

Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks Crazy For Christmas



Hailed as, “The eternal hipster, purveyor of the drollest and most swingin’ tunes the rock generation ever enjoyed” (Minneapolis Star Tribune), Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks have hijacked the holidays and created a Christmas album you’ll enjoy all year long. Released on October 12, 2010 through Surfdog Records, *Crazy For Christmas* is classic Hot Licks, full of the same dry wit and musical brilliance that has defined Dan Hicks’ music for the past four decades and established him as one of American music’s true cult heroes.

“[*Crazy For Christmas* has] a joyously irreverent charm ...[and is] a warm reminder of just how consistent, steady, and poignantly funny Hicks can be; any season of the year.”
- *All Music Guide*

“You may not be able to believe in Santa anymore, but thanks to Hicks and the Hot Licks you can still believe in the infinitely more valuable vibe and spirit that the Fat Man represents.”
- *Premier Guitar*

“The perfect accompaniment to a holiday martini gathering.”
- *LA Times*

“a classic in the making with its signature sense of humor and witty word that we’ve come to expect from Hicks.”
- *Glide Magazine*

“Hicks and the Hot Licks create a sound that evokes images of Mr. Natural truckin’ along and Django Reinhardt puffing on a cigarette, playing music so rhythmic and bouncy that it could make a cadaver dance.”
- *American Songwriter*

“A Christmas record that sounds antic and deadpan, engaged and tossed off, almost magically laid-back. (Gonzalo Bergara’s Django Reinhardt-like solos ensure the professionalism.)” - *New York Times*

“a devilish twist to holiday classics.”
- *Metro Weekly*

“Necessary for any holiday hipster.”
- *Mountain Times*

“Simply put: nobody else in this world – nobody – sounds like [Dan Hicks]” - *Jambands.com*

“By far my favorite new holiday album, *Crazy for Christmas*, stands up to repeat listens, which really makes it a seasonal anomaly. It’s going in the “play it every year” file.”
- *Lincoln Journal Star*

“*Crazy For Christmas* makes you want to put on your shades (even if it’s snowing) and just lean against a wall snapping your fingers.”
- *Country Standard Time*

“The most swinging Christmas CD you’re likely to find.” - *Vintage Guitar Magazine*

“One of the better Christmas albums to come down the pike in several years, combining classic sounds, a warm voice, and impeccable talent.” - *Stereo Subversion*

“Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks’ shiny, new *Crazy for Christmas* (Surfdog) is perfect for those who like their egnog stiff and their wit dry.”
- *Pacific Sun*

“Perhaps your holiday celebrations get a little rowdy. Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks have got you covered.”
- *My Old Kentucky Blog*

“a holiday album that defines the term ‘instant classic.’”
- *CBS Street Date*

“an unqualified delight.”
- *San Diego Union-Tribune*

“This CD is that rarest of beasts: a good Christmas record.”
- *Suite 101*

“[an] unholy combination of Mose Allison, Django Reinhardt and Frank Zappa.” - *There Stands The Glass*

“Hicks specializes in the mood most of us want to achieve around this time of year - a relaxed, chilled-out demeanor.”
- *NPR Fresh Air*



MUSIC / HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE / HOLIDAY MUSIC
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Like gifts themselves, Christmas albums shouldn't be obligations, though they all too often are. And also like gifts, the ones worth receiving and embracing are those that in spite of the familiar structure, find new ways to deliver old thrills. Or even, sometimes, new thrills. Or even more rarely, something not thrilling, but bracing; not all holiday experiences are cheerful. Here, the pop and jazz critics of The New York Times look for meaning, and hidden presents, in this year's crop of holiday releases. JON CARAMANICA

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...DAN HICKS AND THE HOT LICKS: 'CRAZY FOR CHRISTMAS' (Surfdog). Dan Hicks, the old-timey shaggy-dog singer-songwriter-guitarist from the Bay Area, goes about his career as if it's a long extension of his living room. "Crazy for Christmas" — 12 songs, mostly original — is exemplary, a Christmas record that sounds antic and deadpan, engaged and tossed off, almost magically laid-back. (Gonzalo Bergara's Django Reinhardt-like solos ensure the professionalism.) Mr. Hicks will perform some of these songs in a holiday show at City Winery in the South Village on Nov. 30, citywinery.com; if you're inclined to such concerts, you'll want to be in his company. BEN RATLIFF

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http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/26/arts/music/26holiday.html?_r=2*

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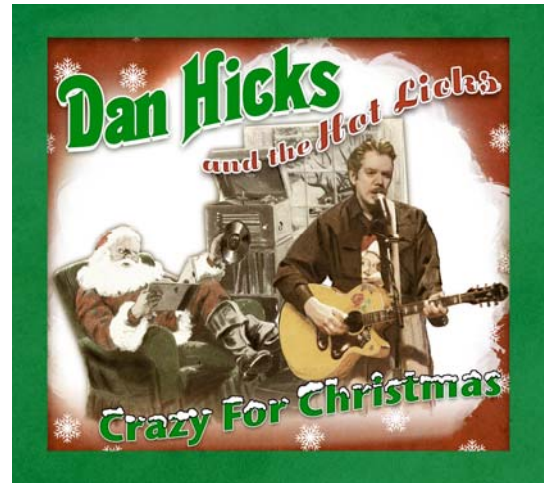
December 2010

Author: Shawn Hammond

Artist: **Dan Hicks & The Hot Licks**

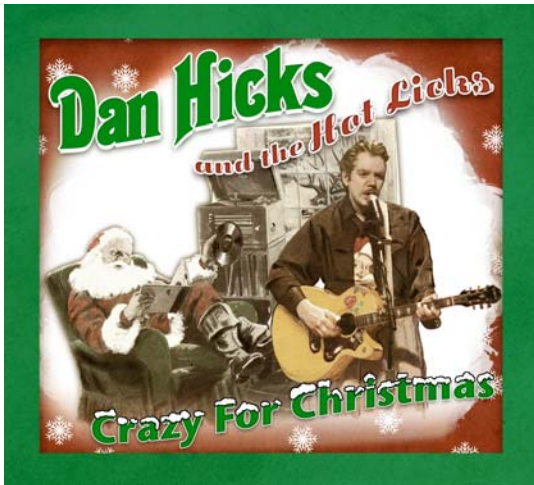
Album : **Crazy For Christmas**

Label : **Sufdog**



Most Christmas albums of the last 20 years make me feel more like the Grinch than someone filled with cheer and goodwill. They seem so cynically “cheery,” shiny perfect, and soullessly overproduced that they’re like icicles in the ear canal. For me, old holiday tunes are a lot more likely to have that vibe that takes you back to your childhood – back to relaxing in your jammies, digging the smell of the Christmas tree, and vegging by a crackling fire. I’m talking about songs from cats like Burl Ives or fun stuff like the tracks on the *Christmas Kisses* compilation, which has an eclectic mix of endearing performances by artists like Leadbelly, Les Paul, Tex Ritter, Sugar Chile Robinson, Mel Blanc, and Harry Stewart (performing as “Yogi Yorgesson”). There’s a soulfulness and warmth to these recordings, and it’s not because there’s a nostalgic connection. I didn’t grow up with those songs, but I *feel* like I did. That warmth is partially the production process, sure, but there’s also a feeling of genuine joy and awe that I just don’t hear in most newer Christmas albums. But Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks’ new *Crazy for Christmas* is one of those rare exceptions. Besides featuring production that has that ol’ magical vibe, it’s full of swingin’ archtop solos from Gonzalo Bergara (“Santa Gotta Choo Choo”), rootsy slide parts (“Santa’s Workshop”), gypsy-jazz violin solos (“Here Comes Santa Claus”), joyous singing (how Hicks’ trademark voice can sound gritty *and* smooth is a mystery), and humor that kids and adults alike can enjoy (check out the scat singing and comically sped-up choruses of “Carol of the Bells,” or the kazoo lines on “Cool Yule”). You may not be able to believe in Santa anymore, but thanks to Hicks and the Hot Licks you can still believe in the infinitely more valuable vibe and spirit that the Fat Man represents.

– Shawn Hammond



Thursday, November 04, 2010
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Author: Ashley Wilson
Artist: **Dan Hicks & The Hot Licks**
Album : **Crazy For Christmas**
Label : **Sufdog**

It's that time of the year again, when Christmas music comes far too soon and Christmas itself doesn't come soon enough.

One can hear "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" only so many times before turning red and green in the face. The solution for this Christmas-induced nausea may be Crazy for Christmas, the latest offering from Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks.

Dan Hicks, always known as a musical weirdo, has been a cult hero in American music for more than four decades. Getting his start as a drummer in the psychedelic band The Charlatans in 1965, he left just three years later to form his acoustic ensemble Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.

Hicks and His Hot Licks' tongue-in-cheek approach obtained national attention in the early '70s with hits "I Scare Myself" and "Canned Music." At the height of their popularity, Hicks even appeared on the cover of Rolling Stone, but disbanded the Licks shortly after.

Though Dan Hicks has stayed occupied over the years, he waited until 2000 to bring back the Hot Licks. Though he's now in his late 60s, Hicks is still a cool cat riding the comeback trail. Crazy for Christmas is his first take on the much loved, sometimes loathed holiday.

Even when Hicks was younger, he played an older style of music. He calls his melding of folk, jazz, swing and country sounds "folk swing." Dan Hicks is a funky cowboy singer who breaks out the scat sometimes. With the Licks format, he employs the call-and-response technique with his inviting female "Lickettes." All of this happens over folksy guitar and jazzy violin.

Crazy for Christmas is an excellent example of Hicks' individual, distinct style and hilarious songwriting. Imagine a grumpy gray-haired guy in his long johns who drank far too much eggnog and a few attractive vixens in Santa suits singing around the tree. It makes for a very entertaining Christmas.

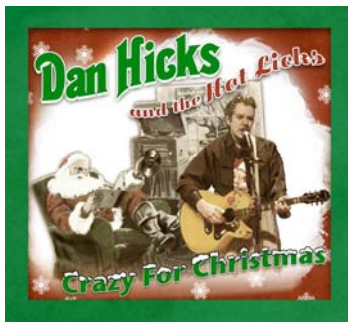
"Every year I get ants in my pants when Christmas comes along," explains Hicks in "I've Got Christmas by the Tail." Though there are a few traditional songs like "I Saw Mommy Kissin' Santa Claus" among Hicks' wacky originals, Crazy for Christmas is no run-of-the-mill holiday album.

Even Hicks' take on the well-known songs is way off-center. Probably the most inventive version of "Carol of the Bells" ever appears on Crazy for Christmas, involving scat singing and a chipmunk vocal track. "Santa's Gotta Choo-Choo" is Hicks' salute to famous country-blues song "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie."

Exhibiting their quiriness, Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks' vision of an "Old Fashioned Christmas" is "a Bethlehem scene on the lawn and a picture of Rudolph in the john." A combination of drinking exorbitant amounts of spirits and the Licks' eccentric version of Christmas music may just be the thing to pull someone through the holiday, as they reveal in the same song, "We'll be picking and grinning and holding onto our sanity."

Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks certainly don't take Christmas seriously on Crazy for Christmas. They are necessarily irreverent; rather they have a different kind of appreciation of the holiday. Perhaps that is why it is such a fun listen. It's a good fit for those who love the holiday, but are absolutely sick of what comes out speakers everywhere each December.

Crazy for Christmas is necessary for any holiday hipster. Bah to Bah-humbug!



There is a lot of Christmas music out there. A lot. Neil Diamond alone has released 753 Christmas records (only a slight exaggeration). So what possessed Dan Hicks to record a Christmas record? Who knows? It doesn't matter, for this record is that rare thing: a truly good Christmas album.

It's got that quirky edge that one would expect and hope for from Dan Hicks And The Hot Licks.

And of course it's also got great musicianship. Dan Hicks takes the holiday known for the least-cool music ever and tips it on its head and makes it cool and hip.

"Christmas Mornin'" – The album opens with "Christmas Mornin'," a fun, quirky tune about Santa Claus and Rudolph getting ready to work on Christmas morning. This song is sort of a parody of Dan Hicks' own song "Where's The Money" from his 1971 album of the same name. This song features cool backing vocals and the line, "Santa's happy 'cause the reindeer didn't give him no guff."

"Santa Gotta Choo Choo" – has a jazzy folk feel. It's a holiday take on "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie," a song originally recorded in 1946 by Louis Jordan And His Tympany Five. The Dan Hicks song tells the tale of the reindeer wanting a break, and so Santa gets himself a train in order to do his job. The piano comes in a couple of minutes into the song, and it's wonderful.

"Somebody Stole My Santa Claus Suit" – starts with a great instrumental introduction, complete with "Jingle Bells" and "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" teases. Then it kicks in with some great lyrics: "Deck the halls and what the hell/I still got my jingle bell/So, sucker, you can keep the suit/'Cause frankly I don't give a hoot." This song is a bit of folk, a bit of swing, a bit of jazz, and just a whole lot of fun. It features an instrumental section that is wonderful. And the female vocalists are delightful as they sing, "Did somebody steal your Santa Claus suit?"

"Carol Of The Bells" – starts as a beautiful rendition, but almost immediately takes a strange bent with what sounds like The Chipmunks. Then it goes into a hip, swinging scat version - with a bit of yodeling thrown in for good measure. This is certainly the coolest, best version of this song ever recorded. (There is even what sounds like a Louis Armstrong impression partway through.) This song is not only a highlight of this album, but will be a highlight of the entire Christmas season this year (and, we can hope, years to come.) "Carol Of The Bells" was composed by Mykola Dmytrovych Leontovych in 1916.

"Run Run Rudolph" – is a classic rock and roll Christmas tune written by Johnny Marks and Marvin Brodie, and made incredibly popular by Chuck Berry. The Dan Hicks And The Hot Licks version is still rock, but acoustic. It features a "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" tease, and some nice work on harmonica by Dan Hicks. It also has a great ending. "Run Run Rudolph" features Dave Bell on guitar.

"Santa's Workshop" – is hilarious. Try not to laugh out loud while listening to it. It's not only the lyrics, but the delivery, as he sings lines like, "Come on, boys, gotta make about a million toys/Gotta paint one red, paint one blue/Paint that one over there blue too." It's the pause before "blue too" that sells it. The song features silly and wonderful backing vocals. And when the song couldn't possibly get any better - or sillier - along comes a kazoo solo.

"Old Fashioned Christmas" – has an undeniable sweetness, while being totally silly. It has some good lyrics, such as "We'll use up last year's wrappings again/Since when is recycling a sin?" And it has a bit of yodeling. The "sanity" section of the song is phenomenal. Really.

"Cool Yule" features more kazoo and some great work on bass. (And am I insane, or one minute and thirty-nine seconds into this song, does it sound very much like the theme to Soap?)

"I've Got Christmas By The Tail" is a Dan Hicks original song that celebrates the holiday (in its own fashion, of course). He sings, "Every year I am the first on the block to tell Santa what to bring" and "I've got Christmas down pat." We all know folks like this, who wait all year for Christmas, who love all the carols, and on and on. But then this song has the wonderful lines, "I'll show Christmas just who is boss/If Christmas doesn't like it, then it's Christmas's loss."

"I Saw Mommy Kussin' Santa Claus" – There are tons of versions of this song out there. But Dan Hicks' take is totally original and refreshing. While still holding true to the spirit of the song, Dan Hicks adds a touch of the cool (which, it turns out, the song was sorely needing). And wow, listen to that guitar. "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" was written by Tommie Connor. The first recording of it was a hit in 1952.

"Here Comes Santa Claus" – This is the coolest version of "Here Comes Santa Claus." It has swing, it has scat, and it has fiddle and some jazzy piano. What more could anyone ask for?

"Under The Mistletoe" – The album concludes with "Under The Mistletoe." Ah yes, a song letting us know where to find romance during the Christmas season. It offers this line of advice: "Just give that green stuff a chance." It's a fun and playful song that has some nice work on fiddle and bass.

Crazy For Christmas is scheduled to be released October 12, 2010 on Surfdog Records. It was produced by Chris Goldsmith, and recorded and mixed by Jimmy Hoyson. Musicians on this album include Dan Hicks on lead vocals, rhythm guitar and percussion; Gonzalo Bergara on rhythm and gypsy lead guitar; Ken Wild on string bass; Greg Bissonette on drums and percussion; John Rosenberg on piano; Malibu Slim on violin; and Lawrence Juber on guitar and dobro. Daria and Roberta Donnay perform backing vocals.

Dan Hicks has been writing and recording music since the late 1960s. In 1965, he joined the San Francisco folk rock group The Charlatans. While still with that band, he created Dan Hicks And His Hot Licks, and their first album was released in 1969. They released three more albums, but disbanded in 1973. In 1998, Dan Hicks signed to Surfdog Records and began recording as Dan Hicks And The Hot Licks again. Dan Hicks And The Hot Licks are going to do a concert tour later this year titled Holiday In Hicksville. At these performances, they will perform Crazy For Christmas in its entirety, as well as doing other Dan Hicks material.

Artist
Dan Hicks & The Hot Licks

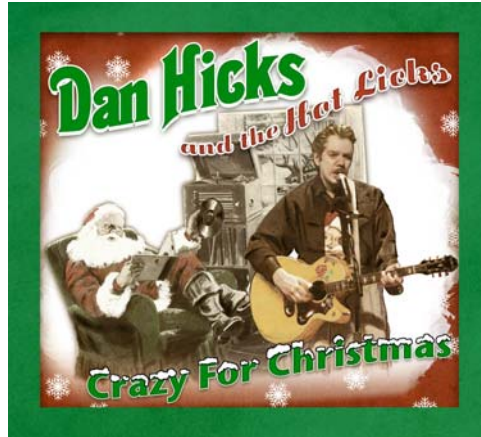
Album
Crazy For Christmas

Label
SurfDog

Oct 10, 2010
by Michael Doherty

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Artist

**Dan Hicks &
The Hot Licks**

Album

Crazy For Christmas

Label

Sufdog

Review by Steve Leggett

Ever since his time with San Francisco's Charlatans in the late 1960s (he was the drummer in the short-lived but influential group), Dan Hicks has been turning out his fascinatingly wry, hip, and jazzy version of country swing, and while he's had no mainstream commercial success (i.e. no big radio hits), he has a loyal and devoted following and now, some 40-plus years later, he's released a delightful holiday album that perfectly spotlights his musical strengths. *Crazy for Christmas* has an easy, unhurried and charming pace to it, with Hicks' assured, relaxed vocals giving this set of skewed originals, parodies, and traditional pieces (albeit run through the Hot Licks wringer) a joyously irreverent charm. The opener, "Christmas Mornin'," sets the stage perfectly, detailing life at the North Pole with Christmas Eve approaching, a place where Rudolph the Reindeer is "finishing up a beer" and Santa has to break up the elves' dice game to get things rolling in the right direction. Then there's "I've Got Christmas by the Tail," which sums up how everyone really wants to feel during one of the most socially demanding and busy times of the year. The traditional holiday fare that Hicks tackles here, like his swinging vocal version of "Carol of the Bells," is wonderfully re-imagined, making this set both a fun and distinctive Christmas album, but also a warm reminder of just how consistent, steady, and poignantly funny Hicks can be; any season of the year.

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A+E Interactive
Bay Area Arts and Entertainment Blog

The Holiday Come to Yoshi's

Posted by Pat May on December 9th, 2009 at 9:52 am

Categorized as Celebrities, Concerts, Music, reviews

<http://blogs.mercurynews.com/aei/2009/12/09/the-holiday-come-to-yoshis/>

There he was, bigger than life, channeling Santa Claus and cracking Tiger Woods jokes on stage Tuesday night, the Bay Area's caroling cut-up, Dan Hicks. In size XXL and sequined Christmas-red dinner jacket, a brown derby and black open-necked nightclub shirt right off the Vegas Strip, Hicks was a sight for sore eyes and a sound for sore ears, the hair too perfect, the pants too white, the voice still too spot-on after all these years.

Hicks has brought his Holiday in Hicksville 2009 ANNUAL EXTRAVAGANZA to Yoshi's in Oakland for two nights (he plays tonight at 8 and 10 p.m for \$26 and \$16 respectively), charming the packed house right out of their Christmas stockings. The whole gang was there – the Lickettes Daria and Roberta on vocals and assorted percussion; Paul Smith on string bass ("A four-time Grammy loser," says Dan), Dave Bell on electric guitar ("Heir to the Taco Bell fortune!"); Richard Chon on mandolin and violin; and special guest, the legendary and octogenarian Bob Dorough on piano and vocals.

Through Dan's own devilish twists on Christmas classics like Rudolph the Bald-Headed Reindeer and romping tunes like Along Comes a Viper, Hicks and his entourage once again gave Yoshi's fans a holiday swingfest they won't soon forget. Catch him tonite if you can.

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[Dan Hicks & the Hot Licks](#)

December 10th, 2007

The [High Noon Saloon](#) was the spot for the *Holidaze in Hicksville* as [Mr. Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks](#) graced our Madison grounds with a true treat, as a matter of fact, this one goes down as a classic. Not only was it the season for holiday cheer as only Dan Hicks can share (I believe the one phrase in the show was lets get these Christmas songs out of the way, hey hey) , but it was also Mr. Hicks' birthday. There was even a cake. Oh yeah there was a show. As expected except better, the show seemed to be more than a show, an experience. Folk swing is somewhat the style of the music, but man.....there was some kicked up blues riffs, so finely timed dance steps and a barrel, check that, a building filled with a humor so sincere to this night that you couldn't go home without feeling connected. There were plenty of old classics to rejoice in...from *I Scare Myself* (which really blew the top off the place)and the nights closer of *How can I Miss You When You Won't go Away*, but for me the stopper was the rendition of the *Tom Waits* song *The Piano Has Been Drinking*. While this show can be compared to others in the long and brilliant career of Dan Hicks, there was so many thrilled audience members that I would have sworn this was there first time witnessing the event that is *Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks*. I also noticed that while the room was filled up nicely, there was plenty of room for some younger ears, I really think that this music and the way it is presented to a crowd is something for the younger crowds to share in. Madison's own [Harmonious Wail](#) and their Gypsy Swing music opened the show and was all that I have heard people say and more. Be sure to check them out also.

[Listen to my first conversation with Dan here.](#)

[Listen to my second conversation with Dan here.](#)



Mr. Dan Hicks and MisterG 12/09/07

Posted by Administrator
Filed in [show/album "G"-views](#)
