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HOLIDAY Preview



MERRY MAVERICKS

Country rockers the Mavericks bring tidings of comfort and joy on *Hey! Merry Christmas!* From the naughty to the nice, singer Raul Malo and guitarist Eddie Perez reveal the secret to writing original holiday songs. **BY SARAH RODMAN**

CHOOSE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT TO WRITE AND RECORD—IN THIS CASE, ARIZONA

"I don't need to be in three feet of snow to write about it. The hell with that," says Raul Malo with a laugh about the desert serving as the unlikely backdrop for summoning yuletide cheer. "You just hole up, get a pen, paper, a cup of coffee, roll a joint, and go at it."

THE KEY TO TIMELESSNESS? NOSTALGIA.

"When I first heard the mix of it in the playback, it hit me in a deep-bones kind of way, like, 'Wow, that's going to be around a really long time,'" says Eddie Perez of the wistful "Christmas Time Is (Coming 'Round Again)." "We all aspire to the greats that have come before."

SANTA CLAUS NEEDS TO CUT LOOSE SOMETIMES

"He's earned it," says Malo of the bawdy, jazzy "Santa Wants to Take You for a Ride," one of eight originals on the album. "He's worked his ass off to bring a bunch of toys to a bunch of unappreciative little brats that are going to sift through it and ignore it for the rest of the year. Let's get real now. Santa's had enough of their s---. He's going to have himself a little fun too or cancel the damn thing."

EVEN MAVERICKS HAVE TRADITIONS

"As Cubans, on Christmas Eve we get together and have the big party, and there is usually pork, rice and beans," says Malo. "Sometimes we go all out and actually cook a whole pig. That's a lot of work." Perez also settles in to watch movies and specials with his wife and son, including *A Christmas Story* and *Trading Places*.

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"Everybody [played] multiple instruments, so it was really an orchestra," says Eddie Perez (far right)

