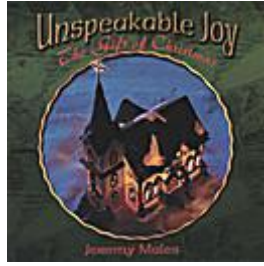


Mp3 Jeremy Males - Unspeakable Joy (the Gift Of Christmas)



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Rich traditional Christmas vocals yet fresh in their presentation /semi-classical/Guitar/Cello/Piano ---light the tree and gather the family around the fireplace 12 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional, EASY LISTENING: Crooners/Vocals Details: A Christmas Story Our home was on the 3rd floor rear over a storefront on Armitage Ave. in Chicago. We lived in a cold-water flat with stove heat, no bathtub, no storm windows or screens, and the biggest windows I ever saw. There were five of us in four small rooms: Mom, Dad, my older sister (14), my younger brother (10), and myself (12). We were very satisfied in this living condition. I dont recall one complaint or word of dissatisfaction from anyone about our tiny apartment and we lived this way for 10 years. We were glad to be together. This was our 6th Christmas together as a family. We three children had been separated from our parents for three years. What a difficult time those three years were for us, but especially for my Dad. Dad was Sunday School Superintendent as well as Associate Pastor at Bethesda Pentecostal Church. When Christmas came, Bethesda pulled out all the stops to celebrate the birth of Christ. The Church was filled every year, even the balcony, but the Christmas of 1947 was the best. We put on a published play (I was the lead that year) and sang carols. Children recited Scripture from memory. My big sister nervously sang O Holy Night accompanied by a boy she had a crush on. Solos and readings of all sorts were offered by all types of people. All this was watched over by a huge, brightly decorated Christmas tree that approached two stories, placed at the side of the podium. The Christmas lights werent the small lights you see today, but large bulbs that lit up the whole church. No other lighting assistance was needed. We sang our carols by their light. At the end of the pageant, in a very anti-climactic moment, we each received a small gift from under the Christmas tree that quickly lost its glow of anticipation as the program ended. Dad and I picked

out the tree that year. It was my first lesson in how tall objects look short when they lie on the ground. At the tree lot, I was sure Dad had made a mistake and the tree would be too short. When men of the congregation raised it inside the sanctuary, I was amazed how swiftly it grew in height and towered over me. What a memory God has given me. I had the gift of being able to share the whole experience of that Christmas service with my father, from preparation to gift-giving. The most profound moment of the evening, however, was yet to happen. It was one Dad and I would share with each other some 55 years later. Our family was the last to leave the church that Christmas night, a habit that has stayed with me over the years. It was almost 11 o'clock. About three inches of snow had fallen and the streets and sidewalks were covered with this beautiful white quilt. It was so still, no sound, no cars, no one else. Only occasional traces of stray footprints could be seen in the new snow. We entered what seemed like our own private world. It was a short walk to Armitage Ave. where we would turn west away from the lake and go three city blocks to our home. The street was populated on both sides with small store-front businesses: bakeries, butcher shops, drug stores, candy stores, gift shops, barber shops, a florist, a movie theater, several mom and pop grocery stores, an Ace hardware, and too many taverns with newly available TVs, along with an occasional overhead door belonging to an out-of-place industrial company. All we ever needed was within easy walking distance. The sidewalks wouldn't be shoveled until well into the following morning. Hardly a car was parked on Armitage. There were never more than a few. One auto would pass as we walked, the driver carefully following the lone tire tracks already laid in the freshly fallen snow by a previous auto. Streetcar tracks lay hidden beneath the snow. It was Christmas night. There might not be a streetcar until early in the morning. We were walking very close to each other as we turned onto Armitage, I beside my Dad and us behind the rest. We had gone a short distance when in the blink of an eye I became an observer of the scene before me, tucked away in some corner, looking in on the others. As a 12-year-old, I was not yet aware of the significance of these junctures of time and eternity; they would act as guideposts for my journey through this life. It was many years later when I came to understand that these pictures from my past were memories of decisions made. Right or wrong, these decisions influenced my thoughts and actions. On that Christmas in 1947, with my hands in a small jacket, my person all drawn in to protect against the cold, head tilted down, I thought with finality: we are a family again. That thought carried with it a sense of accomplishment and maturity that belonged to a man. In that moment, I wasn't any age. It was a spiritual me who was watching over the family with my Dad.

God brought healing to our family and my fathers faith in God was honored. This image from the past was on my mind in the summer of 1992. Dad and I were meeting more frequently now. He was well into his struggle with cancer and time was growing short. The last time Dad and I sat in the sun that summer, I told him of my memory from that long past Christmas. To my surprise, he remembered the moment immediately and we kept nodding and smiling in amazement as we recalled all the details. He lived the same experience I had as we walked home together on that Christmas night. He too had decided: we are a family again. Much of the distance between us melted away. More would in the weeks that followed. We connected in a way that was never possible before as we shared again that sacred moment from the past. We are a family. He was my dad. My warmest memories and many of my lifes decisions are connected with Christmas. That is why I made this CD. Somehow, enough of what I had hoped to express made it into the recordings. When Silent Night was wrapped up, I drove to a nearby park in Denver to see how it sounded when played in the car. I cried through the whole song. I was so grateful for what we had made. When the recordings were finally completed and the master done, a sense of satisfaction came over me. I can die now. I dont care if I do another thing. As ridiculously as this might read, that was how I felt. Please enjoy. Ill be listening with you. Jeremy

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