

= So Amazin ' =

So Amazin ' is the third studio album by American singer Christina Milian . The album , her first studio release since 2004 's It 's About Time , was released by Island Records on May 16 , 2006 in the United States . Unlike previous records , which had contributions from many producers , Milian wrote and produced So Amazin ' primarily with hip hop producers Cool & Dre . During production , Milian was mentored by L.A. Reid and executive producer Jay @-@ Z of Def Jam Recordings .

The album 's musical style is primarily urban and R & B , in contrast to the pop sounds of Milian 's previous albums , a change suggested by Island Def Jam . Following criticism over her previous albums for a lack of consistency , Milian had ten of the album 's tracks produced by Cool & Dre . Lyrically , the album was inspired by Milian 's breakup with Nick Cannon . So Amazin ' was completed within a three @-@ month period , and Milian received writing credit for nine of the album 's songs .

The album debuted and peaked at number 11 on the U.S. Billboard 200 , and sold a total of 163 @,@ 000 copies . Internationally , the album charted in the United Kingdom , France and Switzerland . The album 's only single , " Say I " , featuring rapper Jeezy , saw peak positions of number four in the UK , and number 21 in the United States . The critical response to So Amazin ' was mixed . The album 's production and " Say I " were generally praised , while several critics did not feel that the album showcased Milian 's personality . One week after the release of So Amazin ' , Milian was dropped from Island Records .

= = Background = =

Milian 's previous release , It 's About Time (2004) , was her second studio album , but served as her debut in the US . The critical response to the album was mixed to generally negative . The club tracks , most notably lead single " Dip It Low " , were praised ; however , the ballads were said to be disappointing . The album only performed modestly commercially ; it debuted and peaked at number 14 on the Billboard 200 album chart , selling a total of 382 @,@ 000 copies , but managed to achieve Silver certification in the UK by the British Phonographic Industry . The album received a Grammy Award nomination for " Best Contemporary R & B Album " in 2005 .

Following the album 's release , Milian was cast in a lead role in the horror film Pulse , starring alongside Kristen Bell and Ian Somerhalder . Milian traveled to Romania for filming , and later discovered that her then @-@ boyfriend Nick Cannon had cheated on her while she was away . Milian said in an interview , " it was heartbreaking for me . I was a good girl , a really loyal girl ? and I got beat real . "

Whereas Milian 's previous albums had pop and R & B stylings , she was encouraged by Island Def Jam to target a new audience and release an urban record . Explaining the change , Milian said that one of her main problems was that previous releases would often find mainstream success , but would be relatively unsuccessful on urban radio . As an R & B artist , she wanted to build her core audience ? a true fan base that would support her through time ? to increase her career 's longevity . The main purpose of her genre change was to go back to the streets and add to her core audience .

= = Production = =

To create a more urban record , Milian had a list of producers that she wanted to work with for So Amazin ' . She said that in most cases , even when she had R & B producers , most songs would end up being pop instead of R & B. L.A. Reid suggested to Milian that she should work with Cool & Dre , with whom she ended up working with as the first people to start off the album . Although Milian was originally supposed to work with several different music producers , she felt that the chemistry they had in the first week was so " instant and real " that she felt she could not get a better " vibe " with anybody else other than them . Together , they produced four songs in the first few days , which prompted Milian to ask her label if she could continue working with the duo . At the same

time , Cool & Dre called their managers to ask if they could continue working with Milian . Milian felt that it was " just the perfect connection " , and that working with them " just felt so original " . The singer described Cool & Dre as " beat makers " , rather than just hip @-@ hop producers , and believed that she was really able to express herself lyrically through their music .

Milian ended up working with Cool & Dre on the majority of the production of the album , producing ten of the album 's eleven tracks together . Milian also wrote the track " Y 'all Ain 't Nothin ' " with Ne @-@ Yo , which was produced by The Heavyweights . Features on the album include Three 6 Mafia , Young Jeezy , and Dre of Cool & Dre . While working on the song , " Who 's Gonna Ride " , Dre ran into Three 6 Mafia at the studio and they agreed to feature on the song . The album completed within a three @-@ month period , whereas Milian 's previous albums would take six months to a year .

Milian received writing credit for nine songs on the album . Milian did not try to write mainstream records for the radio ; rather , she wrote about " everything , about your life and concentrate on you doing you . " For previous albums , Milian wrote about things that had happened in the past , whereas for So Amazin ' , she focused on the present . She compared the writing process to writing a diary ; whenever she would experience something that she thought would be important , she would write it down for future reference . Milian felt that by writing down true experiences , her songs were like " captured emotion " . When writing songs , Milian said that the amount of time it took to write varied . It would depend on what she was writing about , what was going on in her life , and if it pertained to that exact moment . Sometimes the process was quick , but other times it could take several hours to write an entire song .

Although Milian was a songwriter since her teenagers years , she only felt real growth during the production sessions when Dre told her , " there are no rules " . Previously , Milian would write songs that followed rules , where she would have a hook , a verse , and another verse with similar sound and melody . For So Amazin , she wrote with a " no rules theory " , which was her biggest obstacle while recording the album . She said , " It was just , you know what ? I can change up the melody I can do different things . Sometimes I might get stuck but wait half an hour and it 'll come to you and end up being hot . So that 's probably my biggest obstacle , just stepping away from doing the usual that I know and stepping into something new . Once I got past all that , it was just easy . With flying colors , I started writing all the records . "

= = Composition = =

Milian described So Amazin ' as a " consistent , very real and personal album " . A problem Milian had with her previous album , It 's About Time , was that it did not flow . The various pop and urban influences in that album confused the audience , and Milian wanted So Amazin ' to paint a picture ; " you get led down the whole way , you kinda get to see my growth through one album " . Wanting a more consistent approach for her new album , Milian collaborated with only one team of producers , which made for a greater representation of a " more mature , settled " Milian . The purpose of the album was to record an album that had more realness , so that female fans could relate to what she was singing about . Milian felt that Cool & Dre brought their own style of beats to the album , giving it a " raw feel " and " street credibility " . Marcello " Cool " Valenzano of Cool & Dre said that " we come from an R & B background , and we bringing [sic] something new to the table , a style we think is hot . " For So Amazin ' , Milian knew that she needed to record material that had a " realness " . She wanted to make dance tracks , but also wanted to express more of herself at the same time . Milian found the album to be " so much more real and urban and street " than her previous albums .

The single , " Say I " , is an inspirational and motivational record ; Milian wanted to make a record that would be an inspiration to both her and her fans . Focusing on an urban audience , Milian said the record was " way more an urban record than anything I 've ever done . " The singer felt it was necessary to have Young Jeezy feature because he spoke for the streets , and thought his rap was " a very real message . It pertained to his life . " The track , " Twisted " , was one of the first songs recorded for the album . Lyrically , the song is about liking someone so much that you " can 't even go about [your] day in a normal way " . Milian compared the urban vibe of both tracks and said they

were huge records , " where the music is just big and the hook is just big and you can ? t help but sing [along] . "

Dre features on two tracks , " So Amazing " and " Hot Boy " , which both have a club vibe . Milian thought " So Amazing " had a similar vibe to several performance records she had done in the past . Milian raps in the track and described it as being " really street and sexy " . She also said " Hot Boy " is a " hot one for the streets and for the club and for performance . " " Foolin ' " was written when Milian heard an old record and sampled the line , " if you 're foolin , only foolin " . Hearing the original track , Milian knew she needed to write something original , and wrote about an ex @-@ boyfriend , whom she nicknamed " Mr. Big " , that was still interested in Milian but had a new girlfriend . The album 's final track , " She Don 't Know " , has a Latin vibe and features a Spanish guitar . Being Cuban , Milian wanted to incorporate a Spanish record on the album , and sings in English and Spanish in the song . Taking inspiration from Latin soap operas , Milian wanted to portray a very " dramatic feel " in the song . Lyrically , the song is about two people falling in love ; however , the man has a girlfriend who does not know about the new relationship or that he has moved on .

Milian wrote So Amazin ' based on her own life , and each record pertained to a different aspect , especially focused on relationships . During early production of the album , Milian was dealing with her break @-@ up with actor Nick Cannon and wrote several records based on that . While writing the mid @-@ tempo track " My Lovin ' Goes " , Milian felt she turned a new leaf . She said , " you see the change in So Amazin ' where life was just really coming into place . I was finally becoming the woman that I feel that I am right now . Also , I was leaving old love behind and learning about new types of love . Which is great , whether it be life , and also the dating scene is really nice . " Two tracks which Milian wrote about Cannon were " Gonna Tell Everybody " and " Who 's Gonna Ride " . When Milian and Cool & Dre had discussions , her break @-@ up with Cannon was regularly mentioned . Milian felt a need to express herself , and writing became therapeutic for Milian ; she was able to get through the break @-@ up by writing songs . The production by Cool & Dre also inspired Milian to write the tracks , as she felt comfortable with them and was able to be open .

Milian wrote the hip @-@ hop ballad " Gonna Tell Everybody " about " thinking that I had something good , what happens when it 's over , and going forward with my life . " The track was one of the final songs that Milian wrote about the break @-@ up as it " helped me get it all out " . While the record is about a break @-@ up , it focuses more on closure and moving past it . Milian and Cool & Dre used the melody of the Bone Thugs @-@ n @-@ Harmony song " Tha Crossroads " and changed the lyrics " and I 'm gonna miss everybody " to " and I 'm gonna tell everybody " . The other song , " Who 's Gonna Ride " , has a more street and gangster vibe , and contain more raw lyrics . Milian wrote the track with Dre , which she said helped because hip hop artists write about real things in their lives and are not afraid to say anything . While writing the track , Milian let her guard down and wrote what she was feeling and tried to be real . Lyrically , the song also deals with " the girls that come around and try to take your man . Or the groupie girls that are around , paying attention to the guys on TV that only hang out with them for those reasons . " Milian also said " Who 's Gonna Ride " was the hardest song to write because it was not safe , unlike previous songs she had written . The singer explained writing the lyrics was not hard , but the difficulty came from being real and actually writing about her true feelings . When writing the lyrics , Milian removed several lines that she thought were too harsh .

= = Commercial performance = =

So Amazin ' debuted and peaked at number 11 on the Billboard 200 , selling 54 @,@ 000 copies in its first week and 163 @,@ 000 copies in total . Internationally , the album peaked at number 55 on the Swiss Albums Chart , 67 on the UK Albums Chart , and 139 on the France Albums Chart . The album 's lead single , " Say I " , featured rapper Young Jeezy and had a music video , directed by Ray Kay . The single peaked at number four in the UK , and number 21 in the United States .

In June 2006 , Milian 's representative confirmed that she had left Island Def Jam . Although she was dropped from the label , Milian continued to promote the album through live appearances ,

performing on Power 106 's Summer Splash . Milian hoped to take " Gonna Tell Everybody " , the proposed second single , to another label and shoot a video , but was not able to . Milian revealed in an interview with Rap @-@ Up that she was dropped a week after the release of her album . Milian stated that before the release of So Amazin ' , the label and L.A. Reid knew that the album would not have immediate large sales , since she was targeting a new urban audience , but promised to support her . However , after a week , L.A. Reid called to notify Milian that she had been dropped . The singer believed that it was a budget cut , and the label opted to spend money on Rihanna instead . Milian also dispelled rumors that she was originally offered Rihanna 's song " SOS " .

= = Critical reception = =

The critical response to So Amazin ' was mixed . Metacritic gave the album a Metascore ? a weighted average based on the impressions of a select 12 critical reviews ? of 59 , signifying mixed or average reviews . David Peisner of Maxim gave the album three out of five stars and said that Milian 's " talent is real " , and commended her " silky and sassy " voice . He praised Cool & Dre 's " badass " production , as well as " intoxicating " lead single " Say I " . Clover Hope of Billboard wrote that Milian tried to transform from " sweet pop sweetheart " to " peppy urban soulstress " , but the album could not " pinpoint her true identity " and could " only [scratch] the surface of who she really is . " Hope praised lead single , " Say I " , describing it as " instantly rousing " .

Dan Gennoe of Yahoo ! Music UK said that the production by Cool & Dre ensured for " a cohesive whole , with a clear , unmistakable identity " . He praised single " Say I " , saying it " shimmies to a feisty ghetto strut and Shaft @-@ sized orchestrals " , as well as " Twisted " , " Hot Boy " and " Just A Little Bit " . He described So Amazin ' as " almost the perfect R & B album " , only missing " a couple of killer singles " . Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine wrote that while Milian claimed that she was " proudly displaying the various sides of her multifaceted personality " , he felt that " only personality displayed on So Amazin ' is that of her contemporaries and predecessors " . He felt that contrary to the album 's title , " So Amazin ' proves to be anything but " .

Andy Kellman , of review website Allmusic , felt that So Amazin ' was " Milian 's strongest album yet , if only by a narrow margin " . He said that the album was short on ideas , with Cool & Dre using beats from some of their recent hits . He felt that Milian 's weakness was ballads , which were " more like placeholders that merely apply some forced variety to the album " ; but described the club tracks as " perfectly functional and appealing " . Spence Dookey of IGN gave the album a 6 @. @ 9 out of 10 and said that " Milian glistens most brightly on the tracks that are the most stripped down , such as ' Gonna Tell Everybody ' " . He said given the nature of the style of music Milian was practicing , " there 's a fair share of rump shaking club jams offsetting the more slow tempo fare " . Dookey described single " Say I " as " a poundingly theatrical ditty " , and " Foolin ' " as one of the " few tracks that genuinely attempts to lift Milian up from the generic R & B / club stylings " . The reviewer found the overall sound was the album 's biggest flaw ; " the production rings with a sense of detached hollowness ... The result is an album severely lacking any of the warmth that usually accompanies R & B. Milian 's hauntingly beautiful voice deserves to be wrapped in a sunny glow of organic vibes . " Quentin B. Huff of PopMatters praised the album , " despite a few lyrical hiccups , a couple of lackluster hooks , and some obvious influences . "

= = Track listing = =

" Say I " (featuring Jeezy) (Bunny Sigler , Jay Jenkins , Phil Hurtt , Andre Lyon , Marcello Valenzano , Jazmine Sullivan) ? 3 : 33

" Twisted " (Lyon , Sullivan , Valenzano , Leon Ware) ? 4 : 00

" Gonna Tell Everybody " (Anthony Henderson , Steven Howse , Ernie Isley , Marvin Isley , O 'Kelly Isley , Jr . , Ronald Isley , Lyon , Milian , Eddie Montilla , Valenzano) ? 4 : 20

" Who 's Gonna Ride " (featuring Three 6 Mafia) (Paul Beauregard , Albert Bouchard , Jordan Houston , Lyon , Milian , David Roter , Valenzano) ? 4 : 10

" So Amazing " (featuring Dre) (Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) ? 3 : 20

" Hot Boy " (featuring Dre) (Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) ? 3 : 53

" Foolin ' " (Lyon , Milian , Pam Sawyer , Valenzano , Ware) ? 4 : 05

" My Lovin ' Goes " (Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) ? 4 : 00

" Just a Little Bit " (Vinnie Barrett , Bobby Eli , John Freeman Jr . , Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) ? 3 : 05

" Y 'all Ain 't Nothin ' " (Milian , Ne @-@ Yo , Melvin Sparkman) ? 4 : 18

" She Don 't Know " (Jeff Barnell , Bernard Dahan , Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) ? 4 : 35

Bonus tracks

" Wind You Up " (Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) (Japanese bonus track) ? 3 : 42

" Tonight " (Lyon , Milian , Valenzano) (UK / Japanese bonus track) ? 3 : 40

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts = =