

= Circus (Britney Spears album) =

Circus is the sixth studio album by American recording artist Britney Spears . It was released on November 28 , 2008 , by JIVE Records . Looking to transition from her " darker and more urban " fifth studio album Blackout (2007) , Spears wanted to make her next project " a little bit lighter " , incorporating electropop and dance @-@ pop styles . Spears recorded the record during the summer of 2008 , after her much @-@ publicized personal struggles saw her placement under a temporary conservatorship earlier that year . As executive producers , Larry Rudolph and Teresa LaBarbera Whites enlisted collaborators including Spears ' longtime colleague Max Martin and Nate " Danja " Hills .

Upon its release , Circus received generally favorable reviews from music critics , who complimented its production but were ambivalent towards its lyrical content . It debuted at number one on the US Billboard 200 with first @-@ week sales of over 505 @, @ 000 copies , making it her fifth album to reach the top of the chart . The album topped charts in nine additional countries . The record eventually exceeded sales of 3 @. @ 5 million copies and 15 million digital tracks , in doing so it became Spears ' best @-@ selling album since her fourth studio album In the Zone (2003) . The project was promoted through a series of television performances and Spears ' fifth concert tour The Circus Starring Britney Spears .

Four singles were released from the album , two of which became international successes . Its lead single " Womanizer " peaked atop the US Billboard Hot 100 and registered as the largest jump to the top of the chart after debuting at number ninety @-@ six . It became Spears 's best @-@ selling song in the country since " ... Baby One More Time " , and gained a Grammy Award nomination for Best Dance Recording . The second and third singles " Circus " and " If U Seek Amy " peaked at numbers three and nineteen in the country , respectively . Consequentially , Circus became Spears 's second album after her debut effort ... Baby One More Time (1999) to have two top ten singles and three top @-@ twenty hits , also being her first to have two top five hits in the United States along with five charting songs on the Hot 100 . Like their sixth album , this one also features CDVU + technology that includes more than 30 pages of bonus features with an exclusive video performance , 60 printable photos , complete album lyrics , downloadable graphics , and hidden links . In addition , the packaging of the album is made from 100 % recycled materials .

= = Background and development = =

During the summer of 2008 , it was confirmed that Spears was in the process of recording her sixth studio album . With the album 's announcement came the additional confirmation of the involvement of producers Sean Garrett , Guy Sigsworth , Danja and Bloodshy & Avant . During its development , Garrett and vocal producer Jim Beanz complimented Spears 's work ethic after her much @-@ publicized personal struggles the previous year .

Spears chose to write much of the material for the album and worked to develop a more pop @-@ influenced record with collaborators she had worked with earlier in her career . She stated that Circus marked the longest time she had spent recording an album , adding , " I think it is more urban [...] I 'm writing every day , right here at the piano in this living room " and also described the album as her best work to date .

Producer Claude Kelly discussed the album 's initial lack of concept saying , " When I went in with [Dr. Luke] we knew we were going to maybe write something for [Britney] , but there was no concept , it was just knowing her style and knowing what she does . Max Martin , who produced Spears 's first hit " ... Baby One More Time " , produced " If U Seek Amy " for the album . The Outsyders , an Atlanta @-@ based production team , produced the album 's first single , while Fernando Garibay worked on two bonus songs for Spears . Danja reported that he worked on the tracks at Chalice Recording Studios in Los Angeles , and Spears recorded them at Glenwood Place Studios in Burbank ; the Canadian trio Let 's Go to War co @-@ wrote and produced the track " Mmm Papi " . Lil Jon , Rodney Jerkins , Sean Garrett , and Taio Cruz , announced they were working with Spears , though their tracks are not included on the official track listing .

Spears commented of the album 's title , " I like the fact that you 're always on the edge of your seat when you 're at a circus . You 're never bored [...] You 're just really engulfed in what 's going on around you . And you want to know what 's going to happen next . " The album shared a release date with the similarly titled album The Circus by British group Take That . Circus was initially scheduled to be released worldwide on December 2 , 2008 , on Spears 's 27th birthday . However , after unauthorized online leaks , imeem began streaming the album from their website on November 25 .

= = Composition = =

Circus has been described as a sequel to Spears 's fifth studio album Blackout , taking influence from pop genres , including electropop and dance . She described the album as " lighter " than Blackout , which was more urban sounding . Its " fiery " and " confrontational " lyrics have been also compared to those of its predecessor . The album has been compared to the works of Janet Jackson , Eurythmics , New Order and the songwriting of Prince , Leiber & Stoller and Phil Spector . Circus incorporates themes that were acknowledged in Spears 's earlier work . " Circus " and " Kill the Lights " discuss fame , which was previously seen in " Piece of Me " , while " Womanizer " and " Shattered Glass " talk about a womanizing man .

Circus opens with its lead single " Womanizer " . It features synth sirens with a repetitive chorus , and lyrically discusses a cheating man ; it was described by Spears as a girl anthem . " Circus " addresses her feelings as an entertainer and performing , highlighted in the lines " All eyes on me in the centre of the ring just like a circus / When I crack that whip everybody gonna trip just like a circus " . Its electronic dance elements were compared to those of Spears 's earlier single " Break the Ice " . The ballad " Out from Under " incorporates acoustic guitar backings , and has gathered comparisons to her track " I 'm Not a Girl , Not Yet a Woman " . " Kill the Lights " is a dance @-@ pop song that talks about Spears 's conflict with paparazzi . Critics noted similarities to the works of Madonna. as well as Spears 's own " Piece of Me " . " Shattered Glass " utilizes dark electronic beats and details a non @-@ repairable relationship .

" If U Seek Amy " integrates " glam @-@ rave " elements with traditional pop styles ; it gained controversy for its double entendre , where the title sounds phonetically like " F @-@ U @-@ C @-@ K me " . The electropop track " Unusual You " deals with a woman finding unexpected love . It has been compared to musical themes from the 1980s and 1990s , and has been noted as a " pulsating ballad " , with the song also drawing comparisons to the " shimmering waterfall mood first popularized by Janet Jackson " . " Blur " sees the inclusion of urban influences , and lyrically recalls the morning after a party with lyrics " Can 't remember what I did last night / I gotta get my head right , where the hell am I ? Who are you ? What 'd we do last night ? " ; it drew similarities to Spears 's prior song " Early Mornin " . " Mmm Papi " draws elements from a 1960s go @-@ go rock guitar and Latin @-@ pop dance hall themes . Despite its " fun " nature , it was criticized for appearing to " revisit the Lolita persona of " ? Baby One More Time " . It has been suggested that its lyrics deal with either Spears 's father Jamie or paparazzi Adnan Ghalib . " Mannequin " is a dance @-@ pop song with a trip hop influence ; while being noted for its " risky " and " futuristic " nature , it has also been suggested that Spears 's vocals sounded " lifeless " . " Lace and Leather " gained comparisons to " Control era Janet Jackson " , Prince , and Vanity 6 's works from the 1980s and featured a then @-@ unknown Kesha as a backing vocalist . " My Baby " , described as having a " faux @-@ Janet Jackson vocal " , was written by Spears about her two sons Sean Preston Federline and Jayden James Federline , and closes the album .

= = Singles = =

" Womanizer " was released on September 26 , 2008 as the album 's lead single . The song was met with positive response from critics , who complimented its hook and empowering lyrics and deemed it as a return of form and a " comeback " single for Spears . Womanizer debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 at number ninety @-@ six before jumping the next week to number one . The

song broke the record for the largest leap to any position . The record was later broken by Kelly Clarkson 's " My Life Would Suck Without You " . The song is considered one of Spears 's biggest hits and has been covered by several other artists . " Womanizer " has sold over 3 @, @ 200 @, @ 000 digital downloads in the United States . The music video premiered on October 18 , 2008 as a sequel to that of her 2004 hit single " Toxic " . It portrays Spears as a woman who disguises herself in different costumes and follows her boyfriend through his daily activities to expose him in the end .

" Circus " was released on December 4 , 2008 as the album 's second single , a day earlier than planned due to unauthorized leaks . It debuted and peaked at number three on the Billboard Hot 100 . " Circus " has sold over 2 @, @ 763 @, @ 000 digital downloads in the United States . The accompanying music video portrays Spears as a ringleader of a circus accompanied by different performers , and features scenes of Spears in different circus settings . The video received positive reviews from critics , but was criticized for featuring " cruelly trained animals " , however claims were dismissed . It won a Best Video award on Fuse TV .

" If U Seek Amy " was released on March 10 , 2009 as the album 's third single . Sharon Dastur of Z100 stated that Spears had recorded a new version of the song and the new edit would be provided by JIVE Records . The Parents Television Council (PTC) threatened to file indecency complaints with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) against any station that played the song between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The song peaked at number nineteen on the Hot 100 . The music video was released on March 12 , 2009 , and depicts Spears poking fun at American culture .

" Radar " was originally included on Blackout and to be released as its fourth and final single . However , its release was canceled when Spears began work on Circus , and was instead released as a promotional single in 2008 . " Radar " was included as a bonus track on Circus and was released as the album 's fourth and final single on June 23 , 2009 . The music video portrays Spears as an aristocrat at a polo mansion involved in a love triangle with two men who are polo players . " Radar " originally entered the Billboard Digital songs chart at number fifty @-@ two due to digital downloads from Blackout and after being confirmed as a single entered the Billboard Hot 100 at number ninety and then peaked the following week at number eighty @-@ eight .

= = Promotion = =

To promote the album , JIVE Records set up a hotline where fans could leave a message for Spears , some of which received a return phone call from her . Some songs were previewed through the website of the New York radio station WKTU and Amazon.com. MTV aired a 90 @-@ minute documentary , Britney : For the Record , on November 30 , 2008 , documenting her return to her career . In May 2009 , JIVE 's official website held a Britney Spears Global Fan @-@ Fiction Contest , which required a fan to submit a 200 @-@ word story based on one of the songs from Circus . The public were allowed to vote for their favorite short story which would be produced into an animated music video . The winning story was based on the song " Kill the Lights " ; the video premiered on July 27 , 2009 .

Spears 's live comeback began on November 6 , 2008 with a cameo appearance at the Dodger Stadium show of Madonna 's Sticky & Sweet Tour . Midway through the performance of " Human Nature " , Spears joined Madonna on stage . The week prior to the album 's release , Spears performed in several countries as part of the Circus Promo Tour . On November 27 , 2008 , Spears performed " Womanizer " live at the Bambi Awards in Offenburg , Germany , where she received an award for Best Pop International Artist . In addition , she performed the song on Star Academy in France the following day and on The X Factor in the United Kingdom on November 29 . Her performance on The X Factor was watched by an average of 11 @, @ 880 @, @ 000 UK citizens . Spears premiered her second single " Circus " on the Big Apple Circus at the Good Morning America in New York , and also performed " Womanizer " on December 2 , 2008 which coincides with her 27th birthday and the release of the album . On December 16 , 2008 , she performed on NTV Japan 's @-@ 3000 Best Artist of 2008 .

= = = The Circus Starring Britney Spears = = =

While performing on Good Morning America on December 2, 2008, Spears announced her fifth worldwide concert tour, titled The Circus Starring Britney Spears. She first revealed the first leg of 25 dates in the United States and two in the United Kingdom. Her longtime manager, Larry Rudolf stated that the tour would "blow people's minds and promises to show Britney's fans something they will never forget", later adding, "she goes full @-@ speed the whole show? about an hour and a half. It's pretty intense. This is a full @-@ blown, full @-@ out Britney Spears show, It is everything everybody expects from her? and more!" Spears also expressed excitement in including songs from Blackout into the setlist, as she did not tour to promote it. The tour began on March 3, 2009 in New Orleans' New Orleans Arena and finished in Adelaide's Adelaide Entertainment Centre. There were four legs of the tour, visiting North America twice, and others being Europe and Australia. The stage was composed of three rings and set in @-@ the @-@ round to resemble an actual circus. Fashion designers Dean and Dan Caten created the costumes. A giant cylinder screen was set above the stage to showcase videos and backdrops. Effects were provided by Solotech. The set list was composed generally from her albums In the Zone, Blackout and Circus. In June 2009, Britney announced she would tour Australia for the first time; she was also rumored to tour South America, though her manager Adam Leber denied this despite their efforts to do so.

Controversy arose during the Australian leg of the tour after several fans walked out of the performances due to Spears's alleged "lip @-@ synching"; such claims were later denied by Spears's management and promoters. The tour was ranked as the fourth highest grossing tour of the year in North America, becoming the highest grossing tour of the year by a solo artist. In February 2010, Pollstar released their Top 50 Worldwide Concert Tours of 2009. The tour ranked as the fifth highest @-@ grossing tour, worldwide, of the year, with a gross of \$ 131 @.@ 8 million. In May 2010, Hollyscoop ranked the tour at the fifth position in their 15 Most Profitable Female Tours Ever list.

= = Critical reception = =

Upon its release, Circus received generally favorable reviews from music critics. At Metacritic, which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics, Circus received an average score of 64, based on 22 reviews, indicating "generally favorable reviews". Stephen Thomas Erlewine provided a favorable review, describing it as a "friendly remake of the hedonistic Blackout", but preferred its predecessor for being more "sleek or addictive" than Circus. Genevieve Koski of The A.V. Club appreciated that Spears appeared to "put some real effort into her Circus performances", rather than seeming "flat @-@ sounding" as she felt Blackout had. Writing for Digital Spy, Nick Levine opined that Spears "sounds more confident" than she had on Blackout. While Chris Willman from Entertainment Weekly appreciated the overall production of Circus, he was critical of Spears' recently established pattern of "putting out albums with titles that promise more self @-@ revelation than she's ultimately able to provide."

Robert Christgau gave Circus a two @-@ star honorable mention, stating that it was "still fun more often than not". Jon Pareles of The New York Times expressed his enjoyment of the "crisp" material that incorporated "catchy melodic interludes". Caryn Ganz from Rolling Stone opined that the "clubby, adventurous pop" included on the album could have been a satisfactory successor to her fourth album In the Zone (2003). Writing for USA Today, Steve Jones applauded Spears for being "resilient" and "[knowing] who she is as a singer" and not "[wasting] time searching for artistic direction or overthinking her appeal." The Village Voice considered it "no better or worse than Janet Jackson's dominatrix @-@ lite Discipline."

Alexis Petridis of The Guardian gave a more mixed review, suggesting that Spears appeared "frequently sounds disconnected, even a bit bored" throughout the record, whereas Blackout was a "relentless, risky album made by a woman whose obituary was apparently being prepared by Associated Press." A writer for The Independent gave a negative review, opining that Spears' vocal delivery sounded emotionless in mid @-@ tempo and ballad @-@ paced tracks. Slant

Magazine 's Eric Henderson shared a similar sentiment , suggesting that the album 's " self @-@ actualization " gave off a " hollow " feel through the majority of the record . Ann Powers from Los Angeles Times felt that Circus served as a " bang @-@ up job " of stating that " Spears is still a young woman trying to manage an impossible situation . " Writing for NME , Hamish MacBain was disappointed that " Spears is quite simply rubbish at being sexy " , adding that Circus is the " umpteenth attempt to turn the perceived chaos of Britney 's transition to adulthood ? she 's 27 next week ! ? into sleazy , raunchy , dirrty adult @-@ pop product . "

= = Commercial performance = =

Circus debuted at the top of the US Billboard 200 , with first @-@ week sales of over 505 @,@ 000 copies . The album has spent nine weeks in the top 10 , making it Spears 's longest @-@ running top 10 album since *Oops ! ... I Did It Again* , which spent twenty @-@ three weeks in the top 10 in 2000 . Circus was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America on January 29 , 2009 . According to Nielsen SoundScan , as of March 2015 , the album has sold 1 @.@ 7 million copies in the United States . With over 51 @,@ 000 units sold , the album opened at number @-@ one in the Canadian Albums Chart , her best sales effort since *Oops ! ... I Did It Again* , which sold 95 @,@ 000 copies in May 2000 . In less than a month , Circus became the ninth best @-@ selling album of 2008 , with 143 @,@ 000 copies , and one of the top ten selling digital albums of the same year with over 10 @,@ 100 downloads . In March 2009 , Circus was certified 3 × platinum by the Canadian Recording Industry Association , denoting 240 @,@ 000 shipped copies to retailers . In Mexico , the album debuted at the top of the international chart and at number three in the overall chart , selling over 46 @,@ 000 copies and going gold in its first week .

In Oceania , the album was a top 10 success , debuting at number three in Australia and being certified Platinum after three weeks for shipments of 70 @,@ 000 units . It has since gone on to be certified 2 × platinum for shipments of 140 @,@ 000 units . In the United Kingdom the album debuted and peaked at number 4 in the United Kingdom albums chart spending thirty @-@ one weeks on the chart . The album was certified Platinum in the United Kingdom . In France the album sold 18 @,@ 319 copies in its first two days of release , debuting at number five on the French Weekly Album Charts . In Asia the album charted in the Japanese Oricon albums chart peaking at number 5 on the albums chart and gaining a Gold certification .

Despite not being released as singles , several songs from " Circus " appeared on Billboard 's component charts after the album 's release . " Shattered Glass " , peaked at number seventy on Billboard Hot 100 , higher than the album 's fourth single " Radar " . It peaked at number twenty @-@ nine on U.S. Hot Digital Songs , while peaking at number thirty @-@ six on Canadian Hot Digital Songs . The song also entered the Pop 100 chart , peaking at number fifty @-@ seven . " Lace and Leather " peaked at number eighty @-@ four on Billboard Pop 100 , while " Mmm Papi " peaked at number ninety @-@ four on the same chart . " Out from Under " also charted in Sweden . The song debuted at number forty on the week of August 14 , 2009 , reaching number thirty @-@ two on the following . It stayed on the chart for five weeks .

= = Track listing = =

Notes

^ a signifies a vocal producer

^ b signifies a co @-@ producer

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from AllMusic .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =