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HOLIDAY MUSIC

Boyz bring romance to the season



Boyz II Men's "Christmas Interpretations" sounds more like hip hop music than traditional holiday melodies.

By Tracey F. Jones

THE BATTALION

"Christmas Interpretations"
Boyz II Men
R&B
Motown

Interpretations of what Christmas really means are different for different people. Boyz II Men give theirs in their new record release, "Christmas Interpretations."

Their style is a slow, rhythmic, soulful sound. And the music is very relaxing and soft, especially on

the cuts "You're Not Alone" and "Who Would Have Thought."

"You're Not Alone" is a romantic song that speaks of a woman alone encountering a friend during the holidays; while "Who Would Have Thought" tells of a man and woman finding love during this time. The songs are open and expressive, allowing real feelings to surface.

However, other songs on "Christmas Interpretations" sound more like hip hop music than Christmas tunes. I expected the music to be

their personal renditions of "traditional" Christmas songs. Boyz II Men's voices harmonize extremely well together and it would have been wonderful to hear their harmony on such classics as "Do You Hear What I Hear?"

Unfortunately, there was only one rendition of a "traditional" song — "Silent Night" — which the group did an excellent job on. Its gospel-tinged melody gives it a fresh appeal.

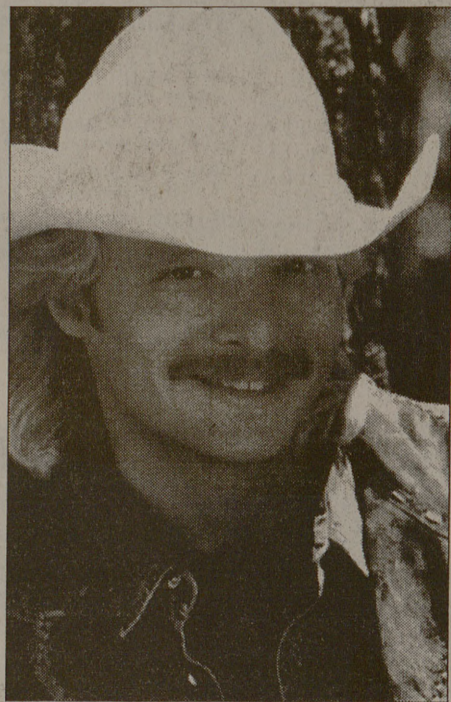
While it is a very personalized album with newly created songs, the melodies

are too similar to each other. It seems that only one rhythm is used throughout the album — either sped up or slowed down. At times, the melody even appears inappropriate for the lyrics.

Furthermore, the album seems geared toward a smaller group of consumers — those who enjoy pure R&B.

"Christmas Interpretations" is truly a well-constructed album, but it is not for everyone. If you enjoy romantic Christmas music, then you would most certainly enjoy this album.

'Honk Tonk Christmas,' a two-steppin' good time



Alan Jackson delivers his distinctive style of country in his first holiday album "Honky Tonk Christmas."

By Lesa Ann King

THE BATTALION

"Honky Tonk Christmas"
Alan Jackson
Country
Arista

Alan Jackson delivers a down-home variety of sad, silly and touching country songs in his first Christmas album "Honky Tonk Christmas."

As usual, Jackson's music is distinctively country. The title cut, "Honky Tonk Christmas," carries a sad theme but with an upbeat sound. The song talks about getting over a recent heartache by spending Christmas in a bar.

Another sorrowful cut, "Merry Christmas To Me," reflects on a man's pain of being alone during Christmas. Jackson wrote the song, but he said he has no idea what inspired him to write such a sad Christmas song.

On a happier note, Jackson sings a funny little duet with The Chipmunks called "Santa's Gonna Come In A Pickup Truck." In this song, Jackson and The Chipmunks discuss how Santa delivers gifts to children in the South when there is no snow.

Another song geared toward

younger listeners is the Burl Ives classic "Holly, Jolly Christmas." Jackson said he learned this song as a child and now enjoys singing it to his own three-year-old daughter.

Through the wonders of technology, Jackson sings a duet with the late Keith Whitley, "There's a New Kid in Town." Written by Whitley, the mixture of these two vocal talents is amazing and gives old Whitley fans chill bumps as they listen to this late performer's voice.

Another duet to listen for on the album, "The Angels Cried," blends Jackson's vocal talents with the sweet voice of rising bluegrass star Alison Krauss. The soft, melodious guitar and mandolin music make this one of the most beautiful songs on the album.

While not traditionally considered a Christmas song, Jackson includes the classic Merle Haggard song, "If We Make It Through December." Jackson's rendition stays true to the old Haggard sound that made this song legendary.

Jackson fans and other hard-core country music listeners will definitely want to find this album in their Christmas stocking; or better yet, they might want to get it before the holidays to get into that country Christmas frame of mind.

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