

Blue Christmas

J.W. Johnson and B. Hayes

C^{sus4} *F* *C*/*E* *C*⁷

I'll have a blue Christmas without you.

C *G*^{m7} *C*⁷ *F*

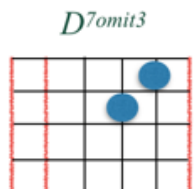
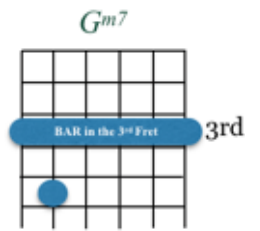
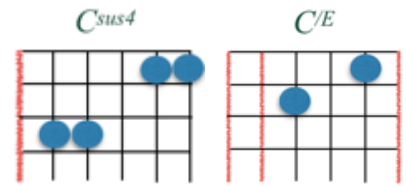
I'll be so blue thinking about you.

C/*E* *D*^{7omit3} *G*^m *G*^{m7}

Decorations of red on a green Christmas tree,

G *G*⁷ *C*⁷ *C*

Won't mean a thing, if you're not here with me.



C^{sus4} *F* *C*/*E* *C*⁷

I'll have a blue Christmas that's certain.

C *G*^{m7} *C*⁷ *F*

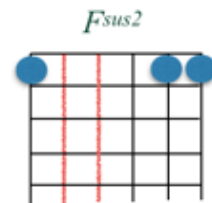
And when the blue heartache starts hurtin',

C/*E* *D*^{7omit3} *G*^m *G*

You'll be doing all right with your Christmas of white,

*C*⁷ *G*^m *C* *F* *F*^{sus2}

But I'll have a blue, blue Christmas.



Play not upon
the **reddened**
strings.

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History

"**Blue Christmas**" was written by Jay W. Johnson with music by Billy Hayes. No likeness of Billy Hayes is available on the net.

Their song is a tale of unrequited love during what is for most a happy time of year; a longstanding staple of Christmas music, especially in the country genre.

“Jay often wrote or worked as he rode the morning and afternoon commute trains to New York,” recalled Judy Olmsted. “He loved to play with words. He made up all kinds of limericks and poems. He wrote for some the top shows on radio (The Fred Waring Show, The Kate Smith Show - and his own radio show on WOR in New York City and the Mutual Network). He later wrote for television. He was a vaudeville veteran, played around with Broadway shows, and had dozens of songs published.”

With the success of Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas” and the tremendous impact of blues music during the forties, Johnson’s first scribbled thoughts for bringing the blues to this season were:

*I expect to have a colorful Christmas,
Tinged with every kind of holiday hue,
And though I know I'll find every shade in the rainbow,
This design of mine will be mostly blue.*

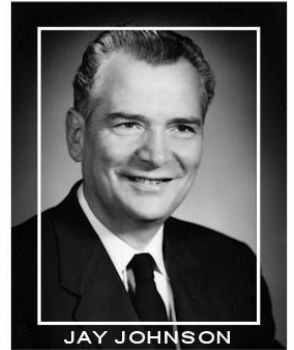


Photo from

www.home.earthlink.net



Elvis, Millie Kirkham and the
Jordanaires
Photo from
elvisblog.net

Elvis Presley cemented the status of "**Blue Christmas**" as a rock & roll Christmas classic by recording it for his 1957 LP *Elvis' Christmas Album*. Presley's version is notable musicologically as well as culturally in that the vocal group the Jordanaires (especially in the soprano line, sung by Millie Kirkham) replace many major and just minor thirds with neutral and septimal minor thirds, respectively. In addition to contributing to the overall tone of the song, the resulting “blue notes” constitute a musical play on words that provides an “inside joke” or “quail egg” to trained ears.

Wikipedia

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