



...Holy Night

It's the late 1960s. My parents bring in a new piece of living room furniture, a Magnavox Console Hi-Fi. It's not just a record player, but a *piece of living room furniture* that houses a high-fidelity turntable.

BY KEVIN MEDLIN

Stained a walnut color, it has two faux drawers on the front and two sliding panel doors on top. Inside the panels on the right is the turntable and on the left is the record storage. I can still see it in my mind's eye.

Maybe the warm, nostalgic feeling I have when I think about that console is due to the Christmas season. Every year, immediately after Thanksgiving, Christmas music played on that console turntable at our house right through New Year's Day. I can still hear the stylus making a scratchy path across the vinyl between each song.

Most of the Christmas albums at our house were compilations of various artists: Bing Crosby, Andy Williams, Gene Autry, Perry Como, and Elvis. But it

wasn't the singer so much as it was the Christmas season, the Christmas spirit, and...being a child.

I imagine all that beautiful music meant time away from school, and for special meals, and of course, for presents to come. So, every year, when I hear *White Christmas*, *Rudolph*, *Angels We Have Heard on High*, and even *Sisters* from the movie *White Christmas*, I get that familiar warm feeling.

Last year, however, was different. I needed to make an adjustment to my Christmas spirit. No longer was I able to hear Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen issue a musical warning to "...the mister who comes between me and my sister."

Hearing loss is a challenge, and I am still not used to the effects.

*You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch. You really are a heel.
You're as cuddly as a cactus,
you're as charming as an eel, Mr. Grinch.*

Earlier this week, I made a rare stop at the mall. Next to the entrance sat a familiar sight: a volunteer standing next to a large red kettle, waving a silent bell.

Since I was a child, every time I see the Salvation Army kettle, I drop coins in from my (or most likely someone else's) pocket. Now, instinctively, I reach into my pocket for change.

Inside the mall, I take a few minutes to stroll down to the North Pole. I stand for a few moments and watch Santa greet the children with a beaming face as he mouths a hearty "Ho, Ho, Ho."

From the looks on their faces, the boys and girls are excited to share their wish lists.

Also this week, I watched a captioned version of my childhood favorite, the original cartoon version of *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. I smiled at the sight of poor Max trying to pull the sleigh up Mount Crumpit, but I definitely missed that Tony the Tiger voice singing

*You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch.
You really are a heel.
You're as cuddly as a cactus,
You're as charming as an eel,
Mr. Grinch.*

I am working on it, but I haven't been able to hear Elvis sing *Precious Lord* yet this year.

And, I'm thinking that the candle-light service at church will take on a whole new meaning when the lights go down, the candles are lit, and the congregation sings *Silent Night*.

I reflected on all these things this week, and I realize that I am truly a blessed man. So, I ask you, my friends, to think of me this Christmas when you hear the song *Do You Hear What I Hear?*

But please, when you think of me, smile at the thought because...I do.

I simply need to mentally tune in my Magnavox Console Hi-Fi and replay those Christmas tunes, and those beautiful hymns that will never leave our souls.

While I haven't heard it this year, I know that our Precious Lord will take my hand, lead me on, let me stand.

And, it is true that I will not hear *Silent Night* when the candles are lit, but it will still be a *Holy Night*. I may not hear the heavenly hosts singing "Hallelujah," but I will know that they are there.

All will be calm, all will be bright. The Christ Child so tender and mild will sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace. **HL**



In 2016, an autoimmune disorder claimed Kevin Medlin's ability to hear. Now the recipient of two cochlear implants,

Kevin is an active member of the HLA Fort Worth Chapter and a current student of American Sign Language. Kevin and his wife, Pamela, have been married for more than 36 years. They have two grown children, Elizabeth Cox and Katherine Medlin.

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into



this holiday season

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