

'Let It Snow' a holiday treat

The release from crooner Michael Buble makes jazzy background music for any festive holiday gathering

By Natasha Chilingirian
Pulse Reporter

Decorating the house with tinsel and lights and tackling packed malls in search of perfect gifts are mood-boosting tasks for some people who celebrate Christmas, but others

may need a outside source to inspire the holiday spirit. Michael Buble's new EP, "Let It Snow," contains the perfect music for people who need a little revving up for holiday activities.

"Let It Snow" is the third release for the 25-year-old Canadian singer. On his previous albums, Buble re-made old classics such as Tony Bennett's "The Way You Look Tonight," and Frank Sinatra's "Come Fly With Me." On "Let It Snow," he continues the trend of re-creating oldies and presents five popular Christmas tunes in his own style.

The title track, "Let It Snow," would most likely appeal to an older crowd. The jazzy-sounding piano and drums evoke images of an old dance hall full of

middle-aged couples twirling to the sounds of a jazz band. Buble's voice isn't unique from the vocals on previous versions, but his talent is still evident. The song is a cheerful beginning to the EP.

"The Christmas Song" is a bit too slow and drawn-out, but like all versions, the melody, lyrics, and mood of the song are enchanting. Buble's beautiful, grown-up voice brings magic to the image of "chestnuts roasting on an open fire." The pace of the tune is ideal for slow-dancing in a toasty living room beside the glow of Christmas tree lights.

On "Grown-Up Christmas List," Buble's emotional vocals make the song stand out as the most touching one on the EP. Not one of the most widely-known Christmas songs, "Grown-Up Christmas List" is about a man remembering childhood Christmas fantasies and wishing for a better world as an adult. The powerful tune is enforced by Buble's sweet voice and a simple piano melody, and can easily become a new favorite on any Christmas lover's music list.

"I'll Be Home for Christmas" doesn't have such a catchy tune, but the focus on Buble's big voice and slow piano background gives the song a gentle and sentimental vibe. The final track, "White Christmas," is a fun, festive finale. For the most part, the tune doesn't stand out from other versions, but Buble adds a different feel by belting out the lyrics and putting his heart into a short ad-lib section at the end.

"Let It Snow" may be short, but five songs are just enough to create a magical Christmas mood. Listening to older Christmas songs evoke memories of the past better than newer, more obscure tunes do, and Buble brings out those memories in his music while providing a new flair at the same time.

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Michael Buble's 'Let It Snow' offers traditional Christmas tunes.

Two artists break barriers, bring fresh tunes to Eugene

The mellow sounds of Rachael Sage and Megan Slankard differ greatly from the 'pop queen' genre

By Aaron Shakra
Pulse Editor

Here is tale of two female performers: one coming, and one already gone.

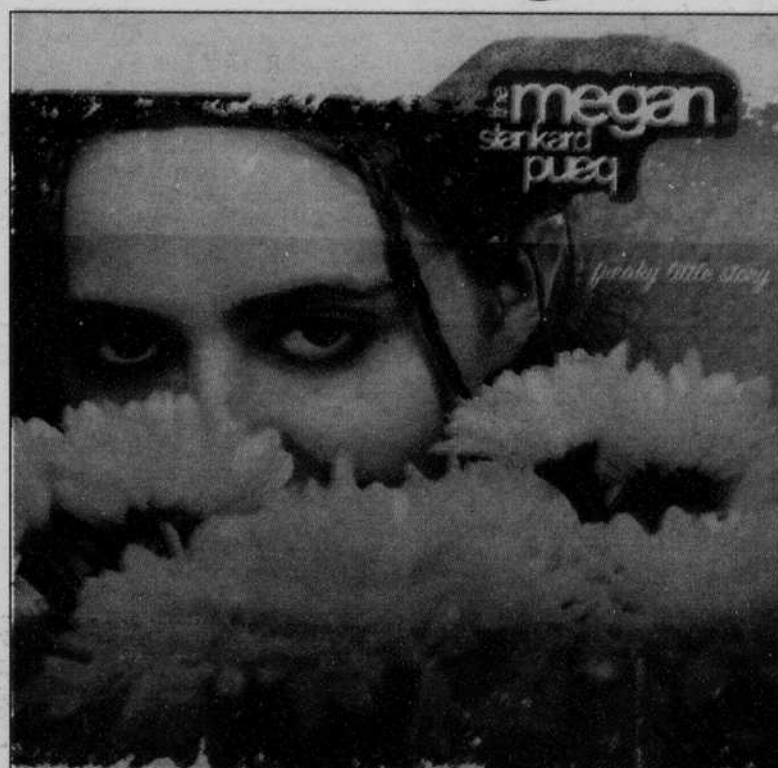
Rachael Sage's latest release is "Public Record." She recently performed in Eugene, and runs her own recording label (MPress).

Next is Megan Slankard, who will play at Café Paradiso — located at 115 W. Broadway — on Dec. 20. Her newly formed band is called "The Megan Slankard Band," and its first release is called "Freaky little story."

There is no denying the talent or worldliness of either performer. Sage — whose "Public Record" is her fifth release — plays a variety of instruments. The 20-year-old Slankard has played in five countries; Sage has toured Europe four times.

Still, for all these credentials, there is something entirely straightforward and downright normal about both Sage and Slankard's music. The lyrics, the sound and the rhythm never manage to rise above a marginal, hit-or-miss quality.

This previous paragraph was to get the worst out of the way first. This is a nation in which Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears, Shakira and numerous



Courtesy

Twenty-year-old musician Megan Slankard has performed in five countries.

other corporate pop clones reign the airwaves, magazines and billboard charts. Right now, there is no greater need for strong, independent female performers (and voices). So while critiques may be raised against the music, both Slankard and Sage are still levels above the majority of what's coming from "pop" queens these days. And, they still have youth on their side to evolve their burgeoning talent.

"Public Record" clocks in at 14 songs and runs the gamut of musical genres

— sometimes jazz, sometimes rock/blues and the occasional ballad. In addition to singing, producing and designing the album's liner notes, Sage plays vocals, piano, Wurlitzer, Mellotron, voco-strings (a 4-octave polyphonic synthesizer), and provides lo-fi loops. One standout of the bunch is the track and the jazzy, breathy "Back to freedom," where she asks: "How beautiful is your beauty mark / and where

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