

Who Rules Christmas?

Article By:

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For almost 30 years, Mariah Carey’s “All I Want for Christmas is You” has been a reliable, though often derided, part of the holiday season, playing frequently on television and radio, and in stores and restaurants. Last year, her company, Lotion, LLC, filed applications to register CHRISTMAS PRINCESS, QUEEN OF CHRISTMAS, and QOC (the initials of “Queen of Christmas”) in connection with not only sound recordings and entertainment services, but also fragrances, jewelry, apparel, glassware, and food products. All these applications, like her earlier applications for ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS and ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS YOU for similarly broad goods and services, are intent-to-use applications, meaning that while she plans to use these marks for all of these goods, she is not doing so yet.

A trademark does not come with a crown or authority, but past pop stars have claimed royal trademarks (most notably registrations for KING OF POP and KING OF ROCK ‘N ROLL for Michael Jackson and Elvis Presley; Madonna never bothered with QUEEN OF POP) to great marketing and merchandising success. Whether or not she really is the “Queen of Christmas,” Carey’s registration of QUEEN OF CHRISTMAS could guarantee her a niche in the holiday market, whether or not her song remains as ubiquitous as it has been for the past decades.

Dominant though Mariah Carey’s song is, she has not secured the title QUEEN OF CHRISTMAS quite yet. Elizabeth Chan, who describes herself as “pop music’s only full-time Christmas singer songwriter,” has opposed Lotion’s applications for QUEEN OF CHRISTMAS and QOC. Chan claims that she and multiple other singers have been variously dubbed the “Queen of Christmas” and that some, like Chan, have embraced the title, while others, including Carey, have distanced themselves from it (citing an interview with Carey from after her filing of the applications). The opposition has just gotten started, and it will be interesting to see if Chan is able to keep Carey from claiming QUEEN OF CHRISTMAS or if Carey will get “all she wants for Christmas.” A smart branding strategy can bestow enduring value onto one success.

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