



FROM LATIN TO LOUNGE, GROOVE TO GOSPEL, *Merry & Bright* is a fresh soundtrack for the holidays. Ranging from an intimate duo version of "Christmas Time is Here," to a high-energy, big-band swing arrangement of "We Three Kings," as well as a Latin-tinged arrangement of "Veni, Veni Emmanuel," this CD of highly original takes on Christmas classics is destined for a top spot on holiday playlists. The album features powerhouse vocalists Tonia Hughes and Bruce Henry on several numbers, including a soulful and sassy new version of "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Lazarus' rhythm section, Tommy Barbarella (keyboards), Jeff Bailey (bass), and David Schmalenberger (drums/percussion), provide the tight, seasoned and inventive core upon which the all-brass big band is layered. Members of the Lazarus Brass bring energy and excitement to a many of the tunes, including "I Saw Three Ships" and a New Orleans Second Line take on "Frosty the Snowman."

Trumpeter Charles Lazarus has been defying categorization since his Carnegie Hall solo debut at the age of 19 – as a member of some of the most iconic brass ensembles in the world, including Canadian Brass, as a member of the Minnesota Orchestra, and as a soloist, composer, producer and band-leader. *New York Newsday* lauds his "bedazzling technique and refined sense of musicianship." *Merry & Bright* is one of four recordings of originals and unique takes on standards with his stellar rhythm section and producers Tommy Barbarella (Prince & Jonny Lang) and Jeff Bailey.

**CD TRACKS:**

1. Jingle Bells
2. Frosty the Snowman
3. Joy to the World
4. Merry Christmas, Baby
5. Christmas Time Is Here
6. Baby, It's Cold Outside
7. The Christmas Song
8. Sugar Plum Fairy
9. Little Drummer Boy
10. I Saw Three Ships
11. Veni, Veni Emmanuel
12. Go Tell It on the Mountain
13. Silent Night

*"Have you ever had one of those stay-in-your-car-to-hear-the-rest-of-the-tune moments? Lazarus's "Christmas Time is Here" took me there last night."*

*- Steve Staruch, Minnesota Public Radio*

*"...the ensemble delivers a lot of sound and fire...(with a distinct sense of whimsy. Be sure this one finds its way into your Christmas stocking."*

*- Derrick Bang, The Davis Enterprise*

*"...keyboard magic (and) slinky and salty brass. As for Charles Lazarus, his trumpet glitters from start to finish."*

*- Andrea Canter, JazzPolice*



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