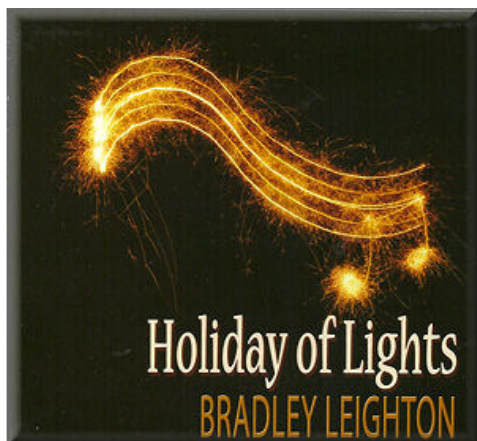


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BRADLEY LEIGHTON

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1. Joy to the World
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4. Winter Wonderland
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6. Let It Snow
7. Little Drummer Boy
8. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
9. White Christmas
10. Angels We Have Heard on High
11. Have Yourself a Merry Christmas
12. Silent Night

Bradley Leighton - Alto flute, bass flute
Allan Phillips - Keyboards, percussion

The flute is an ideal instrument for Christmas songs. It can heavenly music or simply dispense seasonably joyful sounds. This new album accompanies Christmas tunes with Latin-American rhythms: an idea which is not new, as it has already been used by the likes of the Caribbean Jazz Project, Sheila E and Poncho Sanchez.

The information on the CD sleeve is skimpy, but Allan Phillips seems to provide all the Latin percussion as well as playing keyboards - and it sounds as if the exotic beats are created electronically rather than by human hands. This makes for a deadening effect in the rhythm of some tracks, and the flautist temporarily gets out of sync with the beats in *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*. In any case, I hate drum machines, which lack the human touch.

However, both the musicians are skilful and experienced. Allan Phillips was born in Venezuela but now lives in California, where he works as producer, composer and arranger as well as playing numerous instruments. Bradley

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Leighton is based in San Diego. His previous albums have shown his capabilities in both jazz and soul. Here his improvisations on such tunes as *Winter Wonderland* are pleasingly melodious. Other notable tracks include *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, which is given a funky jazz-fusion beat, and *The First Noel*, which is played with tender emotion. The album ends with a tranquil *Silent Night* which dispenses with the Latin percussion.

To sum up, a pleasant album which would make a suitable Christmas present, even for people who are not jazz fans.

Tony Augarde

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