



## David Gogo – Christmas With The Blues

By [John\\_Taylor](#) on November 27, 2012 10:09 AM | 0 Comments

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Canada's David Gogo – he's from Vancouver Island, one of the more isolated (and least urban) of the vast nation's urban areas – is primarily known as a prodigiously talented blues rocker.

This being a collection that celebrates a time of good cheer – or not, given this is, after all, Christmas With The Blues – Gogo here eschews his usual aggressive attack for a lean, clean take on some holiday surprises, with a handful of originals to help make his Christmas parcel distinct from the rest.



That's not to say Gogo's lost his bite – there's still a snarling ferocity to most of his solos. But those solos are generally short and sweet, and Gogo's tone is as sharp as the air on a cold winter's night.

Opener "Christmas Blues" sets the pace – a straightforward twelve-bar exercise with a nice biting solo – remove the lyrical reference to Christmas and this track would be a highlight at any time of the year. Gogo's own "Christmas On The Bayou" is appropriately moody and swampy, with squalling, atmospheric harmonica courtesy of up-and-comer Shawn Hall. It's probably not destined to become a seasonal standard but it's a cool tune. Freddie King's "Christmas Tears" is a flat-out belly rubber, again holiday-themed only by virtue of the lyrics – otherwise, it's just a fine twelve-bar blues with exquisitely tasteful guitar work and sparkling piano from veteran David Vest.

Gogo's second contribution is obviously heartfelt – raised on a tree farm, a song called "Let's Get A Real Tree" seems perfectly natural. A Chuck Berry-style rocker, it works quite well beyond the slightly corny spoken-word intro. The pace slows down with a comparatively gentle, fireside version of Charles Brown's immortal "Please Come Home For Christmas," with Phil Dwyer's creamy sax the dominant instrument. (Dwyer also contributes piano on this particular track). There's a one-two punch with back-to-back versions of "Santa Claus Is Back In Town" and "Merry Christmas Baby," both tough, no-nonsense guitar workouts, the latter enlivened by a fine horn section. Gogo's instrumental take on perennial favorite "Little Drummer Boy" features Hall once more on harmonica, and again there's a swampy, mysterious feel to the track, with Gogo's shimmery guitar adding an enigmatic edge to give the track an entirely unexpected feel. Things wrap up

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with Mack Rice's funky "Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin'," an upbeat romp that should start a few yuletide fires of one sort or another.

Gogo sings well throughout, though his guitar is arguably the more eloquent, and the band is top-notch – there's some great horn work, and pianist Vest (who's worked with the likes of Big Joe Turner and Jimmy 'T99' Nelson) is a revelation.

All in all a wonderful antidote to the saccharine sweetness of most holiday offerings, this is a fine collection that, lyrics aside, would hold up well at any time of the year. Excellent stuff!

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