

## audiophile

by david stout  
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### Speaking of George Michael...

At press time, pop icon George Michael is hospitalized in Vienna, Austria, recovering from a severe bout of pneumonia. The openly gay star was in the country to perform a show on his successful Symphonica Tour when he fell ill. Things seemed pretty dire for the first few days; Michael was listed in critical condition and rumors about his worsening health were swirling. However, the latest official news states that he is out of the ICU and getting better.

Thank goodness for that. Michael is one of my favorite artists, with one of the finest voices ever in popular music. Driving home from Thanksgiving, I put on his two-disc "Live In London" concert DVD and marveled at his impeccable vocals the whole way.

Like all of us, George has his devils to wrestle; unlike most of us, though, he has battled his in the glaring public spotlight. If you're young enough to only know George for his addiction-fueled public screw-ups or are an older fan who hopped off the train after one debacle or another, I highly recommend picking up "Live In London" to learn/remember what a pop treasure George Michael truly has been, is today and hopefully will continue to be for a long time to come.

### Speaking of concert DVDs...

Adele and Lady Gaga, arguably the two most powerful

women in music at the moment, have released must-have live DVDs in recent weeks.

2011 has been an incredible year for Adele. At the beginning of the year she scored a mammoth #1 hit with "Rolling In The Deep," which propelled her sophomore album to the top of the charts for a record-setting 12 weeks. That's the longest run ever for a British female artist and ties the overall record set by... wait for it... George Michael (for 1988's "Faith").

Second single "Someone Like You" was another multi-week #1, cementing Adele's status as the artist of 2011.

Her new "Live At The Royal Albert Hall" (out on DVD and Blu-Ray) features a 90-minute performance of material culled from both of Adele's studio albums, behind the scenes footage shot the day of the show and a bonus live CD. Viewers will find the newly minted star in stunning, full-throated voice delivering all of her best loved songs and two covers, including Bonnie Raitt's "I Can't Make You Love Me."

Lady Gaga has issued her Emmy-winning HBO special "Lady Gaga Presents The Monster Ball Tour At Madison Square Garden" for the home market. She offers up 19 songs encompassing all the hits from "The Fame" and "The Fame Monster" albums as well as the smash singles "Born This Way" and "You And I" from her latest collection.

In less than three years Gaga has sold an estimated 23 million albums and 64 million singles worldwide. The four singles from her last album alone have sold a combined 6 million in the U.S. *Billboard* magazine named Gaga the 2010 Artist Of The Year and she has garnered five Grammy Awards on 12 nominations.

### Speaking of the Grammys...

The nominations for the 54th Annual Grammy Awards have

been released and here are the finalists in the Big 4 categories plus three more. The Grammys will be broadcast live Feb. 12 at 8pm on CBS.

**Album Of The Year:** "21" — Adele; "Wasting Light" — Foo Fighters; "Born This Way" — Lady Gaga; "Doo-Wops & Hooligans" — Bruno Mars; "Loud" — Rihanna

**Record Of The Year:** "Rolling In The Deep" — Adele; "Holocene" — Bon Iver; "Grenade" — Bruno Mars; "The Cave" — Mumford & Sons; "Firework" — Katy Perry

**Best New Artist:** The Band Perry; Bon Iver; J. Cole; Nicki Minaj; Skrillex

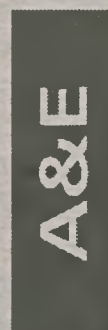
**Song Of The Year:** "All Of The Lights" — Jeff Bhasker, Malik Jones, Warren Trotter & Kanye West, songwriters (Kanye West, Rihanna, Kid Cudi & Fergie); "The Cave" — Ted Dwane, Ben Lovett, Marcus Mumford & Country Winston, songwriters (Mumford & Sons); "Grenade" — Brody Brown, Claude Kelly, Philip Lawrence, Ari Levine, Bruno Mars & Andrew Wyatt, songwriters (Bruno Mars); "Holocene" — Justin Vernon, songwriter (Bon Iver); "Rolling In The Deep" — Adele Adkins & Paul Epworth, songwriters (Adele)

**Best Pop Solo Performance:** "Someone Like You" — Adele; "You And I" — Lady Gaga; "Grenade" — Bruno Mars; "Firework" — Katy Perry; "F\*\*\*in' Perfect" — Pink

**Best Pop Duo/Group Performance:** "Body And Soul" — Tony Bennett & Amy Winehouse; "Dearest" — The Black Keys; "Paradise" — Coldplay; "Pumped Up Kicks" — Foster The People; "Moves Like Jagger" — Maroon 5 & Christina Aguilera

**Best Dance Recording:** "Raise Your Weapon" — Deadmau5 & Greta Svabo Bech; "Barbra Streisand" — Duck Sauce; "Sunshine" — David Guetta & Avicii; "Call Your Girlfriend" — Robyn; "Scary Monsters And Nice Sprites" — Skrillex; "Save The World" — Swedish House Mafia ::

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## out in print

by terri schlichenmeyer :: *qnotes* contributor

### 'Remembering Christmas'



It happens every year.

First, you start seeing Christmas decorations. Then you notice yourself mouthing the words to songs while you're shopping and you start to get nostalgic, missing family and remembering this gift and that dinner and holidays through rose-colored glasses.

It's ho-ho-horrible, almost as if you're homesick for something you never had. Seriously, who ever had a "perfect holiday," anyhow? In the new book "Remembering Christmas," featuring three novellas by three premier authors, the only things perfect are the ghosts of Christmases past.

It's funny how we remember special things we got for Christmas at the same time we remember things we didn't get. In "Away, in

a Manger" by Tom Medicino, middle-aged James is empty-handed and empty-hearted.

Life as a gay man in New York was good once. There was always another party, another summer in Fire Island and another trip with Ernst, James' lover and mentor.

But times change: Ernst is now an old man with fusty habits, the summer house is a tired tradition that needs to be retired and James wants... something. Then, on his way to spend Christmas with his family, car trouble strands James in a tiny town where his future is hiding, covered in snow.

Remember wishing for that one special thing to show up beneath the tree? No matter how old you are, it's hard not to have a specific gift in mind when you see piles of gifts and in

"A Christmas to Remember" by Frank Anthony Polito, all Jack Paterno wants is a boyfriend.

Specifically, Jack wants Kirk, his old pal from high school. There's so much history between them, so many mutual friends and boyhood memories in common. But, even though Jack is pretty sure Kirk's gay, Kirk isn't so sure himself...

And, sometimes, especially if Christmas loses its magic, lost love feels keener. When Neil broke up with Theo just before the holidays, Theo decided that he might as well do what he said he'd never do and go home for Christmas. But, in "Missed Connections" by Michael Salvatore, a chance encounter with an old love becomes an odd gift.

Though my mother always told me not to judge a book by its cover, I have to admit that I did. The cover of this book looked like it was going to be fun.

I should've listened to Mom.

"Remembering Christmas" is awfully dark-mooded. It pouts and mutters, feels sorry for itself, gets morosely introspective and wallows in pity for pages and pages and pages. There are occasional bursts of good tidings and great

joy, but the melancholy and angst overpowers it. I think I could have handled that in one story, but the similar theme of all three tales made me want to drown my sorrows in spiked egg nog.

I think that if you're single, hating it and want some paper commiseration, then this book will be good company this season. But, if you're looking for a holiday book that makes you feel all Christmassy, this one is a perfect disaster. ::

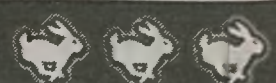
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"Remembering Christmas" by Tom Medicino, Frank Anthony Polito and Michael Salvatore © 2011, Kensington \$15.00 / \$16.95 Canada, 250 pages



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