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Season's Greetings

Santas' CD relieves doldrums with odd mix

Let me say this right off: the Screaming Santas' holiday CD, *Trim the Tree*, was not exactly what I expected.

First of all, despite the 70s retro packaging and the sappy-sounding song titles — "I ♥ Xmas," for one — I have to admit that there was a part of me that expected the CD to include a little, well, screaming.

But there was none of that to be had in any of the four tracks contained on *Trim the Tree*. In fact, the first two tracks made it appear that the Screaming Santas were just as mushy and plastic as their Brady-esque apparel and hairstyles would indicate.

Listening to "Jesus Christ," the first song on the CD, had me disheartened immediately. Written by Alex Chilton, whose 70s band Big Star recorded the original version of the song, "Jesus Christ" is a lyrically uninteresting piece, made even less exciting by the melodic, low-key treatment of the Santas. Its sugary and repetitive chorus, "Jesus Christ was born today / Jesus Christ was born," gets tiresome in seconds — fortunately, the song lasts only two and a half minutes.

We get a glimpse of originality in "I ♥ Xmas," produced and written by Gavin Guss (who also chips in some vocals, guitar and drums for the track). For many, Christmas brings mixed emotions — feelings of isolation and togetherness, for example, or the joys and burdens of tradition — and this song captures those well: "Here on Christmas Eve / I'm feeling like a dog in a manger scene."

One revealing passage comes in the chorus, when we discover one reason the songwriter seems to love the holiday. In his words: "It feeds my inse-



CD REVIEW
Trim the Tree
Screaming Santas

★★

curities." But the overall tone of the first two tracks left me totally unprepared for the third song on the CD, innocuously labeled "(L.G.H.) for Christmas," which sounds similar to the others, but shows a completely different attitude.

It's apparent in the very first lines, when we find out just what L.G.H. stands for: "Oh, the yuletide time is here, again, so let's get high for Christmas / We'll see baby Jesus and three wise men, when we get high for Christmas."

Needless to say, I was rolling on the floor after that. I mean, after listening to music so uninteresting and poppy that it could've been from the Melrose Place soundtrack, it was a shock to hear, "'Tis the season to be jolly, and our hearts are full of song / As we stuff this wreath of holly in the Merry Christmas bong."

Not exactly Nat King Cole.


Made up of Guss and the members of several different bands, the Screaming Santas are probably just a one-time entity, comprising Rick Roberts of Peach, the Posies' Jon Auer, former Posie and current Love Battery drummer, Mike Musburger, and Braden Black and Chris Lockwood of Super Deluxe.

But they should keep their day jobs.

By David Thorn


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