

= Wrapped in Red =

Wrapped in Red is the sixth studio album by American recording artist Kelly Clarkson , released on October 25 , 2013 , by RCA Records . The album is a follow @-@ up to her first greatest hits album , Greatest Hits ? Chapter One , and its companion extended play , The Smoakstack Sessions Vol . 2 . Produced by Greg Kurstin , it is her first Christmas album and her first record to be solely released by RCA . Wrapped in Red consists of sixteen tracks , featuring five co @-@ penned original songs and eleven cover versions of Christmas standards and carols , two of which are duets featuring recording artists Ronnie Dunn , Reba McEntire and Trisha Yearwood .

Weary of constantly being asked for her primary genre , Clarkson had long @-@ desired to record a Christmas album as a means to defy genre limitations . She commissioned Kurstin , who had studied jazz music under the tutelage of Jaki Byard , to produce the entire album . Drawing inspirations from the soundtracks to the features A Charlie Brown Christmas and White Christmas , as well as the Christmas albums by Mariah Carey , McEntire , and Phil Spector , they experimented on various styles and sounds using Spector 's famed Wall of Sound technique to a create a contemporary holiday theme to classics . The Christmas music of Wrapped in Red comprises a variety of the genres such pop , jazz , country , and soul , marking a departure from the pop rock sound established from her previous studio albums ; while its lyrics share a singular theme of the color red , which represents a plethora of emotions during the holidays .

Wrapped in Red debuted on the Billboard 200 chart at number 3 and topped the Billboard Top Holiday Albums chart with 70 @,@ 000 copies sold in its first week of release . For nine consecutive weeks , Wrapped in Red stayed on the top ten of both charts and was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America and Music Canada . By the end of 2013 , it became the year 's best @-@ selling Christmas release in the United States and the second best @-@ selling Christmas release in Canada . Its lead single " Underneath the Tree " became an international top forty Christmas hit song and was radio 's most @-@ played new holiday song of 2013 . In promoting Wrapped in Red , she appeared in red dresses on various televised appearances ; and filmed an accompanying television special , Kelly Clarkson 's Cautionary Christmas Music Tale , at The Venetian Las Vegas , which premiered on NBC on December 11 , 2013 . In 2014 , Clarkson released the title track as the second single and hosted an annual Christmas benefit concert , Miracle on Broadway , at the Bridgestone Arena on December 20 , 2014 .

= = Background = =

Clarkson had expressed interest in recording a Christmas album for years , having recorded various Christmas songs such as " Oh Holy Night " and " My Grown Up Christmas List " on the American Idol : The Great Holiday Classics (2003) , " I 'll Be Home for Christmas " on iTunes Session (2011) , and being featured on Blake Shelton 's Christmas album Cheers , It 's Christmas (2012) . Weary of constantly being asked for her primary genre , she felt that recording a Christmas album would finally pave a way for her to explore other different genres . She remarked , " I always get asked what genre I 'm in : ' Is this country or pop or rock ? What are you ? ' And what 's cool about making the Christmas album was , ' Oh , there are no limitations ! We can do whatever we want ! ' " . She further added , " The thing about Christmas is that it almost doesn 't matter what mood you 're in or what kind of a year you 've had ? it 's a fresh start . I 'm going to clear the air and take stock of the good that 's happened . "

Discussions about making her sixth studio album being a Christmas record began on December 2012 , a month after releasing her first greatest hits album , Greatest Hits ? Chapter One . Having found the opportunity to do so , Clarkson commissioned producer and multi @-@ instrumentalist Greg Kurstin , whom she had previously collaborated with on her albums Stronger and Chapter One , to solely produce the whole album . Despite having been raised in a Jewish faith and unfamiliar with Christmas songs , Kurstin still agreed to produce the project . As a result , the record marked the second time her studio album only had a single producer (the first being David Kahne solely producing My December in 2007) . It also marked the fourth time Kurstin had solely produced an

entire studio album apart from being a member of the musical groups The Bird and the Bee and Geggy Tah (the first three being Lily Allen 's It 's Not Me , It 's You in 2009 , Sia 's We Are Born in 2010 , and The Shins ' Port of Morrow in 2012) .

= = Recording = =

Recording sessions of the basic instrumental tracks for *Wrapped in Red* took place in Kurstin 's Echo Studio in Los Angeles while orchestral sessions were recorded at EastWest Studios in Hollywood and featured vocals recorded in The Barn studio in Nashville . In recording tracks for the album , Clarkson and Kurstin wanted to showcase as many different styles as they could by experimenting in various sounds and styles to create fresh , contemporary sound to classic @-@ sounding music . He recalled , " It was a lot of fun for us because we got to go back to our roots . When Kelly started singing , it was clear she had the chops and had been trained to do anything . " Further adding , " We really experimented . It was so much fun and liberating . And it pays off . " Kurstin , who studied with jazz musician Jaki Byard at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music , recruited various jazz and soul musicians such as James Gadson , Kevin Dukes , Roy McCurdy , and Bill Withers to perform on the record to resonate a Memphis soul sound . He also collaborated with Joseph Trapanese to arrange and conduct a chamber orchestra .

In providing instrumentation for the record , Kurstin used all of his instruments such as a Mellotron and a Chamberlin , taping them from a distance to stimulate the Wall of Sound , a recording technique originally developed by Phil Spector that was popular in the early 1960s . He enlisted Clarkson to provide all the background vocals herself . Clarkson , who grew up singing in a chorus , was pleased with the aspect ; saying , " Blending is something I knew how to do from childhood . Sometimes I 'd have to do an alto instead of a soprano because they needed a bigger sound . But I 've never had to do anything like this before ? doing all my backup vocals , essentially being my own choir . " Together , they began to record in May 2013 and continued through the summer of that year , beginning by recording " White Christmas " with Clarkson in the vocal booth and with Kurstin on a piano . She commented , " The production is all him . I would be just like ' Hey , can we make this more jazz ? Hey , can we make this more bluesy . And he just , like Harry Potter , made this happen . It 's so weird . "

= = Composition = =

= = = Theme and influences = = =

Clarkson has cited the color red as the album 's only theme . A color traditionally associated with Christmas , she affiliated the color to various emotions in the holidays . Wanting to stray away from her usual pop sound , she described *Wrapped in Red* 's music as a representation to explore different genres such as jazz , country and Memphis soul . She recalled , " What 's cool about Christmas albums is you can do jazz , rock and roll , you can do pop , you can do blues , like you can do all that stuff and it works ? cause it 's all classic and it 's Christmasy sounding . " She also noted that the album 's multitude of styles positively contributes to her artistic goal , saying , " My best friend from childhood heard it and said , ' This is what you sound like , before everything else . ' And I agree , It 's my core sound . Back in the day , when artists came out with things like " Fall to Pieces " and " Bridge over Troubled Water " , those songs transcended genres . It wasn 't , ' Where is it going to fit ? ' You catered to whatever the song calls for . And that 's exactly what I did ? without having to have an umbrella for everything . "

In gathering inspirations for *Wrapped in Red* , Clarkson started by listening to Bing Crosby 's and Rosemary Clooney 's soundtracks from the 1954 feature film *White Christmas* as well as Mariah Carey 's *Merry Christmas* (1994) and *Merry Christmas to You* (1997) by Reba McEntire . While Kurstin , who used to play in a jazz band , took influences from *A Charlie Brown Christmas* by the Vince Guaraldi Trio and *A Christmas Gift for You* by Phil Spector as his inspirations , which resulted

to the album 's Wall of Sound resonance . Clarkson also cited that her relationship with her then @-@ fiancé Brandon Blackstock had inspired some of the album 's lyrical content .

= = = Song analysis = = =

Clarkson shares writing credits on all five original songs on *Wrapped in Red* , some of which were written in December 2012 to avoid writing Christmas tunes during the 2013 summer season . She co @-@ wrote the opening and the title track , " *Wrapped in Red* " , with Ashley Arrison , Aben Eubanks , and Shane McAnally . A Christmas ballad , the song was inspired by a scene in the holiday feature film *Love Actually* (2003) , in which someone confesses unrequited love towards another . Critics singled out the track the one that resonates the Wall of Sound the most . The second track , " *Underneath the Tree* " , was written by Clarkson and Kurstin , making it the first time they had co @-@ written a track together . Clarkson remarked , " Greg and I have worked a lot together , but usually I just come in and I just sing . We 've never have actually written a song together at this point . And he and I were like , ' Let 's just try to write something for the record . " RCA Records chief executive Peter Edge remarked that its release as a single was partly inspired by the success of " *All I Want for Christmas Is You* " by Carey . The following track is a rendition of the holiday standard " *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* " , which Clarkson had selected for its saccharine content .

Clarkson favored " *Run Run Rudolph* " as her favorite classic , saying " Just because it got to be a little more rock and roll . " She also remarked that " *Please Come Home for Christmas (Bells Will Be Ringing)* " , was the first song selected for inclusion after her mother 's recommendation and the song 's melancholic lyrics . Written by Clarkson and Eubanks , " *Every Christmas* " , was the first song to be written for the album . She revealed that the song narrates of her holiday life prior to meeting Blackstock , McEntire 's stepson , saying " *Every Christmas* , I was just like , ' This is going to be different , right ? I 'm going to actually find someone and not be pathetically alone for the rest of my life ? ' " . The seventh track is a cover of Elvis Presley 's " *Blue Christmas* " . Its follow @-@ up , a rendition of " *Baby , It 's Cold Outside* " , features Ronnie Dunn . Clarkson had approached Dunn thinking that his personality suited the song 's content well , saying " Like , it 's straight @-@ up his personality to say all of that to try and get you to stay , and have a drink . " " *Winter Dreams (Brandon 's Song)* " was written by Clarkson , Arrison , and Eubanks as a companion piece to " *Every Christmas* " . Dedicated to Blackstock , the song accounts her holiday after meeting him . She remarked , " Christmas changes , it morphs , it comes to life a little more ? It ? s just a happier time . "

The tenth track , " *White Christmas* " , was the first song to be recorded for *Wrapped in Red* . A cover of Rodgers and Hammerstein 's " *My Favorite Things* " follows up as the eleventh track . Clarkson opted for the Broadway performance of the song to stray away from Julie Andrews 's version , citing " I think you shouldn 't go near anywhere of what she 's doing because she 's so good . " Clarkson and Kurstin co @-@ wrote " *4 Carats* " with Cathy Dennis and Livvi Franc . Originally written a pop song , they converted it as a Christmas song to fit the album 's theme , describing it as a crossover between Eartha Kitt 's " *Santa Baby* " (1953) and Madonna 's " *Material Girl* " (1984) . A rendition of Imogen Heap 's " *Just for Now* " was described by Clarkson as her highly dysfunctional environment , saying " Can we just stop for like five minutes and have like a normal Christmas setting ? " The song begins by sampling the melody of the Christmas tune " *Carol of the Bells* " . The closing track , a rendition of the traditional carol " *Silent Night* " , features McEntire and Trisha Yearwood and ends in an a capella setting between the trio . In addition , two tracks were also included in the deluxe edition of the album : the first , Clarkson 's cover of " *I 'll Be Home for Christmas* " from iTunes Session ; and the second , her rendition of the first stanza of the ecclesiastical hymn " *Oh Come , Oh Come Emmanuel* " .

= = Release = =

Wrapped in Red was first released internationally on October 25 , 2013 by RCA Records through

Sony Music Entertainment . It then received a North American release on October 29 , 2013 by RCA as part of its holiday promotional campaign with the soundtracks to the feature films Black Nativity and The Best Man Holiday , with Wrapped in Red being promulgated as the one that will transcend formats and become a new holiday classic . In an interview with Billboard , RCA marketing executive Aaron Borns remarked that the album was their main release of the holidays , quoting " The angle on this album is that , like all great Christmas records , it 's about amazing vocal performances . That 's what this is intended to be @-@ an album launched this year but timeless and genre @-@ defying . " In preparation for its release in the United States , RCA shipped a half @-@ million units on Amazon.com and Target , which exclusively released a deluxe edition . A red LP pressing of Wrapped in Red by United Record Pressing followed the CD release on November 25 , 2013 , marking the first time an album by Clarkson was released on a vinyl record . A deluxe LP and CD edition was also released on the Sony Music store which included a scarf , a holiday ornament , and a snow globe , all of which were decorated in red as inspired from the album . A international promotion campaign was also planned for Clarkson , but was later halted due her pregnancy . On October 21 , 2014 , Wrapped in Red was reissued by RCA with a special edition CD + DVD release exclusive to Walmart stores in the United States . A green LP pressing of the album will also have a limited 500 @-@ copy release on December 9 , 2014 .

= = = Promotion = = =

On October 15 , 2013 , " White Christmas " was released as a promotional single from Wrapped in Red . Three days after , " Underneath the Tree " premiered on Clarkson 's Vevo channel . A television Christmas special , titled Kelly Clarkson 's Cautionary Christmas Music Tale , was filmed by concert director Hamish Hamilton on October 30 , 2013 , the eve after its street date , at The Venetian Las Vegas . A pastiche of A Christmas Carol , the Christmas special featured live performances of selections from Wrapped in Red (one of which features McEntire and Yearwood) . Produced by Done and Dusted , Cautionary Christmas Music Tale premiered on NBC in the United States and Global in Canada on December 11 , 2013 , being pegged by RCA as the album 's primary promotional medium . NBC 's premiere broadcast of the special was seen by 5 @.@ 31 million viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research . It also received a 1 @.@ 4 share among adults between the ages of 18 to 49 , generated NBC ? s second biggest overall audience its time slot . NBC had also a rerun broadcast of Cautionary Christmas Music Tale on Christmas Day , which was seen by an additional 3 @.@ 54 million viewers .

Clarkson had also promoted Wrapped in Red in various televised performances , all of which she was dressed in red attire . She first performed " Underneath the Tree " on the The Today Show on November 26 , 2013 . On December 4 , 2013 , she performed " Run Run Rudolph " and " Blue Christmas " on the Christmas at Rockefeller Center television special . Clarkson had then performed " Underneath the Tree " on more televised events : such as on the fifth season of the The Voice on December 3 , 2013 , The Ellen DeGeneres Show on December 5 , 2013 , and on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon on December 12 , 2013 . On December 25 , 2013 , Clarkson returned to The Today Show on its Christmas Day broadcast , performing " Blue Christmas " . Selected tracks from the album were also used in advertisements , such as " Run Run Rudolph " , which was used in a Belk holiday advertisement , and " Underneath the Tree " , which was featured in an Amazon.com and Amazon Kindle Fire HDX advertisement with an appearance by Clarkson performing the song . On December 20 , 2014 , She will host a Christmas concert , Miracle on Broadway , at the Bridgestone Arena . An annual Christmas benefit concert , Miracle on Broadway , will feature live performances of various Christmas songs by McEntire , Yearwood , Garth Brooks , Ronnie Dunn , Kacey Musgraves , Hayley Williams , Charles Esten , and Meghan Trainor , some of whom will also join Clarkson in performing selections from Wrapped in Red .

Wrapped in Red 's lead single , " Underneath the Tree " , was released to radio airplay on November 5 , 2013 . Praised in its initial release , music critics approvingly compared the song to " All I Want for Christmas is You " and blazoned it as a future Christmas standard . Reviewing for Slant Magazine , Sal Cinquemani wrote that track is likely to become Clarkson 's very own

contemporary standard ; while The Independent 's Hugh Montgomery applauded it as " a winner on all fronts . " After debuting on the Billboard Holiday 100 chart at number 34 , it became holiday top ten hit by peaking at number eight on the chart . It also topped the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart for four consecutive weeks , becoming Clarkson 's third track and the fifteenth holiday song to top the chart . " Underneath the Tree " also charted on the main Billboard Hot 100 chart at number seventy @-@ eight and became a top forty hit internationally : including the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 chart , the Dutch Top 40 chart , and the Official UK Singles Chart . USA Today reported that " Underneath the Tree " was American radio 's most @-@ played new holiday song of 2013 , while Edison Media Research reported that the single was the first holiday song to receive a considerable support on mainstream contemporary hit radio in almost 20 years . Wrapped in Red 's second single , the title track , was serviced to radio airplay on November 25 , 2014 . On the week ending December 28 , 2014 , it debuted on the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart at number 11 on the week ending December 13 , 2014 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the album received an average score of 73 , based on 6 reviews , and scoring higher than any other album by Clarkson . AllMusic 's senior editor Stephen Thomas Erlewine gave it a three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars . He described its uptempo arrangements , as well as Clarkson 's vocal performance , as " bold and brassy " and its mid @-@ tempo arrangements as " even more alluring " . He also noted the track selection " favors the bold , " but that " she fares well in this setting , always sounding like the strongest element in the mix " Towards the end of his review , he wrote that " Perhaps the concept and execution are conventional , but even in this utterly expected setting , Clarkson retains her fiery , individual spirit , and that 's what makes Wrapped in Red appealing : to the letter , it delivers what it promises . " Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine also gave it a similar rating . He noted that the album " largely offers a respite from the pop @-@ rock template she 's been relentlessly pursuing since Breakaway , with less shouting and more of the varied range and texture on full display that helped coronate her the winner of the inaugural season of American Idol . For better or worse , a decade of recording and touring has roughed up the edges of her voice , lending a lived @-@ in quality that imbues lyrics about love and longing with an authenticity that might have otherwise been missing had she recorded these songs just a few years earlier . "

NPR 's Ken Tucker described the album as a " glossy but heartfelt work " and approvingly compared its contrasting philosophy to Nick Lowe 's Quality Street : A Seasonal Selection for All the Family , both of which he described as " will put you in a holiday mood " . Matt Casarino of PopMatters gave the album a generally favorable review , claiming that " Clarkson plays it safe and spends too much time showing off her upper register , but Wrapped in Red is a warm and romantic addition to the Christmas pop Zeitgeist , " adding " Wrapped in Red doesn't need edge ; it's just dynamic and varied enough to be satisfying , and it's light @-@ years better than any of the whitewashed Christmas crap Simon Cowell has inflicted on the world " . Sarah Rodman of The Boston Globe gave a favorable review , particularly lauding " Underneath the Tree " , and described Clarkson 's rendering the Christmas standards as " fairly straight " . She added , " She starts gently on " Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas " before belting out the money notes . She ambles assuredly through the soulful favorite " Please Come Home for Christmas (Bells Will Be Ringing) " and hangs by the piano for a torchy ? White Christmas . " Newsday 's music columnist Glenn Gamboa wrote that " Clarkson handles it all expertly ? hitting remarkably high notes on " Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas " and swinging jazzily on " Baby It 's Cold Outside " with Dunn . The new songs make Wrapped in Red a real gift , as the title track and " Underneath the Tree " channel the Phil Spector Christmas albums ; and " 4 Carats " somehow blends " Stronger " and " Santa Baby " . Reviewing for HitFix , Melinda Newman gave the album an " A " rating , praising

Clarkson 's vocal performances and noting that she and Kurstin " have clearly studied legendary Christmas albums of yore ? most notably Spector 's A Christmas Gift For You and Andy Williams ' Merry Christmas ? to lovingly recreate Christmas standards , as well as craft new ones in the image of those sets . " Chris Klimek of Slate declared *Wrapped in Red* as the best of 2013 's new Christmas records , noting for its vintage sound . He also observed that its five original tracks , most notably " *Wrapped in Red* " and " *Underneath the Tree* " , have reasonable odds of remaining in the yuletide rotation five years from now . In his review for The New York Times , Jon Caramanica wrote that Clarkson is very likely the only singer working in pop with a real possibility of creating a modern holiday classic along the lines of Carey 's " *All I Want for Christmas Is You* . " and remarked that her takes on familiar songs , however accomplished , are " also faithful in the way that someone mindful of pop history would be . "

= = = Commercial performance = = =

Wrapped in Red became a commercial success in the United States . Prior to its release , music commercial analysts predicted that the album would likely sell at least 60 @, @ 000 copies in its first week of release in the region , and foresaw it to be the front @-@ runner as the bestselling holiday release of the season . On the week ending November 16 , 2013 , it debuted on the Billboard 200 chart at number 3 with 70 @, @ 000 copies sold in all retailers , a 93 @, @ 000 decrease from Stronger 's first week sales of 163 @, @ 000 copies in 2011 . Nielsen Music analyst Dave Bakula attributed its low performance to the falling market share of the holiday music in general , which saw 3 @. @ 8 percent decrease in 2012 . The album 's chart debut on the Billboard 200 earned Clarkson her sixth consecutive top three studio album as well as the highest debut for a Christmas record by a female artist since Susan Boyle 's first Christmas album *The Gift* debuted at the top of the chart in 2010 . *Wrapped in Red* also debuted three other different charts , most notably at the top of the Billboard Top Holiday Albums chart . On the week ending November 30 , 2013 , by charting at number six on the Billboard 200 , the album became the lone Sony release inside the chart 's top ten , with the others being Universal Music Group releases .

Despite its modest debut week , *Wrapped in Red* began to gain traction at the beginning of the holiday season , selling up to 131 @, @ 000 copies during the Thanksgiving week . It experienced its best sales week after benefiting from NBC 's premiere broadcast of *Cautionary Christmas Music Tale* , selling up to 136 @, @ 000 copies on its seventh week of release . For nine consecutive weeks , it stayed in the top ten of the Billboard 200 , the most by any studio album by Clarkson . On December 5 , 2013 , the album was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America , making it her fifth platinum studio album . *Wrapped in Red* subsequently became the bestselling Christmas release of 2013 by selling over 763 @, @ 000 copies , according to Nielsen Soundscan , making her the first American female artist to have the number @-@ one Christmas album of the Soundscan era . Twelve of the album cuts from *Wrapped in Red* have also entered the Billboard Holiday Digital Songs chart during its first week of release ? led by " *Silent Night* " , " *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* " , and " *Underneath the Tree* " at numbers one , two , and four , respectively . Other songs have also appeared in various Billboard charts throughout the holiday season : songs such as " *Blue Christmas* " and " *Please Come Home for Christmas* " charted on the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart , peaking at numbers 5 and 6 , respectively ; whereas " *My Favorite Things* " , " *Run Run Rudolph* " , " *Please Come Home for Christmas* " , " *Silent Night* " and " *Wrapped in Red* " peaked on the Billboard Canada AC chart at numbers eight , seven , 14 , 22 , and 49 , respectively . Tracks such as " *My Favorite Things* " have charted on the Billboard Mexico Inglés Airplay chart at number 49 ; while " *Silent Night* " attained a position in both the Billboard Holiday 100 and the Billboard Hot Country Songs charts , peaking at numbers 86 and 51 , respectively . Amazon.com listed *Wrapped in Red* as their second bestselling album during the holiday season , and listed it as their sixth bestselling title of 2013 . The album has sold 785 @, @ 300 copies in the US as of November 2014 . And in 2014 peaked at 7 on the holiday chart .

Internationally , *Wrapped in Red* had a relatively limited commercial performance . In Canada , the album debuted on the Billboard Canadian Albums chart at number 6 on the week ending November

16 , 2013 , making it her fifth top ten debut on the Nielsen @-@ tracked chart . It peaked on the chart at number 5 on the week ending December 28 , 2013 . Wrapped in Red became the second bestselling Christmas album of 2013 in Canada with 67 @,@ 000 copies sold in the region , behind A Christmas Gift to You by Johnny Reid . In Australia , the album debuted on the ARIA Albums Chart at number 82 on the week ending November 4 , 2013 , and peaked at number 29 on the week ending December 30 , 2013 . In Switzerland , it debuted on the Schweizer Hitparade at number 97 on the week ending November 10 , 2013 . In the United Kingdom , Wrapped in Red charted on the Official UK Albums Chart at number 65 on the week ending December 14 , 2013 . Despite its limited performance , Sony Corporation listed the album as their fifth bestselling release worldwide during the holiday season , which included albums , album cut tracks , and singles sales .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks were produced by Greg Kurstin , with vocal production on " Every Christmas " made by Jason Halbert .

Note

" Just for Now " contains a portion of the composition " Carol of the Bells " , written by Peter J. Wilhousky .

Tracks from the concert DVD were filmed from the television special Kelly Clarkson 's Cautionary Christmas Music Tale .

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits lifted from the album 's liner notes .

Instruments

Production

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =