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## Jim Brickman brings Christmas concert to the Embassy

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel  
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Few may realize it, but renowned romantic music pianist Jim Brickman, who performs in concert next Monday at the Embassy Theatre, began his musical career in his hometown of Cleveland writing advertising jingles for companies such as McDonald's and Kellogg's.

Beginning in 1994 when he released his first album entitled "No Words," Brickman stepped away from advertising and became the best-selling solo piano artist of our time, collaborating with such renowned singers as Olivia Newton-John, Carly Simon, Kenny Loggins and even Kermit the Frog.

Brickman says his current holiday show entitled "Jim Brickman's A Christmas Celebration" will feature all the humor and familiar hits fans expect from him, as well as a generous sampling of some of his favorite Christmas music.

"There's nothing like playing Christmas music, that's for sure," Brickman said in a telephone interview. "Everybody's in a great mood. People gather together and celebrate together, family and friends.

"I always like to include some of my popular songs because I know that people come to hear those songs," Brickman added. "It's a nice combination of both (hits and Christmas music).

"I like Christmas hymns and carols the best — 'Oh, Holy Night' and 'Do You Hear What I Hear?' A lot of the really traditional songs of Christmas are some of my favorites."

For the past 15 years, Brickman has made a holiday tradition of touring with a Christmas show. This year, he will bring along familiar faces, such as Anne Cochran and Tracy Silverman, while adding someone new: former Indianapolis Colts football player Benjamin Utecht.

"Well, Anne (Cochran) has been with me every time I've been in town (Fort Wayne)," Brickman said of the performers in this show. "She has so many fans there, so well loved there, so she's coming back with me, and Tracy (Silverman), as well on the electric violin, it's a great compliment.

Ben Utecht found fame and fortune playing football, Brickman said, but "when you hear him sing, you just think how can one guy have so much talent on the football field and on the stage. He's really an amazing talent."

One of the things Brickman enjoys most about touring during the Christmas season is he gets to perform in the Midwest. Not only do the audiences remind him of his Midwestern upbringing, but the crisp, cool weather reminds him of Christmases past and home.

"I can tell the difference for sure," Brickman said of performing for a Midwestern audience. "There's something about the point of view that comes from growing up (in the Midwest). I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and I always feel like coming home. The weather feels like it's the way I grew up with it at Christmastime.

"The thing about the holiday time is nostalgia is such a big part of it," Brickman added. "And so we all look back and reflect and, when you hear these songs, they remind you of a time and a place."



### More Information

#### Music of the season

**What:** Jim Brickman performs "A Christmas Celebration" holiday concert.

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Monday

**Where:** Embassy Theatre, 121 W. Jefferson Blvd.

**Cost:** \$27.75, \$37.75, \$47.75; VIP tickets are \$67.75 and include meeting Jim Brickman. Tickets available at the Embassy box office, Ticketmaster outlets, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or 1-800-745-3000. For information, call the Embassy box office at 424-5665.

#### Listen in

To hear the audio of our interview with Jim Brickman, click on the link Thursday morning with this story.