



"Sleigh Ride" Tops List of Popular Holiday Classics for Fourth Consecutive Year

December 12, 2012

It's that time of year again when holiday music takes over the airwaves and fills our homes, shops and cars with that extra bit of cheer, raising peoples' spirits and inspiring shoppers' zeal for finding that perfect gift.

This year, as with many years in the past, the top ten most-played holiday songs were all written or co-written by members of the **American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)**.

And for the fourth year in a row, "**Sleigh Ride**," written by **Leroy Anderson** and **Mitchell Parish**, and recently covered by ASCAP Grammy-nominated indie rock trio **fun.**, tops this list of popular holiday classics. Like "Sleigh Ride," many of these perennial favorites continue to be re-recorded by contemporary artists year after year, proving their timelessness and boosting already impressive airplay.

"Music is one of the most important and defining aspects of the holiday season. Favorites like 'Sleigh Ride' and 'Winter Wonderland' help to set the mood and brighten spirits each and every year," commented **ASCAP President and Chairman Paul Williams**. "It's no surprise that these beloved tunes have all been written by ASCAP members, America's greatest songwriters and composers. These works serve as a cornerstone of the ASCAP repertory."

Since October 1, 2012, "Sleigh Ride" has aired more times than any other holiday song this season. Though the lyrical version we know today depicts a wondrous winter scene, "Sleigh Ride" was originally composed by Leroy Anderson as an instrumental piece on a hot summer day in 1946. Mitchell Parish added lyrics to the song in 1950, and since then, it has been recorded by countless performers - perhaps a more diverse group of musical artists than any other piece in the history of western music.

To this day, Leroy Anderson's recording remains the most popular instrumental version, while Johnny Mathis' recording has become the most popular vocal version.

As is the case with many holiday standards, "Sleigh Ride" continues to be covered by current acts, and was just released by ASCAP members and recent Grammy nominees **fun. for the compilation album *Holidays Rule*. ASCAP's Zooey Deschanel-fronted indie duo **She & Him** also recorded the carol for their 2011 holiday album *A Very She & Him Christmas*.**

The top ten most-played holiday songs so far this holiday season are listed below, all written or co-written by ASCAP songwriters and composers. Each song includes songwriter credits, and cites the most popular artist version played on radio to date.

1. "**Sleigh Ride**" Music by Leroy Anderson, Lyrics by Mitchell Parish
Most popular version performed by Leroy Anderson
2. "**Winter Wonderland**" Written by Felix Bernard, Richard B. Smith
Most popular version performed by Eurythmics
3. "**Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!**" Written by Sammy Cahn, Jule Styne
Most popular version performed by Harry Connick Jr.
4. "**Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas**" Written by Ralph Blane, Hugh Martin
Most popular version performed by The Carpenters
5. "**Santa Claus Is Coming to Town**" Written by Fred Coote, Haven Gillespie
Most popular version performed by Bruce Springsteen
6. "**Do You Hear What I Hear?**" Written by Gloria Shayne Baker, Noël Regney
Most popular version performed by Whitney Houston
7. "**The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)**" Written by Mel Tormé, Robert Wells
Most popular version performed by Nat King Cole
8. "**Jingle Bell Rock**" Written by Joseph Carleton Beal, James Ross Boothe
Most popular version performed by Bobby Helms
9. "**Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree**" Written by Johnny Marks
Most popular version performed by Brenda Lee
10. "**It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas**" Written by Meredith Willson
Most popular version performed by Bing Crosby

Note: The list represents an aggregation of all different artist versions of each cited holiday song played on radio from 10/1/12 through 12/3/12. The holiday song data was tracked by radio airplay monitoring service, Media Monitors.