

Christina Aguilera

True to its title, *Stripped*, the audacious new RCA Records release from Christina Aguilera, strips away the last remnants of her previous teen idol persona and what's left is as real as it gets.

The sixteen new tracks that comprise *Stripped*, including her sensational debut single, "Dirrty," showcases an unadorned, unfettered and fearlessly outspoken artist who has liberated herself, her soul and her music on an album that is as much a declaration of independence as it is a convincing demonstration of her fierce and original talent. Simply put, this is the real deal. "When you're seventeen years old, green and inexperienced, you're grateful for any guidance and direction you can get." Says Christina on her rocket sled ride to the top following the 1999 release of her eponymously-titled debut album, with its string of consecutive chart toppers, including "Genie In A Bottle" and "What A Girl Wants." It was a feat she would repeat the following year with *Mi Reflejo*, the smash Spanish language version of her debut, followed by her hit holiday release, *My Kind Of Christmas*.

Ten million plus albums, a Grammy win for Best New Artist and a marathon round of world touring later, Christina began to fearlessly break free from the mass media mask that hid her true self, and the full scope of her talent. "I felt trapped," she admits. "I was under the thumb of people who were mostly interested in keeping me doing exactly the same thing. But I'm not blaming anyone," she's quick to add. "You learn fast in this business and, once I knew where I wanted to go, I didn't let anyone get in my way." Where she wanted to go, at least initially, was to her Los Angeles home where she could catch her breath, reconnecting with herself and her two canine companions. "I needed a break," she reveals. "I wanted to disappear into empty space for awhile. So much had happened in such a short time, and not only in my career. I'd gone through a breakup with my first real love and I began realizing that I should be experiencing a bit more of life than TV and recording studios, hotels and green rooms." As well intended as her much-deserved hiatus may have been, the vocalist and songwriter still had to contend with the restless creative energy that had fueled her preteen trajectory from talent show contestant in and around her native Pittsburgh to international superstardom.

"I'm driven," is Christina's frank admission. "Even in the midst of touring, I was thinking about what my next album would be, writing bits and pieces of songs in journals and scrapbooks." That album, like Christina's long overdue R&R, would have to wait. Unable to resist the lure of a promising creative collaboration, she joined forces with Pink, Mya and Lil' Kim on the smash "Lady Marmalade" single and video. That eye-popping slice of ear candy kept her front and center in the international spotlight even as she began, slowly and steadily, to lay the groundwork for a musical manifesto that would change all the rules. "I was straight ahead about what I wanted to do," Christina continues. "For a long time, I'd been uncomfortable with

the image that had been built around me and my music. It felt like I was pretending, trying to hide the real me, and hurting inside because of it. This time I was determined to step beyond the hype and glitter, to take it back down to the bare necessities. It was like starting all over again."

Yet at the same time, Christina's bold work-in-progress wasn't simply a reaction to the past. "I wanted to explore some of the music that had inspired me coming up," she explains. "I've always been a huge fan of soul. I love real rock & roll and hip-hop, of course, is one of my biggest influences. I wanted it all." And what she wanted she set about to achieve with a relentless determination and a willingness to stretch her creative boundaries. "I've always thought recording was about attaining perfection," she reveals. "What I discovered making this album is that getting across real feelings is what's important. As much as possible, I wanted to have the listener right there in the studio with me. I wanted to introduce myself, to get down to it. What mattered was sharing what I was really going through...for the first time."

And the first and most formidable challenge for Christina was to assemble a supporting cast that, in her words, "weren't influenced by my old image." A ruthless process of elimination yielded a production and songwriting team that included, among others, Pink producer Linda Perry; the team of Redman and Rockwilder; Alanis Morissette producer Glenn Ballard; fast rising studio wizard Scott Storch, as well artist/producer Alicia Keys. Recorded over an eighteen-month stretch, with Christina firmly at the helm every step of the way, *Stripped* slowly but surely took shape, not only as an exercise in breathtaking stylistic diversity but as a resonant and revealing look into the mind and emotions of a young woman on the verge of personal and professional liberation.

The result is resonant and revealing original tracks that decisively shred Christina's squeaky clean persona, even as they set the stage for a career that, millions of albums and concert tickets later, is only now just getting started. The proof is all over *Stripped*, from the opening notes of "Impossible," the smoky ballad by Alicia Keys, to the romantic revelations of "Can't Hold Us Down," featuring the persuasive production of Scott Storch; from the soaring affirmations of "Beautiful," to blistering licks of "Make Over," to the superheated funk of "Dirrty," featuring Redman and Rockwilder. "I loved 'Let's Get Dirty,'" Christina reveals, "So I asked Rockwilder to put something together kind of like that for me." She laughs. "What I got was a little too close, but then I figured, 'Why not?' The track is like an answer song to the original, only from a female point of view."

As much excitement and surprise as a first listening to *Stripped* might generate, there are other textures, urgent, honest and unguarded, that emerge with time. "Everything I sing about in 'I'm OK' is real," she asserts. "I took it right out of my life and I'm singing it right to my Dad." While another *Stripped* standout, "Can't Hold Me Down," may at first sound like payback to a certain superstar rapper, for Christina that's

hardly the point. "I haven't got time for all that," is her retort. "I'm more interested in helping girls stand up for themselves. That's what the song is about - double standards and how we're supposed to look and act a certain way just to please men. If I have any influence as an entertainer, I want it to be optimistic and uplifting, to make this world a little better place to live." For Christina Aguilera, it all begins by getting real. "This music is who I am," she confidently asserts. "You can take it or leave it, but I'm not going to change, not for anyone." In the end, she says, it's a tribute to the millions of worldwide fans who have made her a household name. "Fans grow up, too," she smiles. "We're all reaching out for something more real and if we really want it, we're going to find it. This album is for anyone who really wants it."

AWARDS

MTV Europe Awards Winner! In addition to being the best awards show host ever, Xtina won in the category of Best Female! The 10th Annual MTV Europe Awards were held in Edinburgh, Scotland. - posted 11/7/03
Congratulations to Christina for winning Best Single for Dirty at the Q Awards. - posted 10/6/03

Christina has been honored with a special award at the GLAAD Awards for her video "Beautiful". - posted 5/13/03

Christina won the BEST INTERNATIONAL FEMALE at the Channel V Thailand awards. - posted 4/10/03

Dirty wins the Sexiest Video Award, as voted by Yahoo! And Launch.com users.- posted 2/25/03

Christina is nominated for a Grammy! DIRRTY is nominated in the category of Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group. - posted 1/10/03

Christina has won the 2002 ALMA Award for Outstanding Song in A Motion Picture Soundtrack: 'Lady Marmalade' The show aired Saturday, June 1, 2002 on ABC-TV.

MTV Japan held their very first Video Music Awards with 'Lady Marmalade' winning Best Video From a Film

The 2002 MVPA Video Award winners have been announced:

- Best Styling In A Video: 'Lady Marmalade' (Trish Summerville)
- Best R & B Video: 'What's Going On' - Artists Against AIDS (Black Dog Films / Jake Scott and Malik Sayeed)
- Winners were announced Wednesday, May 22, 2002 at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood

Christina won her third Grammy Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals for 'Lady Marmalade'.

Christina won a TMF Award from the Belgium music channel and Holland music channel for Best Video Of The Year for 'Lady Marmalade'

Christina Maria Aguilera was born on December 18, 1980 in Staten Island, New York. Her parents are of Ecuadorian and Irish descent. Due to her father being in the U.S. military, the Aguileras moved quite frequently. Christina's musical career began when her family settled in Philadelphia when she was six years old; she began competing in local talent shows. In 1988, Christina competed on Star Search (she didn't win). By the time she turned 10, she was singing the National Anthem at Pittsburgh Steelers and Penguin games. In 1992, she joined the cast for the Disney Channel's "The New Mickey Mouse Club." The 'club' featured soon-to-be stars Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake ('N Sync), J.C. Chasez ('N Sync), and Keri Russell (felicity). Two years later, Christina moved to Japan where she performed a duet with Japanese Pop star Keizo Nakanishi ("All I Wanna Do). In 1998, Christina returned to the United States to record the song "Reflection" for the Disney movie, Mulan. Upon hearing the song, she was offered a deal with RCA.

Christina's self-titled debut album was released in 1999. The record featured bubblegum, teen-oriented dance pop. The lead single, "Genie in a Bottle," topped the charts for five weeks. In 2000, the second single, "What a Girl Wants," (produced by Guy Roche: Brandy, Cher, Dru Hill, Aaliyah, K-Ci & Jo Jo) became the first single of the year 2000. The album also spawned the hits, "I Turn to You" and "Come on Over Baby (All I Want is You). During this time, Christina won the ALMA (award honoring Hispanic-Americans for their achievements) award for Best New Artist. She was also on the cover of Entertainment Weekly, Teen Pop, and Latina. Christina was named one of the most fascinating women of 1999 by the "Ladies Home Journal" CBS television special.

In February of 2000, Christina won a Grammy for Best New Artist. That summer, she headlined a huge international tour co-sponsored by Levi's and Sears. In the Fall of 2000, she released a Spanish language album entitled *Mi Reflejo*. In December she released a Holiday Christmas album.

In March of 2001, Christina collaborated with Ricky Martin on "Nobody Wants to be Lonely." The song peaked at number 11 on the Billboard Charts. She also collaborated with Pink, Mya, and Lil' Kim on the remake of "Lady Marmalade" for the soundtrack of *Moulin Rouge*. The song stayed at number one for five weeks. The video won the 2001 MTV Award for Best Video of the Year. That year, Christina won her second Grammy: Best female Pop Vocal Album for *Mi Reflejo*.

At the end of 2002, Christina shocked her fans with her second album, *Stripped*. Her first single, "Dirty," depicted a much different singer than her pre-teen fans were used to. The singer publicly defamed her first record, and said that *Stripped* was a reflection of her as a person and artist. The album's other hit singles: "Beautiful" and "Stronger" did well. In the summer of 2003, Christina toured with Justin Timberlake. Their tour was entitled: *Justified and Stripped*.