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## Album Review: Rascal Flatts' 'The Greatest Gift of All'



LAURA HOSTELLEY • OCTOBER 20, 2016 - 5:37 AM



*Photo courtesy Big Machine Records*

Rascal Flatts brought a modern pop with country twang to their first ever Christmas album, *The Greatest Gift of All*. The 10-track project features classics one might expect on a holiday collection, such as “Silent Night,” “Let It Snow” and “O Holy Night,” but is also accompanied by contemporary Christmas tracks out of the ordinary, such as “A Strange Way to Save the World” and Stevie Wonder’s “Someday at Christmas.”

*The Greatest Gift of All* opens with a jazzy and upbeat rendition of “Joy to the World.” The track paves way for the rest of the project and introduces listeners to the Flatts’ unique take on traditional holiday tunes.

In songs that follow, “O Holy Night” and “Deck the Halls” tempos are slowed down letting Gary LeVox’s talent shine through. Production throughout the record plays an important role on this album and may be what sets it apart on the shelf filled with similar albums that are only played a couple months out of the year. The unique arrangements and production elements are courtesy of the group, showcasing their outstanding abilities.

“Go Tell it On the Mountain” stands out to any listener who has heard this traditional hymn at a Christmas Eve church service. The tune is drenched in funky guitar riffs with horns shouting in the background. The unconventional sound strikes the urge to stand up and clap along with the rocking rendition of the track. Jay DeMarcus put his own spin on the tune when he produced the arrangement and absolutely makes the song their own.

“A Strange Way to Save the World” and “Someday at Christmas” are tracks fans may not be familiar with, but after they hear Rascal Flatts versions, they’ll want to listen time and again. They both give the project its own flavor, and stand out among the more traditional tracks.

The trio needed help when it came to “Silent Night,” so they called on their children to assist. LeVox’s 16-year-old daughter Brittany takes the lead vocal part in the first verse as the younger children echo behind her. She has a whole lot of dad in her as is evident in this awe-inspiring track.

In a flurry of Christmas records being released this season, Rascal Flatts use their years of experience in the studio to attract attention. It provides the perfect soundtrack to decorating the tree, baking Christmas cookies and most importantly spending time with loved ones. They really did give us “the greatest gift of all.”