

= Music Box (Mariah Carey album) =

Music Box is the third studio album by American singer Mariah Carey . It was released by Columbia Records on August 31 , 1993 , in North America . The album comprises ballads primarily co @-@ written by Carey and Walter Afanasieff , with whom she had previously worked on Emotions (1991) , and a few urban dance tracks . During the course of the album 's development , Carey wanted to broaden her audience , choosing a more pop / R & B oriented sound . During this time frame , they experimented with different organs and other musical instruments , leading the album 's sound away from her more contemporary previous efforts . Two unused tracks from the album sessions were released as B @-@ sides : " Do You Think of Me " and " Everything Fades Away " .

In order to successfully take the album in a new direction , Carey and Afanasieff sought out new and innovative producers , as well as some from Carey 's previous releases . Kenneth " Babyface " Edmonds first began working with Carey on Music Box , where he helped produce some of the album 's softer and more melodious tracks , as well as being part of the songwriting process . Additional writers and producers were Robert Clivillés and David Cole (a pair also known as C + C Music Factory) and Daryl Simmons . While the album featured a range of different talented music producers , the bulk of the songwriting was done by Carey and her writing partner , Walter Afanasieff . In future projects , they would continue writing material for Carey 's albums , until her 1999 release Rainbow , where he is absent from the writing credits .

Four singles were released from the album . The first three , " Dreamlover " , " Hero " and " Without You " , became worldwide chart @-@ topping singles , the latter becoming Carey 's highest charting international single of her career . " Without You " became Carey 's first number @-@ one single in most European markets and reached the top three in the United States . To promote Music Box , Carey embarked on the short but successful Music Box Tour which traveled to select cities in North America . Carey was nominated for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for " Dreamlover " at the 1994 Grammy Awards and received the same nomination for " Hero " at the 1995 Grammy Awards .

After its release , Music Box received generally mixed reviews from music critics . The album faced criticism regarding Carey 's more mellow and lazy tone in comparison to her previous work . Despite some unfavorable reviews , the album became a commercial success , topping the Billboard 200 and becoming Carey 's first number @-@ one album in Australia , France , Germany , the Netherlands , Switzerland and the United Kingdom . The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certified it diamond , for shipments of ten million copies across the United States . Music Box remains Carey 's highest seller with 32 million copies sold worldwide and is one of the best @-@ selling albums of all time .

= = Background = =

In 1988 , Carey was discovered by Tommy Mottola , CEO of Columbia Records , and was promptly signed to the label . Carey 's self @-@ titled debut studio album , released the following year , focused on re @-@ recording and mastering several songs she had already written in high school alongside classmate , Ben Margulies . Aside from the seven songs taken from Carey 's demo tape , four other tracks were written and produced by the former and an array of famed record producers . The album was complimented by critics , who called it a mature debut , full of various genre influences ranging from pop , R & B and soul . The album became a commercial success , selling fifteen million units globally . While making a strong impact on pop music , Carey became interested in altering her sound , and deviating from pop music for her second studio effort , Emotions (1991) . Following the success of her debut , Columbia allowed her to take more control over her musical departure , enabling her to change her genre infusions , melodies and production .

= = Writing and development = =

With Carey in the captain 's chair , having more control than she had on any other album , she took

the album in a new direction , alongside Afanasieff . For Carey 's third studio effort , she enrolled the help of a range of songwriters , as well as record producers . Aside from Afanasieff , Kenneth " Babyface " Edmonds , a man who would collaborate with Carey often in the near future , also took part in the project . Babyface , who helped produce much of the album , also co @-@ wrote a track with Carey titled " Never Forget You " , a song that was released as a B @-@ side to " Without You " exclusively in the United States . The album , which consisted mostly of slower ballads (with the exception of " Dreamlover " , " Now That I Know " , and " I 've Been Thinking about You ") , contained collaborations with some carry @-@ on producers and writers from Emotions . Of these were Clivillés & Cole (of C + C Music Factory) , who co @-@ wrote the track " Now That I Know " , a danceable pop ballad , which used similar formulas and synthesizers from tracks on Emotions . Another writer ? producer that worked on the album was David Hall , who with Carey wrote the U.S. single " Dreamlover " .

During the album 's recording , Carey worked with several different musicians and producers , aside from Walter Afanasieff , the only hold over from her debut . On the album 's first track " Dreamlover " , Carey worked with Dave Hall throughout the song 's entire production . In order to help with some of the song 's arrangements , Mottola enrolled the help of Walter Afanasieff , who took on the completed track and transformed it into a more commercial hit .

= = Music and lyrics = =

Emotions contains influences from mostly 1950s , 1960s and 1970s balladry and gospel , as well as her continued work of R & B and soul . The album , while praised by some as more mature and raw , failed to reach the critical or commercial heights of her debut effort , while selling far less and failed to introduce Carey into a different market . Following these events , Columbia decided to try to market Carey in a similar fashion to her debut , only having her produce a more commercial and radio @-@ friendly album . Their plans were to tone down Carey 's vocals , and soften the album 's production , leaving a more contemporary pop / R & B record . Agreeing to the change , Carey and Afanasieff began writing and recording material for her third studio effort , Music Box .

One of the noticeable differences from Music Box and Carey 's previous albums is its sound . The album was described by Afanasieff as a softer and more pop @-@ oriented album , " filling the songs with air " , and allowing far more space in the overall sound . Another noticeable change is in the album 's production . When Mariah Carey was released , critics took notice of its " overly produced " and " studio perfect " quality , where in comparison , Emotions maintains a " raw , live sound . " Music Box however , falls in between the two , a decision made by Carey during the album 's production . She would layer each track with live backing vocals , so not to sound too overly produced , but still kept the inclusion of musical synthesizers .

According to Marc Shapiro , Music Box reflects signs of Carey 's vocal maturity , as well as representing an album she was truly proud of . The album 's first single " Dreamlover " was described as a " slight piece of pop fluff , " representing a more commercial side to Carey than the " more ambitious , " " Vision of Love " . Critics believed the song 's chart performance was due to its summer release , as people were still looking for a " not @-@ too @-@ heavy " and more diverse sound . The song 's composition was described as " mid tempo and mildly dance @-@ able , " with Carey 's voice being called " perpetually happy , " like a " little @-@ girl voice . "

= = Songs = =

" Hero " , the album 's second single , was one of Carey 's most inspirational ballads at the time . The song is described as " a lush ballad " , with Carey making use of her impressive , " lower alto register . " As one of the more emotional tracks on the album , " Hero " builds emotion , verse through verse , where the lyrics and melody finally " broke through . " " Anytime You Need a Friend " is another pop ballad in which Carey would , " let her voice roam free " , a feature critics felt lacked on the album . The song featured " rough and low vocals " , as well as some glimpses of Carey 's upper registers . As with most of the songs on Music Box , the lyrics boast a positive message , and

it is the only song on the album to feature traces of gospel @-@ inspired vocals throughout the chorus .

The album 's title track , " Music Box " , is another ballad Carey wrote with Afanasieff . The song is described as one of Carey 's more difficult compositions , due to its " softness " . The song requires a great deal of legato to keep " the tunes softness and sweetness , without resorting to volume . " Carey 's vocals on the track are defined as " soft and controlled , " managing to maintain the delicate balance in a manner that seems effortless , floating easily over the keyboard and the shimmer of the guitar . Lyrically , due to the song 's message of " commitment and promise , " and the " tinkling music @-@ box line played on the synthesizer , " the track gives the sensation of a wedding vow recital . " Never Forget You " is a slow song , further connecting it to the song 's message of " lamenting the loss of love , in a very tender way . " The song contains keyboard notes that hover over the verses and allow Carey to indulge in her backing vocals . It was described by Nickson as a " stand out track , " one that could have easily become a hit single , " with an appeal that would have easily transcended generational barriers . "

= = Critical reception = =

Upon release , the album received mixed reviews from critics . Ron Wynn from Allmusic gave the album 4 out of 5 stars , Roc Wynn of Allmusic said that Carey 's " octave @-@ leaping " voice was downplayed in favor of the demonstration of " her ability to sing softly and coolly . " Although favorably stating that Carey lowered the volume on her vocals , he said that the energy had declined , with the exception of personality @-@ injected songs like " Hero " and " Dreamlover . " Overall , however , he claimed the album 's " different " approach was wise . Ashley S. Battel from Billboard gave the album a positive review , writing , " While Carey tones down the predominance of her tremendous vocal range throughout much of this release , there is no question that she remains the driving force behind yet anoth [e] r collection of heavy @-@ rotation Top @-@ 40 successes . "

David Browne from Entertainment Weekly gave the album a mixed review . He said that due to Carey 's lower energy level , her voice no longer soars above the backup chorus , instead it only " drip [s] over them like syrup instead of overpowering them ; she lets the melodies speak for themselves . " . Browne awarded the album an unenthusiastic score of C + . Stephen Holden of Rolling Stone complimented Carey 's vocals , but found her lyrics " made up entirely of pop and soul clichés " and stated " Music Box is so precisely calculated to be a blockbuster that its impact is ultimately a little unnerving " . However , in his review for The New York Times , Holden wrote that the album " takes aim at the commercial pop mainstream with an even sharper focus " than Carey 's previous albums , while noting " If huge ballads like ' Hero , ' ' Anytime You Need a Friend ' and a gospel @-@ flavored remake of Harry Nilsson 's 1971 hit , ' Without You , ' traffic in pop clichés , they are the top @-@ of @-@ the @-@ line in generic 90 's pop " . In his consumer guide for The Village Voice , critic Robert Christgau gave the album a " dud " rating , indicating " a bad record whose details rarely merit further thought " . In a retrospective review , The New Rolling Stone Album Guide (2004) noted a " soft @-@ rock slump " and stated " While there 's nothing wrong with Carey singing relatively straight for 10 songs , there is a sore lack of power here : baleful soaring ballads , pop optimism along the lines of smiling through the tears and believing in yourself (or him , or Him) , and hardly a decent tune in the lot " .

= = Commercial performance = =

Music Box entered the US Billboard 200 at number two , with 174 @,@ 000 copies sold . In its fifteenth week after release , the album topped the chart and enjoyed its highest sales week in December , selling 295 @,@ 000 copies in its first week atop , 395 @,@ 000 the following week and peaking with 505 @,@ 000 copies sold in year 's final week . It stayed at the top for eight non @-@ consecutive weeks . It remained in the top ten for thirty @-@ one weeks and on the Billboard 200 for 128 weeks (more than two years , longer than any other of her albums) , re @-@ entering the chart three times . The album also reached number one on Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums .

Music Box was the second @-@ best selling album in the United States in 1994 , only behind Ace of Base 's The Sign . In the United States , Music Box became Carey 's best @-@ selling album at the time , being certified diamond by the RIAA , denoting shipments of ten million copies

The album became a success in Canada , peaking at number two on the charts and being certified seven @-@ times platinum by the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA) . Music Box became Carey 's best @-@ seller in Europe , topping the charts in Australia , Germany , Switzerland and the United Kingdom . In Germany , it became her highest @-@ charting album , spending eighty weeks on the German Albums Chart , eleven of which were spent at number one . Germany 's sales of the album were also very impressive , with a certification of double @-@ platinum by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) , for shipments of one million copies . In Australia , the album was certified fourteen @-@ times platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) , denoting shipments of 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 copies . The album finished at number one on the (ARIA) 1994 End of Year Chart . In the United Kingdom , Music Box remains Carey 's highest seller , topping the UK Albums Chart and being certified seven @-@ times platinum . It became a million @-@ selling album in France , receiving a diamond certification and topping the French Album Charts . Sales in France have been estimated at 1 @,@ 418 @,@ 100 . In Brazil , Music Box remains one of the best @-@ selling albums by an international artist , selling 1 @,@ 500 @,@ 000 copies . Music Box finished number twenty @-@ three on the all time album chart in the Netherlands , where it was certified six @-@ times platinum .

In Asia , Music Box became one of the best @-@ selling albums of 1994 , selling 2 @.@ 2 million copies in Japan alone . The album 's sales continued to skyrocket in Asia , topping sales of 600 @,@ 000 in South Korea and 150 @,@ 000 copies in Taiwan as of 1994 . In Singapore and Hong Kong , sales reached 110 @,@ 000 and 100 @,@ 000 copies respectively . Music Box has sold 32 million copies worldwide , and is one of the best @-@ selling albums of all time .

= = Singles = =

" Dreamlover " was released as the album 's first single on July 27 , 1993 . The single debuted at number thirteen on the Billboard Hot 100 , and due to its massive airplay , the song reached the top of the Hot 100 , staying there for eight weeks . Dreamlover topped the charts in Canada , and reached the top @-@ ten in many other countries . The song was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) , denoting shipments of one million copies , as well as receiving a gold certification in Australia and New Zealand . The music video for " Dreamlover " featured " summer scenery , " with scenes of Carey swimming in a pool by a waterfall , lying in a bed of sunflowers , as well as singing in front of hip @-@ hop dancers . The video tried to capture , a " home video " feel , adding to the song 's subtle and airy nature , something that only helped the song dominate the charts " Hero " served as the album 's second single , and was released on October 19 , 1993 . Music critics praised the song , calling it her most directly inspirational song since " Make It Happen " . The song topped the charts in the United States and the top @-@ five in many other major music markets . The music video for " Hero , " featured footage from Carey 's concert at Proctor 's Theatre , as was done for Carey 's following music video for " Without You . "

" Without You " , the album 's third single , became the biggest international hit of Carey 's career . " Without You " reached number three in the United States , but experienced its real success throughout Europe . The song became Carey 's first number one chart topper in France , Germany , Sweden , Switzerland and the United Kingdom , propelling the sales of Music Box throughout the world . Carey brought the song renewed popularity , through her highly successful adaptation . It became one of the " fifty most @-@ played songs of the year " and even outsold Harry Nilsson 's version , receiving many awards and recognition . " Anytime You Need a Friend " , the album 's final single , experienced success on the charts , reaching the top @-@ ten in many countries , as well as peaking at number twelve in the United States . It became the second single in Music Box to perform better throughout Europe than in the U.S.

= = Promotion = =

To promote the album , Carey embarked on her first headlining concert tour , the Music Box Tour . Due to stage fright , Carey had not toured to promote her previous albums and did not originally plan a tour to support Music Box . However , after the continued success of the album and persuasion from Tommy Mottola , Carey agreed . Because Carey did not feel physically or emotionally ready for an extensive tour , six concerts were scheduled , each with many days in between , in order to give her voice time to rest . An extra performance at Proctor 's Theatre was planned ; there , Carey filmed the one @-@ hour special Here Is Mariah Carey for release during the Christmas season .

When tickets went on sale , the concerts did not sell out instantly but sold at a healthy pace . On the opening night , she sang at the Miami Arena . Approximately two @-@ thirds of the venue 's capacity was filled , which worried Carey 's management . However , Carey did not seem to mind and began the show with high spirits . The first show in Miami received scathing reviews ; subsequent shows sold out of tickets and attracted rave reviews .

Aside from touring for the first time in her career , Carey visited various American and European television programs , performing different singles from the album . In late 1993 , Carey appeared on The Arsenio Hall Show , performing both " Dreamlover " and " Hero . " Other 1993 performances included " Hero " on The Jay Leno Show and " Dreamlover " on her first visit to Top of the Pops . Carey continued promoting the album in 1994 , performing " Without You " on a second visit to Top of the Pops , as well as visiting France , Germany , Japan , Spain and Sweden . In the midst of the Music Box Tour , Carey had already begun working with Walter Afanasieff on her holiday album Merry Christmas , which was to be released during the Christmas season of 1994 . Additionally , Carey and Affanasieff reportedly began experimenting with ideas and music for Carey 's 1995 album Daydream .

= = Track listing = =

International edition
Latin American edition

= = Album credits = =

Credits adapted from Music Box album liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications and sales = =