

Dennis van Aarssen **Christmas When You're Here (Deluxe)**

“Looking for original Christmas music? Just call me”



Anyone who has followed the career of 'crooner' Dennis van Aarssen can hardly be surprised that his third record is a Christmas album. Preceded by two single-releases in the beginning of November, Christmas When You're Gone, to be released on November 11th, is the perfect Christmas release of 2024. “I really love Christmas. It was obvious that I would record a Christmas album. Actually, it was already decided before I started as a professional singer,” says the successful singer.

Dennis van Aarssen's Christmas album stands out from regular Christmas-albums because it is not a collection of covers of well-known Christmas songs. The album contains eight new, original tracks. Completed with three covers, Wonderful Christmastime by Paul McCartney , Driving Home For Christmas by Chris Rea and Hang Your Lights by Jamie Cullum, which have been given a new and unique arrangement. “This album is a dream come true. I will be singing these songs every year around Christmas from now on. So you have to be damn sure that these songs are outstanding. I can truly say that these songs are really close to my heart.”

“From the moment I first sang Frank Sinatra on TV, a lot of people immediately said I should record a Christmas album. It also makes sense because Bing Crosby, Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra have all recorded various Christmas albums. So not only did they make insanely good swinging big band music, they were also very good at telling stories with Christmas songs. That's why you still hear those songs during the festive season. Apparently, the genre fits very well with the atmosphere of Christmas.”

Christmas songs in the bloody heat

“The first concrete plans for a Christmas album date from before the recording of my second album. Clearly, I didn't want to start my recording career with a Christmas album. Next to that I had enough stories to tell for a second album. But at the end of last year we had already written some excellent Christmas songs. All created during the many writing sessions with Jeff Franzel (he accompanied such artists as **Frank Sinatra**, **Sammy Davis Jr.**, and **Mel Tormé**.), and Maria Christensen (lyricist for Celine Dion and Jennifer Lopez, ed.). I wrote seven songs with Jeff and Maria, one track with Simon Gitsels and Karel Schepers, and picked three additional covers. I went to America this summer knowing we needed three or four more good songs. It was 38 degrees in New York at that time. In shorts and with the air conditioning on, we wrote three of the current seven Christmas songs in that bloody heat. There was absolutely nothing that resonated the typical Christmas atmosphere during that session. But while writing, you get into that Christmas feeling very quickly because you know what Christmas is all about.”

Jamie Cullum and Instagram

“The pre-selection contained twelve original songs and about the same number of covers. The choice for the covers was made quickly. I knew right away that Chris Rea's Driving Home For Christmas would

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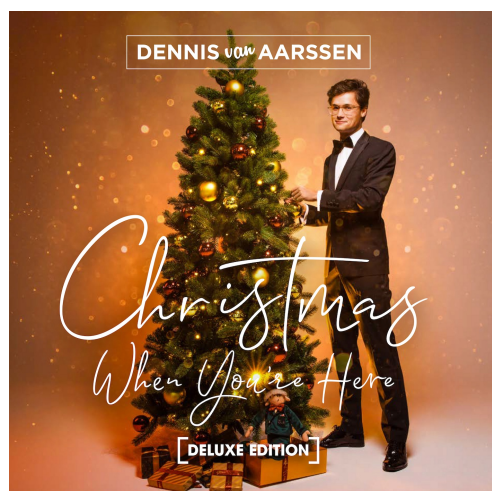
be part of the track listing. It is one of the greatest Christmas hits ever. We made a new and quite different arrangement, giving the song a more disco feel. Every time we played it live it did surprise the audience. Everyone knows this song, but because of the new arrangements it really captures the listeners attention. Jamie Cullum also made a Christmas album two years ago with original Christmas songs. All great songs. Hang Your Lights is just a really great track and it has never been covered by anyone. The live performance I once sang during Muziekcafé was picked up by Jamie Cullum and he then shared it on his own Instagram. Very cool and a great honour too.”

Christmas icon

“I hope that with these songs we will generate more in terms of streaming and airplay on radio. I can honestly say that the album contains ten songs that deserve to be played and heard. I've listened to this Christmas album quite often now. I also notice that I have taken another step in my development. Now I listen even better and more critically. And more often. Because everything has to be right.”

“Who is the Christmas icon in the Netherlands? I wouldn't know as far as music is concerned. We don't really have an amazing artist who is successful every year at Christmas. And the same applies to the question: who is the successful crooner in the Netherlands? The one singer who represents that American Songbook so beautifully? I think there's a hiatus and I'd really like to fill that missing part in this specific musical spectrum. I think Christmas just keeps getting bigger. Moreover, it is a universal celebration with a positive vibe. So, who are you looking for when it comes to original Christmas music? Just call Dennis van Aarssen.”

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Tracklisting:

Kris P. (The Christmas Elf)
Hitch A Ride With Santa
Everytime When Christmas Comes Around
(Will You Be) Gone By Christmas Night
Hang Your Lights
The Old Songs
Stay For Christmas
Last Christmas
Driving Home For Christmas
Santa's Crazy North Pole Orchestra
The Joy That's In Your Heart
Christmas When You're Here
Wonderful Christmastime
This Time Of Year
Until Next Christmas

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