

= Underneath the Tree =

" Underneath the Tree " is a song by American recording artist Kelly Clarkson , from her sixth studio album and first Christmas album , *Wrapped in Red* ( 2013 ) . Written by Clarkson along with Greg Kurstin , who handled its production , it is a Christmas @-@ themed song that sings of gratitude for companionship during the holidays , in which the beloved is being referred as the only present needed " underneath the tree " . Accompanied by various instrumental sounds , the song prominently incorporates a Wall of Sound treatment along with sleigh bells and bell chimes to resonate a holiday atmosphere . " Underneath the Tree " was first released to Adult Contemporary radio stations on November 5 , 2013 , by RCA Records as the lead single from the album .

" Underneath the Tree " has been praised by music critics , who considered it as the main highlight of *Wrapped in Red* and lauded its potential to be a holiday classic . They also complimentarily compared it to the 1994 modern Christmas standard " All I Want for Christmas Is You " by Mariah Carey . Three weeks after its release , the song topped the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart and attained a top ten position on the Billboard Holiday 100 chart . It also attained a chart position on the national Billboard Hot 100 chart and became top forty hit in Canada , the Netherlands , South Korea , and the United Kingdom .

Filed by English director Hamish Hamilton , the accompanying music video for the song features a live performance from the television special *Kelly Clarkson 's Cautionary Christmas Music Tale* at The Venetian Las Vegas . Apart from the television special , Clarkson has also performed it in various televised performances , such as *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* and the American singing competition *The Voice* .

= = Production and composition = =

After recording tracks for her greatest hits compilation , *Greatest Hits ? Chapter One* , Clarkson began discussing with her record label RCA Records about plans for her sixth studio album being a Christmas release in late 2012 , during which she also began to write original Christmas material . Greg Kurstin , whom she had previously collaborated with , was approached by Clarkson to produce the album ; and together , they co @-@ wrote the tracks " Underneath the Tree " and " 4 Carats " . " Underneath the Tree " was produced by Kurstin , who also played most of the instruments , including a mellotron and a Chamberlin , to evoke a Phil Spector 's Wall of Sound treatment ? a sound that Billboard and HitFix noticed upon hearing the song . He also had Clarkson provide all the voices in it , including all its backing vocals . She recalled the experience as new , stating , " I 've never had to do anything like this before ? doing all my backup vocals , essentially being my own choir . "

" Underneath the Tree " is an uptempo big band @-@ style Christmas and pop song written by Clarkson and Kurstin . It is one of the five original songs recorded for *Wrapped in Red* . According to the sheet notes at Musicnotes published by EMI Music Publishing , the song was written in the key of E ? major , in which the vocal range spans from E ? 4 to G5 . Apart from the Wall of Sound , various other sounds , such as sleigh bells and bell chimes , are also prominently heard on the song , which features a saxophone solo on the bridge .

= = Release and reception = =

On October 18 , 2013 , Clarkson premiered " Underneath the Tree " on her Vevo channel . On November 5 , 2013 , RCA Records released it as a single on Adult Contemporary radio stations in the United States , while also planning to release it on Mainstream Pop stations . It was then released as a digital download in the United Kingdom on November 22 , 2013 , and in the United States on December 9 , 2013 . A digital EP containing remixes of the song was released internationally on December 17 , 2013 .

= = = Critical response = = =

" Underneath the Tree " has received critical acclaim from various music critics on its release , who lauded it as main highlight of *Wrapped in Red* and a prospective Christmas standard . Billboard 's Marisa Fox called it as the album 's " biggest surprise " , and described it as an optimistic tune that has Clarkson powering through Darlene Love @-@ style vocals . While Mikael Wood of the Los Angeles Times 's described it as a remarkably cheery single . In her review , Christina Vinson of Taste of Country remarked that the track " has everything a Christmas song could want : a jazzy , big band sound , saxophone and bells ringing , all bottled up in an optimistic and catchy holiday track " and said that Clarkson " shines " , as her " strong vocals are needed to offset the snazzy production and chorus . " In his review , Idolator 's Carl Williot wrote that the song " sounds instantly familiar ? sleigh bells , laments about a lonely Christmas day , a sax solo ? but with a tightly coiled hook and Clarkson ? s transcendent voice , the whole thing is kind of invigorating . " Sarah Rodman of The Boston Globe called it as bouncy , cooing number tailor @-@ made to soundtrack sleigh rides , and named it as the best track on the album .

Critics also approvingly compared it to Mariah Carey 's modern Christmas classic " All I Want for Christmas Is You " ( 1994 ) , a track that RCA chief executive Peter Edge described as the song 's inspiration . Williot added that " Underneath the Tree " is strong enough that it could enter the pantheon of modern Christmas staples like Carey 's " All I Want For Christmas Is You " and ' N Sync 's " Merry Christmas , Happy Holidays " . Jenna Hally Rubenstein of MTV News remarked , " if we may be so bold , it is definitely on par with other impeccable Christmas originals ? namely Carey 's " All I Want For Christmas Is You " . " Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine noted the similar themes of two songs , and that " Underneath the Tree " is likely to become Clarkson 's very own contemporary standard . Melinda Newman of HitFix wrote , " It 's a finger @-@ popping , bell @-@ ringing pleaser that could achieve that rare feat of becoming a new Christmas standard . That hasn 't happened since Carey 's " All I Want For Christmas " in 1994 ; " while The Independent 's Hugh Montgomery applauded it as having a sass , jingle and a sax solo , saying that it is " a winner on all fronts . "

== Chart performance ==

Upon the release of *Wrapped in Red* , " Underneath the Tree " entered the Billboard Holiday Digital Songs chart as an album cut at number four on the week ending November 16 , 2013 . Following its release as a single , it reached a peak position of number three on the week ending December 28 , 2013 . After being released as a single to Adult Contemporary radio , the song debuted at number 21 on the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart for the week ending November 23 , 2013 , eventually topping the chart after three weeks , becoming her third Adult Contemporary number one song and her first since " Stronger ( What Doesn 't Kill You ) " ( 2012 ) . That same week , it also entered the Billboard Holiday 100 chart at number 34 , making it her second entry at the Holiday Songs after " I 'll Be Home for Christmas " ( 2011 ) . The song entered the chart 's top ten after two weeks at number 10 . On the week ending December 21 , 2013 , the song entered the main Billboard Hot 100 chart at number 92 , and peaked at number 78 on the week ending January 4 , 2013 . Brian Mansfield of USA Today reported that " Underneath the Tree " was radio 's most @-@ played new holiday song of 2013 .

Internationally , " Underneath the Tree " became a top forty hit in four countries . After debuting at number 41 on the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 chart on the week ending December 21 , 2013 , the song reached a peak of number 28 after a week . In the United Kingdom , it debuted on the Official UK Singles Chart at number 79 on the week ending December 14 , 2013 , eventually reaching at number 30 on the week ending December 28 , 2013 . In the Netherlands , " Underneath the Tree " debuted on the Mega Top 50 chart at number 38 on the week ending December 14 , 2013 , and peaked at number 34 on the week ending December 28 , 2013 . That same week , it entered the Mega Single Top 100 at number 85 , and peaked at number 69 . It " Underneath the Tree " entered the Dutch Top 40 chart at number 26 , making it her first top forty hit in that region after four years since " I Do Not Hook Up " peaked at number 19 in 2009 . It then peaked at number 25 after a week . In South Korea , the song debuted at number 2 on the Gaon Singles Chart on the week ending

November 9 , 2013 . In Japan , it debuted on the Billboard Japan Hot 100 chart at number 84 on the week ending January 4 , 2014 , and spend two weeks on the chart .

= = Music video = =

On the eve of *Wrapped in Red* 's release , RCA Records released an animated lyric video for " Underneath the Tree " , featuring shots of ice skating , a snow @-@ covered town , and copious Christmas trees . The lyric video was released to positive reviews , with *Idolator* 's Sam Lansky describing it as " a nice visual accompaniment to the song that just lends an extra high @-@ octane Yuletide cheer to its already @-@ effervescent spirit " . Its accompanying music video premiered on December 3 , 2013 on Vevo , featuring a live performance from the stage of her NBC television special *Kelly Clarkson 's Cautionary Christmas Music Tale* , which was directed by Hamish Hamilton , known for his concert films .

= = Live performances and usage in media = =

Clarkson has performed " Underneath the Tree " in various televised performances . She first performed " Underneath the Tree " in a live televised performance on *The Today Show* on November 26 , 2013 . Apart from being performed from the set of *Kelly Clarkson 's Cautionary Christmas Music Tale* featured in the song 's accompanying music video , a different live performance was aired during the television special itself , in which Clarkson was accompanied by children while singing it . She also performed the song on the fifth season of the American singing competition *The Voice* on December 3 , 2013 . On December 5 , 2013 , she then performed it on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and on *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* .

= = Track listing = =

Digital download ? Single

Digital download ? Remixes EP

= = Credits and personnel = =

Recording

Produced at Echo Recording Studio , Los Angeles , California

Personnel

Credits lifted from the *Wrapped in Red* liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = Radio and release history = =