

The New York Times

Holiday Music for the Joyful, the Lonely and the Skeptical



The holiday season has brought new releases from Engelbert Humperdinck, Ingrid Michaelson and Eric Clapton.

By Jon Caramanica

Dec. 6, 2018

The Mavericks, ‘Hey! Merry Christmas!’

The beginning of “Hey! Merry Christmas!” — the first holiday album by the country music interrogators the Mavericks — strolls along at a friendly pace, their original songs touching on Western swing, 1950s rock, traditional country and more. But midway through comes a bawdy new cabaret-esque number, “Santa Wants to Take You for a Ride,” that feels less like an apostate take on holiday good will and more like a lost Blowfly original: “Santa’s gonna stuff your stocking full/He knows what you want ’cause he’s no fool/Got a treat he’s saving, saving just for you.” These words are sung lusciously by Raul Malo, a precise vocalist who sprinkles his singing with dry wit. It’s a testament to his deftness that he makes this raunch sound utterly wholesome.

