

**Film Title and Release Date:** *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas* (2017)

**Length of Film in Minutes:** 52 minutes

**Film Genre:** Documentary

**Reviewer Name and Grade:** Sarina P., 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Date Reviewed:** January 1, 2023

2 This film is about all of the famous Christmas songs written by Jewish people, including White Christmas, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire, Silver Bells, A Holly Jolly Christmas, and many more. The film also addresses what it was like growing up Jewish in a Christian-dominated country.

It's based on interviews with comedians, the children of songwriters, a priest, a filmmaker, a historian, and others who talk about the reasons so many classic Christmas songs were written by Jews and some of the stories of how the songs came about. One of the reasons Jews so many Christmas songs was that there was a large market for them, and the songs didn't have to be religious in nature. Jews created much of the popular lore surrounding Christmas.

Some of the songwriting was influenced by the writers' experiences as Jews. For example, the song Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was based on the writer's life growing up Jewish and being made fun of for his big nose. It was not written as a song originally, but as a coloring book commissioned by a department store. It was later set to music. It makes the point that Jews don't necessarily want to assimilate, but to be appreciated as they are.

The documentary also addresses the large influence Jews have had on the entertainment industry in general, in film, theatre, and music.

*How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)? Browsing documentaries.*

*Did the plot (for fictional movie) or presentation of information (for documentary) keep you interested?*

Yes.

*Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?*

Just right. I thought the segments were well grouped.

*What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?*

5th grade and up.

*4. 4 stars.*

I thought it gave a lot of good examples and the pacing was good. I enjoyed learning about a subject I didn't know much about before.