness and anxiety and worry that the Charlie Brown character is all about. And, you know, I think that’s so essential. And so for them to pick this music, you know, CBS executives thought they were nuts, that you would have this jazz music on a kiddie show. But it is absolutely appropriate, and it’s part of—it’s a <u>big</u> part of what makes that show such a perennial, and like you said, so iconic.</p>
00:22:25	Morgan	Host	And jazz is mature. Jazz is mature for a cartoon. But I never really felt like Charlie Brown and his crew were kids. I mean, they were working on real issues. Charlie Brown was in therapy, and Lucy was his therapist charging five cents for advice. Their parents were mostly mute, so they had to work out their decisions by themselves. There was interesting relationships with Woodstock and Snoopy, nobody really knew that whole thing. So this was a smart choice, an unusual choice, but I can’t ever think of Charlie Brown without thinking of this music. I can never do that. And, um... I’m just glad you picked this out.
00:22:59	Music	Music	“What Child Is This” off the album <i>A Charlie Brown Christmas Soundtrack</i> by the Vince Guraldi Trio. Mid-tempo, slightly melancholy, gently wistful piano over light drums.
00:23:21	Oliver	Host	I didn’t realize this until I did research to prep for this, but it is one of the top two best-selling jazz albums of all time, the other one being Miles Davis’ <i>Kind of Blue</i> . Which of course—
00:23:32	Morgan	Host	Sort of disparate.
00:23:33	Oliver	Host	—again, one of the most important jazz albums in terms of the form, and one could easily say that Guraldi gets this because of its inherent populism, not because it’s the best jazz ever recorded. But that said, I kind of like the fact that this is one of the best-selling jazz LPs of all time. That’s kind of nice.
00:23:50	Morgan	Host	We were talking beat before we started, and it’s got 32 million streams on Spotify. So it’s popular with a lot of folks.
00:23:56	Oliver	Host	Right, and that’s only in the last week.
00:23:58	Morgan	Host	Right.

[Everyone laughs.]

What's your jam off of here?

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| 00:24:01 | Oliver | Host | Well, I mean, "Christmas Time Is Here" is fantastic. You know, the Linus and Lucy theme is also just one of those instant Proustian kind of triggers. But because Guraldi was—and let's not forget—a very accomplished jazz composer and arranger himself, I think one of the songs on here that I just love, love, love is "Skating". |
| 00:24:22 | Music | Music | "Skating" off the album <i>A Charlie Brown Christmas Soundtrack</i> by the Vince Guraldi Trio. Upbeat, lively, gently cheerful piano and drums. Music plays for several moments uninterrupted, then fades down as Oliver speaks. |
| 00:24:41 | Oliver | Host | It's so lively. It has that beautiful kind of Bill Evans piano element to it. And it's a reminder that even though the best known songs on here on a little bit more melancholy, there are just these moments of brightness that Guraldi also balances things with as well. |
| 00:24:57 | Music | Music | <i>["Skating" plays for several seconds more, then fades out entirely.]</i> |
| 00:25:12 | Alonso | Guest | I would be surprised, or I should say I wouldn't be surprised rather, that for a lot of jazz musicians, that this was sort of their gateway drug, or jazz fans. You know, that this was sort of an early exposure, like, "Ah, this. Where can I get more of this?" Uh, because, you know, like just in listening to that little snippet of "Skating", like, you can hear the drummer whisk over the top of his, you know, over the skins and stuff. And, yeah, it is just so precisely put together, and it is so evocative of, not just of winter but of childhood joy and so many other things. |
| 00:25:44 | Morgan | Host | And in the scene where this is used, the kids look so light. There's always the expressions on their faces like, "Ah!" And because we didn't grow up—because we grew up in California, I didn't know what that skating thing was about. This song is so perfect, because it is light and it is blissful. |
| 00:25:59 | Alonso | Guest | It's a snowflake on your tongue. |
| 00:26:00 | Morgan | Host | <i>[Laughs]</i> Indeed. I think it's worth mentioning too that there was some controversy around this album. That the original musicians that played on this album from the Trio weren't credited on the release, and didn't find out until later. One, and I don't know his name, his daughter went into the record store to buy the album and saw that his name wasn't on there.

They're blaming the controversy on Fantasy Records, who they think just didn't really care about how the album was labeled and there was some drama. I think it has been remedied, but in the earliest copies of this album, the two guys that played on it are not credited. The two guys that went into the studio to create the cues are credited. |
| 00:26:38 | Oliver | Host | I also read that the musicians were only paid \$128 for working on this session, and even I'm sure by inflation standards, little bit more today, that's still not a lot of money for one of the best selling albums of all time. |

[Everyone responds affirmatively.]

00:26:51 Morgan Host Hope they kept their publishing, and of course, he didn't live long. Of course he passed—

00:26:56 Oliver Host '76.

00:26:57 Morgan Host Yeah, at 47 years old.

00:26:59 Music Music "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing" off the album *A Charlie Brown Christmas Soundtrack* by the Vince Guraldi Trio. A chorus of high voices singing over organ playing.

*Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn king
Peace on Earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph...*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:27:22 Oliver Host So Morgan, you are taking us home with, as I mentioned before, another album filled with songs from the 1960s. This is the 2007 Stax compilation, *Christmas In Soulsville*.

00:27:34 Music Music "Merry Christmas, Baby (Take 1)" off the album *Christmas In Soulsville* by Otis Redding. Upbeat, poppy R&B with bells in the background.

*Merry Christmas, baby
Sure did treat me nice
Sure did treat me nice*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:27:51 Morgan Host Stax Records. Okay, Stax Records, which uh, of course started in Memphis. It started out as Satellite Records, and then became Stax. I like albums that throw out the whole roster, and *Christmas In Soulsville* was Stax's entire roster, or the G's. Of course, the franchise player was Otis Redding, but he died in 1967 and they had to keep building.

I picked this album because of the Blackness of it. I didn't grow up listening to it, and in fact I discovered it as I was trying to prepare for Tuesday Review's day. We were gonna talk about Christmas albums. And I stumbled on this album and was like, "Oh my god, what is this?"

[Oliver and Alonso laugh.]

Whereas I think both the Andy Williams album and the Vince Guraldi album conjure up, you know, egg nog and warm apple cider, *Christmas In Soulsville* will skip all that and bring the Crown Royale. This is Black, okay? Real Black.

Um, one of the things that I like about it is its twist on these Christmas songs. "Merry Christmas, Baby" is flirty. It's the soul, it's the boom of Otis Redding's voice, and it's flirty. So you forget about Christmas and you're like, "Wait, is this about relationships?" And that's what it feels like.

I guess one of the stand-outs to me on the album is the Staple Singers, "Who Took The Merry Out of Christmas?" Can we hear a little bit of it, Christian?

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|----------|--------|-------|---|
| 00:29:17 | Music | Music | <p>"Who Took The Merry Out of Christmas?" off the album <i>Christmas in Soulsville</i> by The Staple Singers. Mid-tempo, passionate R&B with drums and tambourine.</p> <p><i>Who took the merry out of Christmas?
(People all over the world forgot about merry)
Too busy fighting wars
Trying to make it to Mars
Searching for light and can't seem to find the right star</i></p> |
| 00:29:38 | Morgan | Host | <p>Leave it to The Staple Singers in the 60s to politicize Christmas. They're talking about everyone's fighting wars, trying to find out how to make it to the stars. And I'm like, this could be about Christmas, this could be about civil rights. You just don't know. So that's one of my favorite songs on the album.</p> |
| 00:29:57 | Oliver | Host | <p>You said that some of this stuff is flirty, but there's a few jams on here that are straight up raunchy.</p> <p><i>[Everyone laughs.]</i></p> <p>And of course, I'm thinking of the two different versions they have of "Santa Claus Wants Some Loving".</p> <p><i>[Morgan laughs again as the song starts.]</i></p> |
| 00:30:10 | Music | Music | <p>"Santa Claus Wants Some Loving" off the album <i>Christmas in Soulsville</i> by Albert King. Upbeat R&B with bells, drums, and guitar.</p> <p><i>I don't want no turkey
Don't care about no cake
I want you to come here, woman
'Fore the children wake 'cause
Santa Claus wants some loving</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i></p> |
| 00:30:24 | Oliver | Host | <p><i>[Morgan continues to laugh in the background.]</i></p> <p>Morgan, you have spoken a lot about the songs that were allowed inside your house and the ones that you had to kind of sneak on the side. How would your parents have reacted to "Santa Claus Wants Some Loving"?</p> |
| 00:30:34 | Morgan | Host | <p>That would've been the last album I played in that house, okay?</p> <p><i>[Alonso and Oliver laugh.]</i></p> |

They would've been like, "You chose this over Johnny Mathis?" But my one aunt that I mentioned to you when we were doing the Millie Jackson special, she would have played this. You know, and if Johnny "Guitar" Watson snuck his way on this album, this would be a hit for her.

But I love that take on it. I said at the start that this album is really, really Black. Rance Allen Group has a song on here called "White Christmas", which I think is probably the Blackest version of "White Christmas", and heretofore, I thought was one of the Blackest Christmas songs ever. And then I came across The Emotions' "Black Christmas". Um, let's hear a little bit of that if we can.

00:31:15 Music Music "Black Christmas" by The Emotions. Upbeat, poppy R&B with cheerful, multilayered singing.

*Snow is gleaming, we turn on the lights
Makes me know that the time is right
Makes me know that the time is right
For a Black Christmas
A beautiful Black Christmas...*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:31:37 Morgan Host I didn't know until I started researching this, I didn't know that The Emotions were ever on Stax. I came to know them in the Columbia years. "Don't Ask My Neighbor", and of course, with Earth, Wind & Fire, "Boogie Wonderland" and "I Don't Wanna Lose Your Love". So I didn't really know the history of them on Stax.

00:31:54 Oliver Host "Blind Alley"?

00:31:55 Morgan Host Didn't know.

00:31:56 Oliver Host Oh, man. They were killing on Stax. Anyways/

00:31:57 Morgan Host Didn't know. Didn't know that uh, Isaac Hayes had produced their album. So I came to them late in the party. And speaking of Isaac Hayes, when you talk about flirty, "The Mistletoe and Me".

00:32:10 Music Music "The Mistletoe and Me" off the album *Wonderful* by Isaac Hayes. Slow, melodic, gently sensual singing.

*...to make it complete
There's you, the mistletoe, and me*

*Look at the flames in the fireplace,
Embrace each other*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:32:36 Oliver Host That's some babymaking Christmas music right there.

[Everyone laughs.]

00:32:38 Morgan Host I was about to say. You're not enjoying this with the family. It's you and bae, okay?

00:32:45 Alonso Guest Now I'm curious, this is a 2007 compilation. Do you think that they would have done this in the 60s, as a sort of mass, like, "Here's our Christmas album." Or do you think it's the sort of thing that only with hindsight we can be like, "You can check these out."

00:32:59 Morgan Host You know, that's a good question. That's a good question. I think Oliver's probably more familiar with Stax than me. I can't imagine them making a conscious decision that we're not gonna release this now. And I don't know if it was just these adult themes. I don't know if there were issues with publishing, 'cause Stax went through their whole drama.

00:33:17 Oliver Host Yeah, I mean, this is actually an update on a 1980s compilation that also did the same thing, which was to go through the Stax vault catalog and then put it all together into a Christmas themed LP. It didn't have the same name. I can't remember what the previous iteration was. I'm just wondering if it was common for R&B labels to compile Christmas stuff. Like, you mentioned that Motown did it, but I'm wondering what year Motown did it.

[Morgan responds affirmatively.]

And if they did it early in the 60s or early 70s, yeah, why wouldn't Stax have followed suit? Because Stax did put out comps in the early 70s of—because they had such an important stable that they brought together people to do these comps. So, it is a little bit surprising that you didn't see this earlier.

00:33:58 Morgan Host Right. I mean, like I said, I found this two years ago, prepping for Tuesday Reviewday. There's only one instrumental track on this album, but it's gorgeous. It's Booker T and the M.G.'s "Winter Wonderland" and soon as that organ starts you're like, "Good lord."

00:34:14 Music Music "Winter Wonderland (Take 2)" off the album *Christmas in Soulsville* by Booker T and the M.G.'s. Upbeat, electric instrumentals.

00:34:29 Morgan Host That one's precious, and I think this album as a whole just reminds me of the music of Stax records, which to me always was a great blend of gospel, of soul, and of blues. And that is this compilation in a nutshell. And I can't remember a better use of an entire roster, except as my homegirl reminded me, of Death Row records Christmas. She was like, "Why did Death Row put out a Christmas album?"

[Morgan and Oliver laugh.]

00:34:57 Oliver Host Why not, actually?

00:34:58 Morgan Host It's like, ooh! So we talked about Nate Dogg and that Santa Claus thing.

00:35:01 Music Music "Santa Claus Goes Straight to the Ghetto" off the album *A Soulful Christmas* by Nate Dogg. Upbeat, festive hip-hop.

Santa Claus is coming straight to the ghetto

Now on the first day of Christmas, my homeboy gave to me

*A sack of the Krazy glue and told me to smoke it up slowly
Now on the second day of Christmas, my homeboy gave to me...*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:35:24 Morgan Host The last song on here that I want to mention is that Little Johnny Taylor, "Please Come Home For Christmas" because the build of the song and some of the lyrics of the song are so gospel-y, and of course he was a child gospel star. And Little Johnny Taylor went on to be grown Johnny Taylor and had that adult-centered R&B music.

00:35:47 Music Music "Please Come Home For Christmas" off the album *Christmas in Soulsville* by Little Johnny Taylor. Plaintive singing over mid-tempo instrumentals.

*My baby's gone
I have no friends to wish me greetings once again
Oh, choirs will be singing "Silent Night"*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:36:08 Oliver Host Before we wrap things up, I thought we could each maybe pick a different holiday song. So again, not affiliated with the albums we chose, but a different holiday song that you'd want our listeners to listen to. And I'll start things off with a kind of obscure 1988 hip hop Christmas song, "Cold Chillin' Christmas" off of the *Winter Warnerland*.

This was a Warner Brothers—I don't know if it was an in house comp only, or I should say promo only thing, but it's of the *Winter Warnerland* compilation. It is Marley Marl producing the Cold Chillin' stable, which includes Big Daddy Kane, I think Roxanne Shante's on here. Basically, it's like the symphony, except Christmas version.

00:36:46 Music Music "Cold Chillin' Christmas" off the album *Winter Warnerland* by Juice Crew. Fast-paced rap.

*You hear a lotta jingle bells at Christmas time
But I done decked the halls with a Christmas rhyme
Santa used to drive a sleigh any Christmas past
He was chilling when I seen him last
A Lamborghini with a spoiler kit
Driver looked like Santa and I said: "Oh, it's..."
I blamed it on my mind in an altered state
But chilling up north on a reindeer plate*

[Music fades out as Alonso speaks]

00:37:07 Oliver Host Alonso, how about you?

00:37:09 Alonso Guest I love my easy listening, and I really love the Canadian vocal group, The Free Design. And they have a song that I think, it is both holiday appropriate, and yet not exactly the sort of holiday sentiment you're used to hearing. And that would be, "Close Your Mouth (It's Christmas Time)".

[Morgan responds emphatically.]

00:37:28	Music	Music	<p>“Close Your Mouth (It’s Christmas)” off the album <i>You Could Be Born Again</i> by The Free Design. Upbeat, festive vocals with multiple voices harmonizing together.</p> <p><i>(Fa-la-la-la-la-la)</i> <i>Close your mouth except to say</i> <i>(Fa-la-la-la-la-la)</i> <i>You might get something happening</i></p> <p><i>This season has a secret joy that some are missing</i> <i>We could all find it if we just once listen</i></p>
00:37:47	Alonso	Guest	I just, you know, their harmonies are the greatest, and I kind of like how this is—there’s almost sort of a scold-y element to this song of like—
00:37:56	Oliver	Host	<p>“Almost”? It says shut your mouth!</p> <p><i>[Everyone laughs.]</i></p>
00:37:58	Alonso	Guest	Yeah, true, you’re right. A thoroughly scold-y element to the song that I think will get you through some family get togethers, maybe.
00:38:04	Oliver	Host	Morgan, how about you?
00:38:05	Morgan	Host	For me, it would be—I would take it to dance music. In 2007, King Street Records put out a compilation, and two of my favorite songs on there were one, “It’s Christmas” by The Ananda Project and also “Let Us Adore Him”, Kenny Bobien. Kenny Bobien is a big time star in soulful house music, but especially known for gospel house music. And I had the opportunity one Christmas to be on the air on Christmas Eve, and I closed my set with Kenny Bobien and “Let Us Adore Him”. So I recommend that for house music fans, and people that just want to spice it up, BPM style.
00:38:42	Music	Music	“O Come Let Us Adore Him” by Kenny Bobien. Fast, layered instrumentals and a backing vocal track repeating “rejoice, rejoice, rejoice”.
00:39:01	Morgan	Host	That’ll do it for this episode of <i>Heat Rocks</i> with our special guest, Alonso Duralde. Be sure to catch his podcast, <i>Who Shot Ya?</i> on our fine network, as well as his and his partner’s pod, <i>Linoleum Knife</i> . Thank you so much for joining us.
00:39:16	Alonso	Guest	Thank you for having me.
00:39:17	Morgan	Host	Where can people find you on socials and such?
00:39:20	Alonso	Guest	I’m @ADuralde on Twitter. @LinoleumKnife on Instagram. And I’m the only Alonso Duralde on Earth, so I’m really easy to find on Facebook.
			<i>[Morgan laughs.]</i>
00:39:31	Oliver	Host	You’ve been listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
00:39:34	Morgan	Host	Our theme music is “Crown Ones” by <i>Thes One</i> of <i>People Under</i>

The Stairs. Shoutout to Thes for the hookup.

00:39:40	Oliver	Host	<i>Heat Rocks</i> is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
00:39:48	Morgan	Host	Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.
00:39:52	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the West Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles.
00:40:05	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:40:07	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:40:08	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:40:09	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.