Merry Christmas?

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and what goes better with Thanksgiving dinner than Christmas music? Well, I guess Thanksgiving music would go better with Thanksgiving dinner, but when was the last time, if ever, you heard a song celebrating carving-ofturkeyday Radio stations around the country are slowly starting to switch to all Christmas music formats, and next week record labels are adding fuel to their playlists.

The legendary Johnny Mathis offers three songs for airplay at AC: “Have a Holly Jolly Christmas,” “I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm,” and “Joy to the World.” All of these cheery titles can be found on his latest Christmas album, The Christmas Album. This is actually Mathis’ sixth collection of holiday hits, and his first since 1986. The Christmas Album was produced by Robbie Buchanan (Barbra Streisand, Celine Dion-Peabo Bryson, Bette Midler) and, yes, that is young Mathis on the cover of the CD.

Steve Tyrell is also spreading the holiday cheer at AC, with “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town” and “This Time of Year,” the first releases from his CD This Time of Year. The Houston native got a huge head start this year when he embarked on his Christmas tour in mid-October. As a producer, arranger, composer and performer, Tyrell has worked on the music for numerous films, including That Thing You Do and The Five Heartbeats. Tyrell also co-produced the Linda Robstad-James Ingram duet “Somewhere Out There” from the film An American Tail. He proposed the idea of having “human” artists record the main themes of the animated feature, which has since become a common practice.

It wouldn’t be Christmas without John Tesh, and next week Tesh’s “It Wouldn’t Be Christmas (Without You)” goes for adds at AC. The track can be found on his CD, Christmas Worship, featuring Tesh on piano and vocals backed by an orchestra. Barry Manilow presents “River” to AC from his holiday album A Christmas Gift of Love.

Speaking of rivers, Justin Timberlake flows into Pop and Rhythm with “Cry Me A River,” the second single from his solo debut album, Justified. “River” was co-written by Timberlake, Timbaland and Scott Storch and will hit MTV on Nov. 26. You can also check out Timberlake on the cover of the upcoming Rolling Stone (on stands Nov. 22) and on Nickelodeon’s All That on Nov. 23.

If we continue down the river in Going for Adds land, we’ll eventually reach paradise — LL Cool J’s “Paradise,” that is. LL follows up his No. 1 hit “Luv U Better” at Rhythm and Urban next week, and this time he enlists the help of rising R&B diva Amerie. “Paradise” can be found on LL’s 10th album, X.

As we close in on Christmas, artists are in the process of wrapping up their current tours. New Zealand native Keith Urban is on the road visiting mostly Southern and Eastern markets through early December, and why not? Next week, he’s Going for Adds at Country with “Raining on Sunday,” the followup to his current No. 1 hit, “Somebody Like You.” The Donnas are also on tour through mid-December, visiting Southern and Western markets. They’ll be promoting “Take It Off” from their fifth album and first with a major label. “Take It Off” goes for adds at Rock and Active Rock, and, in case you were wondering, none of their names are Donna. However, they do go by the stage names Donna A, Donna C, Donna F and Donna R.

— Mike Tras