

= These Are Special Times =

These Are Special Times is the sixth English @-@ language studio album and the first English @-@ language holiday album by Canadian singer Celine Dion . Released by Sony Music Entertainment on October 30 , 1998 , it features cover versions of popular Christmas tunes and original material . Dion worked with David Foster and Ric Wake , who produced most of the tracks for the album . Other producers include R. Kelly and Bryan Adams . Critics praised Dion 's commitment to the recorded material , as well as the production of the songs .

These Are Special Times was released after two of Dion 's most successful albums , Falling into You (1996) and Let 's Talk About Love (1997) . It includes the US number @-@ one single , " I 'm Your Angel " (duet with R. Kelly) and the Golden Globe winning song , " The Prayer " (also featured in Quest for Camelot) . The album has sold 5 @.@ 4 million copies in the United States as of May 2016 , according to Nielsen SoundScan , and has been certified five @-@ times Platinum by the RIAA . In Canada , the album has sold one million copies and been certified Diamond by the CRIA . The album has sold twelve million copies worldwide and is one of the best @-@ selling Christmas albums of all time .

= = Background = =

Celine Dion released two French @-@ language Christmas albums in her early career : Céline Dion chante Noël (1981) and Chants et contes de Noël (1983) . Later , in 1993 , she recorded " The Christmas Song " which appears on David Foster 's The Christmas Album . The next year , Dion was featured on Alvin and the Chipmunks ' " Petit Papa Noël " which is on their album A Very Merry Chipmunk . In 1996 , she recorded " Brahms ' Lullaby " for the compilation For Our Children Too to benefit the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation . " The Christmas Song " and " Brahms ' Lullaby " were included on These Are Special Times in 1998 .

= = Content = =

Celine Dion worked on These Are Special Times with her longtime partners David Foster and Ric Wake , who produced most of the songs . The album contains seven original compositions : " Don 't Save It All for Christmas Day " (co @-@ written by Celine Dion ; covered by Avalon in 2000 and Clay Aiken in 2004) , " Another Year Has Gone By " (written and produced by Bryan Adams) , a solo version of " The Magic of Christmas Day " (recorded in 1999 as a duet with Rosie O 'Donnell and included on a charity album , A Rosie Christmas) , " The Prayer " (duet with Andrea Bocelli ; each artist sang it solo on the 1998 soundtrack to Quest for Camelot) , " Christmas Eve , " " These Are the Special Times " (written by Diane Warren ; covered by Christina Aguilera in 2000) and " I 'm Your Angel " (duet with R. Kelly , written and produced by Kelly) . Other tracks include inspired arrangements of standards like " O Holy Night , " " Blue Christmas " (Diana Krall on acoustic piano) , " Adeste Fideles , " " Ave Maria " and new versions of the modern classics " Happy Xmas (War Is Over) " and " Feliz Navidad . " On the latter track and " Les cloches du hameau , " Dion is joined by her family . In October 2007 , the album was re @-@ released as a Collector 's Edition that includes a DVD of Dion 's CBS television special for These Are Special Times .

= = Promotion = =

Celine Dion promoted the album in the United States with a television special which aired on CBS on November 25 , 1998 . It included two musical guests : Andrea Bocelli on " The Prayer " and Rosie O 'Donnell on " Do You Hear What I Hear ? . " Dion also performed album tracks (" O Holy Night , " " These Are the Special Times ") , her number @-@ one hits (" The Power of Love , " " Because You Loved Me , " " My Heart Will Go On ") , as well as favorites (" Let 's Talk About Love , " " The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face ") . These Are Special Times was a television ratings champion , ranking number @-@ one for the night and drawing an audience of more than sixteen

million viewers . The show was nominated for two Emmy Awards . Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli also performed " The Prayer " at the 41st Grammy Awards on February 24 , 1999 and at the 71st Academy Awards on March 21 , 1999 . She also performed " Blue Christmas " at " The Today Show " and " Another Year Has Gone By " at " The Rosie O 'Donnell Show " and with Bryan Adams at the " Late Show with David Letterman " . " The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire) " was performed in 1992 at the TV show " Good Morning America " , in 1993 with David Foster on his TV special , " David Foster 's Christmas Album " on NBC on December 10 , 1993 and at The Rockefeller Center on November 28 , 2007 . Additionally , Dion performed " Don 't Save It All for Christmas Day " and " Adeste Fideles (O Come All Ye Faithful) " at the 2009 Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade , which aired on ABC .

= = Singles = =

" I 'm Your Angel " was released as the first single from the album . It became Dion 's fourth number @-@ one on the US Billboard Hot 100 , topping the chart for six consecutive weeks . On December 9 , 1998 , it was certified Platinum by the RIAA for shipment of one million copies in the United States . The song was also successful in Europe , peaking at number three in the United Kingdom . In March 1999 , " The Prayer " (duet with Andrea Bocelli) was sent to adult contemporary radio stations in the United States and peaked at number twenty @-@ two on the Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks . In February 2008 , Dion recorded a live version of this song in a duet with Josh Groban . Thanks to the digital sales , the track entered the Billboard Hot 100 at number seventy .

= = Critical reception = =

These Are Special Times garnered generally positive reviews from music critics . Paul Verna from Billboard gave it a very positive review , praising Dion 's maturity and the album 's production . He wrote , " sounding at complete ease and wielding a wildly creative wand , an ever @-@ maturing Dion conjures up surprise on what should be regarded as her next " big " album . " Verna noted that this " grade @-@ A effort " is " no ordinary holiday project . " He praised " grandiose versions of standards " (" O Holy Night , " " Adeste Fideles ") , " modern classics " (" Happy Xmas (War Is Over) , " " Feliz Navidad ") and " thoughtfully produced original compositions " (" Another Year Has Gone By , " " Don 't Save It All for Christmas Day ") . According to him , other highlights include " The Prayer , " a " gorgeous duet " with Andrea Bocelli , the " Phil Spector @-@ esque " " Christmas Eve , " and a " sparkling reading " of " Ave Maria . "

Chuck Taylor from Billboard also praised " I 'm Your Angel , " a duet with R. Kelly . He wrote that " this wonderfully restrained ballad delights with the most graceful vocal performances either of these artists has ever offered to radio . " Taylor commented , " what raises the roof is the tune 's elegant , epic instrumental base , which includes sweeping strings , a soulful choir , and gentle but determined percussive drive . " He continued , that " I 'm Your Angel " " sells big at the bridge , where the instrumentation drops and Kelly and Dion harmonize in a gorgeous minor key ? it truly makes the song . " Chuck Taylor also reviewed " The Prayer " , calling it " a breathtaking , ultra @-@ lush song , and the tour de force combination of Dion and Bocelli [which] will send a half @-@ dozen chills up your spine . " Although he felt that the song is " an unorthodox track for the radio " , Taylor called it " affecting , " " heartwarming , " " absolutely exquisite " and " one of Dion 's most radiant performances ever . "

Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic stated that " any fan of Dion , or of ' 90s adult contemporary pop in general , should find this [album] very enjoyable . " Although according to him , " at times , the production is too slick " and " at other times Dion 's vocals are a little mannered , " overall , These Are Special Times " is very effective , because the songs are good and she 's committed to the material . " Erlewine wrote that These Are Special Times is " an especially successful holiday album since Dion wisely balances " popular carols (" Blue Christmas , " " The Christmas Song , " " Feliz Navidad ") with new songs (" I 'm Your Angel , " " Don 't Save It All for Christmas ") , hymns (

" Adeste Fideles , " " Ave Maria ") , and Christmas songs with a distinct religious theme (" The Prayer , " " O Holy Night ") . "

= = Commercial reception = =

These Are Special Times debuted at number four on the US Billboard 200 , selling 126 @, @ 000 copies . The next week , it became a greatest gainer , jumping to number three and selling 163 @, @ 000 units . In its third week , despite selling 210 @, @ 000 copies , These Are Special Times fell to number five . In the fourth week , thanks to Dion 's CBS television special , the album rose to number three , with a 94 % sales increase (409 @, @ 000 copies) becoming a greatest gainer again . The next week , it moved to its peak position on the Billboard 200 , number two , with sales of 366 @, @ 000 units . These Are Special Times tied Amy Grant 's 1992 Home for Christmas as the highest @-@ charting holiday album ever by a female artist . It stayed at number two for the second week , selling 413 @, @ 000 copies . In the seventh week , These Are Special Times reached its highest weekly sales of 462 @, @ 000 copies , despite falling to number three . In the last week inside the top ten , the album fell to number five selling another 461 @, @ 000 copies . On the Top Holiday Albums , it topped the chart for nine consecutive weeks .

These Are Special Times became the best @-@ selling holiday album of 1998 in the US with a total of 2 @, @ 684 @, @ 000 copies sold . Dion 's album also sold more copies in its first year of release than any other holiday album by a female artist . On December 6 , 2005 , the album was certified five @-@ times Platinum by the RIAA for shipment of five million copies in the US . On November 16 , 2008 , it also became the first holiday album by a female artist to top the five million mark in Nielsen SoundScan history . These Are Special Times is also the highest selling Christmas album by an artist born outside the US . It is the fourth best @-@ selling Christmas album of the entire Nielsen SoundScan era with US sales of 5 @. @ 4 million copies .

In Canada , These Are Special Times peaked at number one . The album shipped one million copies and was certified Diamond by the CRIA . In Japan , the album reached number four and exceeded sales of more than 500 @, @ 000 copies . These Are Special Times was also successful in Australasia and Europe , hitting the top ten in most countries and peaking at number one in Switzerland and Norway . It has sold twelve million copies worldwide , and is one of the best @-@ selling Christmas album of all time .

= = Awards = =

These Are Special Times received the 1999 Japan Gold Disc Award for International Pop Album of the Year . At the 56th Golden Globe Awards , " The Prayer " won the award for Best Original Song . " I 'm Your Angel " and " The Prayer " were nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals at the 41st and 42nd Grammy Awards , respectively . " The Prayer " was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Song at the 71st Academy Awards .

= = Track listing = =

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications and sales = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits taken from AllMusic .

= = Release history = =