

Christmas at Our House

On this album, pianist Michael Dulin brings his rare combination of straightforward melodic sweetness and serious harmonic sophistication to bear on a program of Christmas standards. All the usual suspects are here: "Deck the Halls" (which he begins on a pleasant but unexceptional note before suddenly taking the tune into jazz territory), "Silent Night" (a tune that stands up to tastefully extended melodic development better than one might expect), and "We Three Kings" (to which he adds synthesized bass and piano, making a nice break from the solo piano texture that characterizes the rest of the album) are all here, as are lovely versions of "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Away in a Manger." His treatment of "O Come Emmanuel" is technically impressive, but that's a tune that tends to benefit more from less elaboration, and the syncopation he applies to "Joy to the World" somehow manages to sap it of its natural power. But even the less compelling moments on this album are pleasant and fun to listen to, and it will make a welcome addition to any home's collection of holiday music.

- Rick Anderson
All Music Guide