



ARTS & CULTURE

A New 'Feliz Navidad' from Musical Star Jose Feliciano

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José Feliciano is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his beloved Christmas song *Feliz Navidad* by releasing a new version. The song is still sung in English and Spanish.

But many popular artists appear in the new version, including Jason Mraz, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Shaggy. Pop musician Michael Bolton, Latin boy band CNCO, country band Big & Rich, and Mexican singer and actress Patricia Manterola are also among the 30 acts who teamed to create the new *Feliz Navidad*.

All the artists recorded their parts separately to stay socially distant.

Amazon Music released the final creation. The many artists from different backgrounds and musical **genres** is in keeping with Feliciano's goals for the song, past and present.

"The idea of *Feliz Navidad* was to try and unite the people," the award winning artist said. "My thought when I wrote the song was that it didn't matter what language you were singing in, the feeling of Christmas is **privy** to all of us."

The song has only 20 words in all - six in Spanish and 14 in English. The 75-year-old Feliciano says that back in 1970, he never imagined it would become a holiday hit.

"I would have to say it **fulfills** a dream," he said in an interview over Zoom from his home in Connecticut. "I had the dream in my mind, but that's as far as it went until I wrote *Feliz Navidad*."

Feliciano has been celebrating the 50-year anniversary on social media by posting old pictures and stories. The song has appeared on Billboard magazine's Hot 100 list repeatedly over the years. It became one of the most played and recorded Christmas songs around the world.

The song was part of his 1970 self-titled holiday album, later renamed *Feliz Navidad*. He said he wanted to do a song that, in his words, “really told the story of the **savior's** birth in a way that was musical and people could get behind it.”

The 75-year-old Puerto Rican singer-songwriter has been blind since birth. A documentary film about Feliciano's life is expected to be released next year. *Behind This Guitar* tells about his path from poverty in Puerto Rico and New York to performing at the Vatican's Christmas celebration.

Feliciano said he dealt with difficult conditions in his life.

“I came from a foreign land, I had no **vision**, or at least I thought I didn't — until I found out that I did have a vision and that I saw things the way they should be seen.”

Feliciano will hold a December 20 show featuring *Feliz Navidad* and other Christmas songs livestreamed from his home.

I'm Caty Weaver.

The Associated Press reported this story for VOA News. Caty Weaver adapted it story for Learning English. Hai Do was the editor.

Words in This Story

genre – *n.* a particular kind or category of literature or art

privy – *adj.* admitted as one sharing in a secret

fulfill – *v.* to succeed in achieving (something) : to make (something, such as a dream) true or real

blind – *adj.* unable to see

savior – *n.* someone who saves something or someone from danger, harm, failure, etc. Used by Christians to refer to Jesus Christ

vision – *n.* the act or power of seeing
