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Holiday, Music reviews »

CD review: 'Chanukah Fever: 13 Macca-beats for the Whole Family'

By [Lisa Lednicer](#), [The Oregonian](#)

September 26, 2009, 5:37AM

Let's face it -- Hanukkah is just not as fun as Christmas.

Christmas, in theory, celebrates the birth of Jesus but it's really all about the cookies, the caroling and the colorfully decorated trees.

Hanukkah, by contrast, commemorates a military victory. The holiday lasts for eight days -- which, in theory, means eight days of presents -- but the defeat of the Selucid Empire at the hands of the Maccabees doesn't make for great music.

Christians get a whole songbook of tunes to sing. Jews get to sing songs about ... dreidels.

So I was pleasantly surprised to discover "Chanukah Fever: 13 Macca-beats for the Whole Family" by [Mama Doni](#), aka Doni Zasloff Thomas, a preschool music teacher in New Jersey.

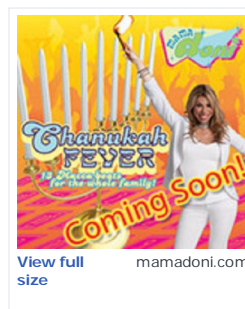
She wrote the melodies and lyrics for 13 songs such as "Chanukah Fever," "Latke Man," "A Land Called Sufganyot" (sufganyot are jelly-filled doughnuts that are a Hanukkah tradition) and "La Vida Dreidel." The album is scheduled for nationwide release in November.

The lyrics are pretty silly -- "Crispy crunchy cool and munchy/Good for breakfast or for lunchy/Latke man! Oh, latke man!" -- but the tunes are catchy. Maybe that's because Thomas covers every musical style, from disco to country to hip-hop to reggae. Your preschoolers will love bopping to the music and your older ones will laugh at the accents of guests such as "Bubbie" (grandma).

Pretty soon, the songs may be crowding out the insipid Christmas Muzak we're all subjected to starting, oh, the day after Halloween.

Play this CD while you're peeling dozens of potatoes for latkes (potato pancakes). And if you're decorating a tree and baking Christmas cookies, you'll like it, too.

-- [Lisa Lednicer](#)



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