



| Playlists | Schedule | Programs | Q2 Music | Events | Blogs | Request Music |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|--------|-------|---------------|
| Search wqxr.org | | Sut | | | | |

WQXR Blog

When Shopping for Tires Meant Buying a Christmas Album

Tuesday, December 18, 2012 - 04:00 PM

By [Brian Wise](#)



Goodyear's Great Songs of Christmas
Volume 10

[JOIN THE DISCUSSION \[7\]](#)

Those ubiquitous Christmas CDs parked at cash registers didn't begin with Starbucks.

As music buyers of a certain age will remember, there was a time when these impulse purchases were tied to whitewalls, not white vanilla mochas. During the 1960s and '70s, the Goodyear and Firestone tire companies peddled annual Christmas albums in their stores, usually for a dollar each, while customers waited to get their tires changed or wheels aligned.

The LPs were assembled by major labels like RCA and Columbia, and included performers like Leonard Bernstein, George Szell, Bing Crosby, Sammy Davis Jr., the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Stan Getz, Isaac Stern and Mahalia Jackson.

Lately, nostalgia-fueled Internet discussions have emerged around the merits and availability of these old LPs. A scan of eBay and Amazon turns up dozens of original Firestone and Goodyear LPs for sale. Part of their allure is tied to scarcity: these albums never made the jump to the CD or download format.

David Feinauer, is the co-owner of [Christmas LPs to CD](#), a seven-year-old family business near Cincinnati, OH that transfers old LPs to CD and MP3 formats and sells them for between \$20 and \$35. He said that the tire companies' albums are consistently top sellers, often because they contained songs not available elsewhere.

"We have people who will buy particular ones because there's one song they want," he said, noting how Goodyear's "Great Songs of Christmas Vol. 8" featured a rare Tony Bennett version of "What Child is This."

Feinauer said the tire company LPs were the brainchild of Stanley Arnold, a music industry consultant who approached Goodyear in 1961 with the idea of a "premium record," as it was called. At first the company was skeptical, but in the first year, Columbia did 100,000 pressings of the first release for mid November. By Thanksgiving they were sold out. The next year they sold 200,000 copies. Customers were limited one per visit.

By 1966, Goodyear sold 15 million albums, according to a Billboard report. "A great deal of special recording is commissioned for such an album," Arnold told the publication. "Recording teams were sent to England to record Barbra Streisand and Pablo Casals was flown in from Puerto Rico to participate."

Classical highlights from the 10-volume Goodyear series included Isaac Stern's "Ave Maria," Andre Previn's "The Holly and the Ivy" and Eileen Farrell's "Conventry Carol." Firestone often specialized in opera singers like Franco Corelli (singing "Oh Holy Night") and Roberta Peters ("Ave Maria").

Firestone was apparently less skilled at branding. "A lot of them have absolutely no marks on the record or jacket that say Firestone," said Feinauer. "It was only on the shrink wrap."

The series featured a mix of secular and sacred Christmas pieces, and remarkably, always had both classical and non-classical artists. They had run their course by the mid 1970s.

"It's the memories," Feinauer said of their appeal. "I'm surprised by how many people not only say, 'I enjoyed it,' but 'I want to share this with my children and grandchildren.'"

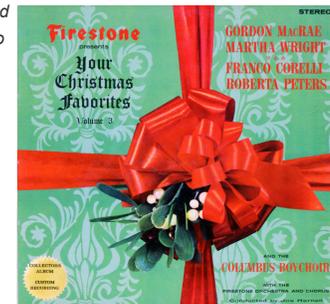
Weigh in: Did you ever own a Firestone or Goodyear LP? Tell us about it below.

TAGS: [christmas](#), [firestone](#), [goodyear](#), [holiday music](#),

MORE IN: [WQXR Blog](#) »

BRIAN WISE

Brian Wise covers the classical music business for WQXR, including aspects of performance, technology, philanthropy and institutional reporting. Follow him on Twitter at [@Brianwise](#).



RELATED



OPERA VOIRE

The Operavore 2012 Holiday Gift Guide



WQXR BLOG

Poll: What's Your Favorite Non-English Christmas Carol?



WQXR FEATURES

The Holiday Channel Returns with Carols, Festive Favorites

COMMENTS [7]

[Leave a comment](#)  [RSS Feed for Comments](#)

Joyce from Middletown, CT

My earliest Christmas music memories are from the Firestone LP, our family owned several...I went on to scratch them but not before they were played (lovingly) over and over and over.....thank you for this wonderful memory!

Dec. 19 2012 01:33 PM

  Score: 0/0 

John from NJ

Every December, Mom would walk in the house with the latest editions. Some great music on these relics.

Dec. 19 2012 11:30 AM

  Score: 0/0 

Frank from UWS

Ah, that brings back memories. I remember "Carols and Candlelight" with Stan Getz doing "Moonlight in Vermont." And something by Doris Day. Anyone remember the albums by JC Penny's too? Now that was the shizzle.

Dec. 19 2012 10:03 AM

  Score: 0/0 

Rowland C. Rodgers from Center Valley, PA

I still have many of them that I inherited from my Father. They were a large part of our holiday celebration when I was a child.

Dec. 19 2012 09:52 AM

  Score: 0/0 

Paul

I remember my dad going around to all the tire stores collecting all the albums each year, they were ly soundtrack for Christmas day; they were as much a Christmas tradition as the search for the head truck, there were few Hesses in the Delaware Valley in the 60s and early 70s, and the trips to the department stores in downtown Philly.

Dec. 19 2012 09:17 AM

  Score: 1/1 

David from Fairfield County, CT

The Goodyear and Firestone Christmas albums are a part of Christmas tradition for most of us. My dad worked for Uniroyal (former US Rubber) in Manhattan. As a young child, I can remember each Christmas season when dad arrived home from work with copy of the latest year's Christmas album. We were all excited year after year. They were treasured competitor's gifts then and a treasure to our listening pleasure still today.

If you have any of these albums and remember them as a child, pull them out and have an old fashioned Christmas. Enjoy the memories!

Dec. 19 2012 08:30 AM

  Score: 0/0 

jim from Westchester

I have a a few of the original LP's and play them each Holiday Season.

Dec. 19 2012 08:14 AM

  Score: 0/0 

LEAVE A COMMENT

Register for your own account so you can vote on comments, save your favorites, and more. [Learn more.](#)

Please stay on topic, be civil, and be brief.

Email addresses are never displayed, but they are required to confirm your comments. Names are displayed with all comments. We reserve the right to edit any comments posted on this site. Please read the [Comment Guidelines](#) before posting. By leaving a comment, you agree to New York Public Radio's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms Of Use](#).

Name*

Email address*

Comment*

Location

* Denotes a required field

© 2012 New York Public Radio
All Rights Reserved.

[Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy](#)

WQXR

[Playlists](#) | [Schedule](#) |
[Programs](#) | [Hosts](#) |
[Featured Articles](#) |
[Cafe Concerts](#) |
[Conducting Business](#) |
[News Blog](#) | [Operavore](#)

Q2 MUSIC

[Schedule & Playlists](#) |
[Programs](#) | [Hosts](#) |
[Q2 Music News](#)

ABOUT US

[Mobile Apps](#) | [QCard](#) |
[Support WQXR](#) |
[About WQXR](#) |
[Contact Us](#) | [Press](#) |
[Jobs](#) | [Underwriting](#) |
[Community Advisory Board](#)
[NY Public Radio](#)

CONNECT

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) |
[YouTube](#) | [RSS](#)