

= Madonna (entertainer) =

Madonna Louise Ciccone (/ tʃoʊni /) (born August 16 , 1958) is an American singer , songwriter , dancer , actress , and businesswoman . She achieved popularity by pushing the boundaries of lyrical content in mainstream popular music and imagery in her music videos , which became a fixture on MTV . Madonna is known for reinventing both her music and image , and for maintaining her autonomy within the recording industry . Music critics have acclaimed her musical productions , which have generated some controversy . Referred to as the " Queen of Pop " , Madonna is often cited as an influence by other artists .

Born in Bay City , Michigan , Madonna moved to New York City in 1977 to pursue a career in modern dance . After performing in the music groups Breakfast Club and Emmy , she signed with Sire Records (an auxiliary label of Warner Bros. Records) in 1982 and released her self @-@ titled debut album the following year . She followed it with a series of commercially and critically successful albums , including the Grammy Award winners Ray of Light (1998) and Confessions on a Dance Floor (2005) . Throughout her career , Madonna has written and produced most of her songs , with many of them reaching number one on the record charts , including " Like a Virgin " , " Papa Don 't Preach " , " Like a Prayer " , " Vogue " , " Take a Bow " , " Frozen " , " Music " , " Hung Up " , and " 4 Minutes " .

Madonna 's popularity was further enhanced by her film roles , including Desperately Seeking Susan (1985) , Dick Tracy (1990) , and Evita (1996) ; the latter earned her a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress . However , most of her other films have been panned by critics . Her other ventures include fashion design , writing children 's books , and filmmaking . She has been acclaimed as a businesswoman , particularly after she founded entertainment company Maverick (including the label Maverick Records) . In 2007 she signed an unprecedented US \$ 120 million 360 deal with Live Nation , which led to a record deal with Interscope Records .

Having sold more than 300 million records worldwide , Madonna is recognized as the best @-@ selling female recording artist of all time by Guinness World Records . The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) listed her as the best @-@ selling female rock artist of the 20th century and the second highest @-@ certified female artist in the United States , with 64 @.@ 5 million album units . Madonna is the highest @-@ grossing solo touring artist of all time , earning US \$ 1 @.@ 31 billion from her concerts since 1990 . Madonna became one of the five founding members of the UK Music Hall of Fame and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in her first year of eligibility . She was ranked at number one on VH1 's list of 100 Greatest Women in Music and number two (behind only The Beatles) on Billboard 's list of Greatest Hot 100 Artists of All Time .

= = Life and career = =

= = = 1958 ? 81 : Early life and career beginnings = = =

Madonna was born to Catholic parents Silvio Anthony " Tony " Ciccone (b . 1931) and Madonna Louise Fortin (c . 1933 ? December 1 , 1963) in Bay City , Michigan , on August 16 , 1958 . Her father 's parents were immigrants from Pacentro , Italy , while her mother was of French @-@ Canadian ancestry . Tony worked as an engineer designer for Chrysler and General Motors . Since Madonna had the same name as her mother , family members called her " Little Nonni " . She has two elder brothers , Anthony (born 1956) and Martin (born 1957) , and three younger siblings , Paula (born 1959) , Christopher (born 1960) , and Melanie (born 1962) .

Upon being confirmed in 1966 , she adopted Veronica as a confirmation name . She was raised in the Detroit suburbs of Pontiac and Avon Township (now Rochester Hills) . Months before her mother died of breast cancer , Madonna noticed changes in her behavior and personality , although she did not understand the reason . Her mother was at a loss to explain her medical condition , and often began to cry when Madonna questioned her about it . Madonna later acknowledged that she

had not grasped the concept of her mother dying .

Madonna turned to her paternal grandmother for solace . The Ciccone siblings resented housekeepers and invariably rebelled against anyone brought into their home ostensibly to take the place of their beloved mother . Madonna later told Vanity Fair that she saw herself in her youth as a " lonely girl who was searching for something . I wasn 't rebellious in a certain way . I cared about being good at something . I didn 't shave my underarms and I didn 't wear make @-@ up like normal girls do . But I studied and I got good grades I wanted to be somebody . " Terrified that her father Tony could be taken from her as well , Madonna was often unable to sleep unless she was near him .

In 1966 , Tony married the family 's housekeeper Joan Gustafson ; they had two children , Jennifer (born 1967) and Mario (born 1968) . At this point , Madonna started to resent him for decades , and developed a rebellious attitude . She attended St. Frederick 's and St. Andrew 's Catholic Elementary Schools , and West Middle School . Madonna was known for her high grade point average , and achieved notoriety for her unconventional behavior . She would perform cartwheels and handstands in the hallways between classes , dangle by her knees from the monkey bars during recess , and pull up her skirt during class ? all so that the boys could see her underwear .

Madonna later attended Rochester Adams High School where she became a straight @-@ A student and a member of the cheerleading squad . After graduating , she received a dance scholarship to the University of Michigan School of Music , Theatre & Dance , and attended the American Dance Festival over the summer . She convinced her father to allow her to take ballet lessons and was persuaded by Christopher Flynn , her ballet teacher , to pursue a career in dance .

In 1978 , she dropped out of college and relocated to New York City . She had little money and worked as a waitress at Dunkin ' Donuts and with modern dance troupes , taking classes at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and eventually performing with Pear Lang Dance Theater . Madonna said of her move to New York , " It was the first time I 'd ever taken a plane , the first time I 'd ever gotten a taxi cab . I came here with \$ 35 in my pocket . It was the bravest thing I 'd ever done . " She started to work as a backup dancer for other established artists . Madonna claimed that during a late night she was returning from a rehearsal , when a pair of men held her at knifepoint and forced her to perform fellatio . Madonna later commented that " the episode was a taste of my weakness , it showed me that I still could not save myself in spite of all the strong @-@ girl show . I could never forget it . "

While performing as a backup singer and dancer for the French disco artist Patrick Hernandez on his 1979 world tour , Madonna became romantically involved with musician Dan Gilroy . Together , they formed her first rock band , the Breakfast Club , for which Madonna sang and played drums and guitar . In 1980 or 1981 she left Breakfast Club and , with her former boyfriend Stephen Bray as drummer , formed the band Emmy . The two began writing songs together , and Madonna later decided to market herself as a solo act . Their music impressed DJ and record producer Mark Kamins who arranged a meeting between Madonna and Sire Records founder Seymour Stein .

= = = 1982 ? 85 : Career breakthrough and first marriage = = =

After Madonna signed a singles deal with Sire , her debut single , " Everybody " , was released in October 1982 , and the second , " Burning Up " , in March 1983 . Both became big club hits in the United States , reaching number three on Hot Dance Club Songs chart compiled by Billboard magazine . After this success , she started developing her debut album , Madonna , which was primarily produced by Reggie Lucas of Warner Bros. However , she was not happy with the completed tracks and disagreed with Lucas ' production techniques , so decided to seek additional help .

Madonna moved in with boyfriend John " Jellybean " Benitez , asking his help for finishing the album 's production . Benitez remixed most of the tracks and produced " Holiday " , which was her third single and her first international top @-@ ten hit . The overall sound of Madonna was dissonant and in the form of upbeat synthetic disco , using some of the new technology of the time , like the Linn drum machine , Moog bass and the OB @-@ X synthesizer . The album was released in July

1983 and peaked at number eight on the Billboard 200 six months later , in 1984 . It yielded two more top @-@ ten singles on the Billboard Hot 100 , " Borderline " and " Lucky Star " .

Madonna 's look and style of dressing , her performances , and her music videos influenced young girls and women . Her style became one of the female fashion trends of the 1980s . Created by stylist and jewelry designer Maripol , the look consisted of lace tops , skirts over capri pants , fishnet stockings , jewelry bearing the crucifix , bracelets , and bleached hair . Madonna achieved global recognition after the release of her second studio album , *Like a Virgin* , in November 1984 . It topped the charts in several countries and became her first number @-@ one album on the Billboard 200 . The title track , " Like a Virgin " , topped the Hot 100 chart for six consecutive weeks . It attracted the attention of organizations who complained that the song and its accompanying video promoted premarital sex and undermined family values , and moralists sought to have the song and video banned .

Madonna was criticized for her performance of " Like a Virgin " at the first 1984 MTV Video Music Awards (VMA) . She appeared on stage atop a giant wedding cake , wearing a wedding dress and white gloves . The performance is noted by MTV as an iconic moment in VMA history . In later years , Madonna commented that she was terrified of the performance . The next hit was " Material Girl " promoted by her video , a mimicry of Marilyn Monroe 's performance of the song " Diamonds Are a Girl 's Best Friend " from the 1953 film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* . While filming this video , Madonna started dating actor Sean Penn . They married on her birthday in 1985 . *Like a Virgin* was certified diamond by the Recording Industry Association of America and sold more than 21 million copies worldwide . In February 1984 , according to the film director Sir Richard Attenborough , Madonna auditioned at the Royale Theatre on Broadway for a dance role in his movie version of *A Chorus Line* using her birth @-@ name of Ciccone , but he rejected her .

Madonna entered mainstream films in February 1985 , beginning with a brief appearance as a club singer in *Vision Quest* , a romantic drama film . Its soundtrack contained two new singles , her U.S. number @-@ one single , " Crazy for You " and " Gambler " . She also played the title role in the 1985 comedy *Desperately Seeking Susan* , a film which introduced the song " Into the Groove " , her first number @-@ one single in the UK . Although Madonna was not the lead actress for the film , her profile was such that the movie widely became considered (and marketed) as a Madonna vehicle . The New York Times film critic Vincent Canby named it one of the ten best films of 1985 .

Beginning in April 1985 , Madonna embarked on her first concert tour in North America , *The Virgin Tour* , with the Beastie Boys as her opening act . She progressed from playing CBGB and the Mudd Club to playing large sporting arenas . At that time she released two more hit singles from the album , " Angel " and " Dress You Up " . In July , Penthouse and Playboy magazines published a number of nude photos of Madonna , taken in New York in 1978 . She had posed for the photographs as she needed money at the time , and was paid as little as \$ 25 a session . The publication of the photos caused a media uproar , but Madonna remained " unapologetic and defiant " . The photographs were ultimately sold for up to \$ 100 @,@ 000 . She referred to these events at the 1985 outdoor Live Aid charity concert , saying that she would not take her jacket off because " [the media] might hold it against me ten years from now . "

= = = 1986 ? 91 : True Blue , Who 's That Girl , and Like a Prayer = = =

In June 1986 , Madonna released her third studio album , *True Blue* , which was inspired by and dedicated to Sean Penn . Rolling Stone magazine was generally impressed with the effort , writing that the album " sound [s] as if it comes from the heart " . It resulted in three singles making it to number @-@ one on the Billboard Hot 100 : " Live to Tell " , " Papa Don 't Preach " and " Open Your Heart " , and two more top @-@ five singles : " True Blue " and " La Isla Bonita " . The album topped the charts in over 28 countries worldwide , an unprecedented achievement at the time , and became her best @-@ selling studio album of her career to this date with sales of 25 million . In the same year , Madonna starred in the critically panned film *Shanghai Surprise* , for which she received her first Golden Raspberry Award for Worst Actress . She made her theatrical debut in a production of David Rabe 's *Goose and Tom* @-@ Tom ; the film and play both co @-@ starred Penn . The next

year , Madonna was featured in the film *Who 's That Girl* . She contributed four songs to its soundtrack , including the title track and " *Causing a Commotion* " .

Madonna embarked on the *Who 's That Girl World Tour* in July 1987 , which continued until September . It broke several attendance records , including over 130 @, @ 000 audience in a concert near Paris , which remains her biggest concert attendance ever . Later that year , she released a remix album of past hits , titled *You Can Dance* , which reached number 14 on the *Billboard 200* . After an annulment in December 1987 , Madonna filed for divorce from Penn in January 1989 , citing irreconcilable differences .

In January 1989 , Madonna signed an endorsement deal with soft @-@ drink manufacturer , Pepsi . In one of her Pepsi commercials , she debuted her song " *Like a Prayer* " . The corresponding music video featured many Catholic symbols such as stigmata and cross burning , and a dream of making love to a saint , leading the Vatican to condemn the video . Religious groups sought to ban the commercial and boycott Pepsi products . Pepsi revoked the commercial and canceled her sponsorship contract . The song was included on Madonna 's fourth studio album , *Like a Prayer* , which was co @-@ written and co @-@ produced by Patrick Leonard and Stephen Bray . Madonna received positive feedback for the album , with *Rolling Stone* writing that it was " as close to art as pop music gets " . *Like a Prayer* peaked at number one on the *Billboard 200* and sold 15 million copies worldwide , with 4 million copies sold in the U.S. alone . Six singles were released from the album , including " *Like a Prayer* " , which reached number one , and " *Express Yourself* " and " *Cherish* " , both peaking at number two . By the end of the 1980s , Madonna was named as the " *Artist of the Decade* " by MTV , *Billboard* and *Musician* magazine .

Madonna starred as *Breathless Mahoney* in the film *Dick Tracy* (1990) , with Warren Beatty playing the title role . Her performance led to a Saturn Award nomination for Best Actress . To accompany the film , she released the soundtrack album , *I 'm Breathless* , which included songs inspired by the film 's 1930s setting . It also featured the US number @-@ one hit " *Vogue* " and " *Sooner or Later* " , which earned songwriter Stephen Sondheim an Academy Award for Best Original Song in 1991 . While shooting the film , Madonna began a relationship with Beatty , which dissolved by the end of 1990 . In April 1990 , Madonna began her *Blond Ambition World Tour* , which was held until August . *Rolling Stone* called it an " elaborately choreographed , sexually provocative extravaganza " and proclaimed it " the best tour of 1990 " . The tour generated strong negative reaction from religious groups for her performance of " *Like a Virgin* " , during which two male dancers caressed her body before she simulated masturbation . In response , Madonna said , " The tour in no way hurts anybody 's sentiments . It 's for open minds and gets them to see sexuality in a different way . Their own and others " . The Laserdisc release of the tour won Madonna a Grammy Award in 1992 for Best Long Form Music Video .

The *Immaculate Collection* , Madonna 's first greatest @-@ hits compilation album , was released in November 1990 . It included two new songs , " *Justify My Love* " and " *Rescue Me* " . The album was certified diamond by RIAA and sold over 30 million copies worldwide , becoming the best @-@ selling compilation album by a solo artist in history . " *Justify My Love* " reached number one in the U.S. and top ten worldwide . Its music video featured scenes of sadomasochism , bondage , same @-@ sex kissing , and brief nudity . The video was deemed too sexually explicit for MTV and was banned from the network . Madonna responded to the banning : " Why is it that people are willing to go and watch a movie about someone getting blown to bits for no reason at all , and nobody wants to see two girls kissing and two men snuggling ? " .

In December 1990 Madonna decided to leave Jennifer Lynch 's film , *Boxing Helena* , which she had previously agreed to star in , without any explanation to the producers . Around this time , Madonna had an eight @-@ month relationship with rapper Vanilla Ice ; he ended their relationship because of Madonna 's *Sex* book . Her first documentary film *Truth or Dare* (known as *In Bed with Madonna* outside North America) was released in May 1991 . The documentary chronicled her *Blond Ambition World Tour* .

= = = 1992 ? 97 : *Maverick* , *Erotica* , *Sex* , *Evita* , and motherhood = = =

In 1992 , Madonna had a role in *A League of Their Own* as Mae Mordabito , a baseball player on an all @-@ women 's team . She recorded the film 's theme song , " This Used to Be My Playground " , which became a Hot 100 number @-@ one hit . The same year , she founded her own entertainment company , Maverick , consisting of a record company (Maverick Records) , a film production company (Maverick Films) , and associated music publishing , television broadcasting , book publishing and merchandising divisions . The deal was a joint venture with Time Warner and paid Madonna an advance of \$ 60 million . It gave her 20 % royalties from the music proceedings , the highest rate in the industry at the time , equaled only by Michael Jackson 's royalty rate established a year earlier with Sony . The first release from the venture was Madonna 's book , titled *Sex* . It consisted of sexually provocative and explicit images , photographed by Steven Meisel . The book received strong negative reaction from the media and the general public , but sold 1 @.@ 5 million copies at \$ 50 each in a matter of days . At the same time she released her fifth studio album , *Erotica* , which debuted at number two on the Billboard 200 . Its title track peaked at number three on the Billboard Hot 100 . *Erotica* also produced five singles : " Deeper and Deeper " , " Bad Girl " , " Fever " , " Rain " and " Bye Bye Baby " .

Madonna had provocative imagery featured in the 1993 erotic thriller , *Body of Evidence* , a film which contained scenes of sadomasochism and bondage . It was poorly received by critics . She also starred in the film *Dangerous Game* , which was released straight to video in North America . The New York Times described the film as " angry and painful , and the pain feels real . " In September 1993 , Madonna embarked on The Girlie Show World Tour , in which she dressed as a whip @-@ cracking dominatrix surrounded by topless dancers . In Puerto Rico she rubbed the island 's flag between her legs on stage , resulting in outrage among the audience . In March 1994 , she appeared as a guest on the Late Show with David Letterman , using profanity that required censorship on television , and handing Letterman a pair of her panties and asking him to smell it . The releases of her sexually explicit films , albums and book , and the aggressive appearance on Letterman all made critics question Madonna as a sexual renegade . Critics and fans reacted negatively , who commented that " she had gone too far " and that her career was over .

Biographer J. Randy Taraborrelli described her ballad " I 'll Remember " (1994) as an attempt to tone down her provocative image . The song was recorded for Alek Keshishian 's film *With Honors* . She made a subdued appearance with Letterman at an awards show and appeared on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno after realizing that she needed to change her musical direction in order to sustain her popularity . With her sixth studio album , *Bedtime Stories* (1994) , Madonna employed a softer image to try to improve the public perception . The album debuted at number three on the Billboard 200 and generated two U.S. top @-@ five hits , " Secret " and " Take a Bow " , the latter topping the Hot 100 for seven weeks , the longest period of any Madonna single . At the same time , she became romantically involved with fitness trainer Carlos Leon . *Something to Remember* , a collection of ballads , was released in November 1995 . The album featured three new songs : " You 'll See " , " One More Chance " , and a cover of Marvin Gaye 's " I Want You " .

In *Evita* (1996) , Madonna played the title role of Eva Perón . For a long time , Madonna had desired to play Perón and wrote to director Alan Parker to explain why she would be perfect for the part . She said later , " This is the role I was born to play . I put everything of me into this because it was much more than a role in a movie . It was exhilarating and intimidating at the same time And I am prouder of *Evita* than anything else I have done . " After securing the role , she had vocal training and learned about the history of Argentina and Perón . During shooting she became ill several times due to the intense emotional effort required . However , as she told Oprah , she was also pregnant during the filming : " I was winded after every take . I had to lie on the couch every ten minutes so I could recover from dizzy spells , I was worried that I was shaking the baby around too much and that would injure it in some way . " Madonna wrote in her personal diary at the time : " Ironically , this feeling of vulnerability and weakness is helping me in the movie . I 'm sure *Evita* felt this way every day of her life once she discovered she was ill . "

After its release , *Evita* garnered critical appreciation . Zach Conner from Time magazine commented , " It 's a relief to say that *Evita* is pretty damn fine , well cast and handsomely visualized . Madonna once again confounds our expectations . She plays *Evita* with a poignant weariness and

has more than just a bit of star quality . Love or hate Madonna @-@ Eva , she is a magnet for all eyes . " Madonna won a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in Motion Picture Musical or Comedy for the role . She released three singles from the *Evita* soundtrack album , including " You Must Love Me " (which won an Academy Award for Best Original Song in 1997) and " Don 't Cry for Me Argentina " . Madonna was later presented with the Artist Achievement Award by Tony Bennett at the 1996 Billboard Music Awards . On October 14 , 1996 , Madonna gave birth to Lourdes Maria Ciccone Leon , her daughter with Leon . Biographer Mary Cross writes that although Madonna was often ill during the filming and worried that her pregnancy would harm the film , she reached some important personal goals : " Now 38 years old , Madonna had at last triumphed on screen and achieved her dream of having a child , both in the same year . She had reached another turning point in her career , reinventing herself and her image with the public . " Her relationship with Carlos Leon ended in May 1997 ; she declared that they were " better off as best friends . " After Lourdes 's birth , Madonna became involved in Eastern mysticism and Kabbalah . She was introduced to Jewish mysticism by actress Sandra Bernhard in 1997 .

= = = 1998 ? 2002 : Ray of Light , Music , and second marriage = = =

Madonna 's seventh studio album , *Ray of Light* , (1998) reflected a change in her image . She collaborated with electronica producer William Orbit and wanted to create a sound that could blend dance music with pop and British rock . American music critic Ann Powers explained that what Madonna searched for with Orbit " was a kind of a lushness that she wanted for this record . Techno and rave was happening in the 90 's and had a lot of different forms . There was very experimental , more hard stuff like Aphex Twin . There was party stuff like Fatboy Slim . That 's not what Madonna wanted for this . She wanted something more like a singer @-@ songwriter , really . And William Orbit provided her with that . "

The album garnered critical acclaim , with *Slant Magazine* calling it " one of the great pop masterpieces of the ' 90s " *Ray of Light* was honored with four Grammy Awards ? including Best Pop Album and Best Dance Recording ? and was nominated for both Album of the Year and Record of the Year . *Rolling Stone* listed it among " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " . Commercially , the album peaked at number @-@ one in numerous countries and sold more than 16 million copies worldwide . The album 's first single , " Frozen " , became Madonna 's first single to debut at number one in the UK , while in the U.S. it became her sixth number @-@ two single , setting another record for Madonna as the artist with the most number two hits . The second single , " Ray of Light " , debuted at number five on the *Billboard Hot 100* . The 1998 edition of *Guinness Book of World Records* documented that " no female artist has sold more records than Madonna around the world "

In 1999 , Madonna signed to play a violin teacher in the film *Music of the Heart* but left the project , citing " creative differences " with director Wes Craven . She recorded the single " Beautiful Stranger " for the 1999 film *Austin Powers : The Spy Who Shagged Me* , which earned her a Grammy Award for Best Song Written for a Motion Picture , Television or Other Visual Media . Madonna starred in the 2000 film *The Next Best Thing* , and contributed two songs to the film 's soundtrack ; " Time Stood Still " and a cover of Don McLean 's 1971 song " American Pie " .

Madonna released her eighth studio album , *Music* , in September 2000 . It featured elements from the electronica @-@ inspired *Ray of Light* era , and like its predecessor , received acclaim from critics . Collaborating with French producer Mirwais Ahmadzaï , Madonna commented : " I love to work with the weirdos that no one knows about ? the people who have raw talent and who are making music unlike anyone else out there . Music is the future of sound . " Stephen Thomas Erlewine from *AllMusic* felt that " *Music* blows by in a kaleidoscopic rush of color , technique , style and substance . It has so many depth and layers that it 's easily as self @-@ aware and earnest as *Ray of Light* . " The album took the number @-@ one position in more than 20 countries worldwide and sold four million copies in the first ten days . In the U.S. , *Music* debuted at the top , and became her first number @-@ one album in eleven years since *Like a Prayer* . It produced three singles : the *Hot 100* number @-@ one " *Music* " , " Don 't Tell Me " , and " What It Feels Like for a

Girl " . The music video of " What It Feels Like for a Girl " depicted Madonna committing acts of crime and vandalism , and was banned by MTV and VH1 .

She met director Guy Ritchie , who would become her second husband , in November 1998 and gave birth to their son Rocco John Ritchie on August 11 , 2000 in Los Angeles . Rocco and Madonna suffered complications from the birth due to her experiencing placenta praevia . He was christened at Dornoch Cathedral in Dornoch , Scotland , on December 21 , 2000 . Madonna married Ritchie the following day at nearby Skibo Castle . Her fifth concert tour , titled Drowned World Tour , started in June 2001 . The tour visited cities in the U.S. and Europe and was the highest @-@ grossing concert tour of the year by a solo artist , earning \$ 75 million from 47 sold @-@ out shows . She also released her second greatest @-@ hits collection , titled GHV2 , to coincide with the home video release of the tour . GHV2 debuted at number seven on the Billboard 200 .

Madonna starred in the film Swept Away , directed by Ritchie . Released direct @-@ to @-@ video in the UK , the film was a commercial and critical failure . In May 2002 she appeared in London in the West End play Up For Grabs at the Wyndhams Theatre (billed as ' Madonna Ritchie ') , to universally bad reviews and was described as " the evening 's biggest disappointment " by one . That October , she released " Die Another Day " , the title song of the James Bond film Die Another Day , in which she had a cameo role , described by The Guardian film reviewer as " incredibly wooden " . The song reached number eight on the Billboard Hot 100 and was nominated for both a Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song and a Golden Raspberry for Worst Song .

= = = 2003 ? 06 : American Life and Confessions on a Dance Floor = = =

Following Die Another Day , Madonna collaborated with fashion photographer Steven Klein in 2003 for an exhibition installation named X @-@ STaTIC Pro = CeSS . It included photography from a photo shoot in W magazine , and seven video segments . The installation ran from March to May in New York 's Deitch Projects gallery . It traveled the world in an edited form . The same year , Madonna released her ninth studio album , American Life , which was based on her observations of American society ; it received mixed reviews . She commented , " [American Life] was like a trip down memory lane , looking back at everything I 've accomplished and all the things I once valued and all the things that were important to me . " Larry Flick from The Advocate felt that " American Life is an album that is among her most adventurous and lyrically intelligent " while condemning it as " a lazy , half @-@ arsed effort to sound and take her seriously . " The title song peaked at number 37 on the Hot 100 . Its original music video was canceled as Madonna thought that the video , featuring violence and war imagery , would be deemed unpatriotic since America was then at war with Iraq . With four million copies sold worldwide , American Life was the lowest @-@ selling album of her career at that point .

Madonna gave another provocative performance later that year at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards , while singing " Hollywood " with Britney Spears , Christina Aguilera , and Missy Elliott . Madonna sparked controversy for kissing Spears and Aguilera suggestively during the performance . In October 2003 , Madonna provided guest vocals on Spears ' single " Me Against the Music " . It was followed with the release of Remixed & Revisited . The EP contained remixed versions of songs from American Life and included " Your Honesty " , a previously unreleased track from the Bedtime Stories recording sessions . Madonna also signed a contract with Callaway Arts & Entertainment to be the author of five children 's books . The first of these books , titled The English Roses , was published in September 2003 . The story was about four English schoolgirls and their envy and jealousy of each other . Kate Kellway from The Guardian commented , " [Madonna] is an actress playing at what she can never be ? a JK Rowling , an English rose . " The book debuted at the top of The New York Times Best Seller list and became the fastest @-@ selling children 's picture book of all time .

The next year Madonna and Maverick sued Warner Music Group and its former parent company Time Warner , claiming that mismanagement of resources and poor bookkeeping had cost the company millions of dollars . In return , Warner filed a countersuit alleging that Maverick had lost tens of millions of dollars on its own . The dispute was resolved when the Maverick shares , owned

by Madonna and Ronnie Dashev , were purchased by Warner . Madonna and Dashev 's company became a wholly owned subsidiary of Warner Music , but Madonna was still signed to Warner under a separate recording contract .

In mid @-@ 2004 Madonna embarked on the Re @-@ Invention World Tour in the U.S. , Canada , and Europe . It became the highest @-@ grossing tour of 2004 , earning around \$ 120 million and became the subject of her documentary I 'm Going to Tell You a Secret . In November 2004 , she was inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame as one of its five founding members , along with The Beatles , Elvis Presley , Bob Marley , and U2 . In January 2005 , Madonna performed a cover version of the John Lennon song " Imagine " at Tsunami Aid . She also performed at the Live 8 benefit concert in London in July 2005 .

Her tenth studio album , Confessions on a Dance Floor , was released in November 2005 . Musically the album was structured like a club set composed by a DJ . It was acclaimed by critics , with Keith Caulfield from Billboard commenting that the album was a " welcome return to form for the Queen of Pop . " The album won a Grammy Award for Best Electronic / Dance Album . Confessions on a Dance Floor and its lead single , " Hung Up " , went on to reach number one in 40 and 41 countries respectively , earning a place in Guinness World Records . The song contained a sample of ABBA 's " Gimme ! Gimme ! Gimme ! (A Man After Midnight) " , only the second time that ABBA has allowed their work to be used . ABBA songwriter Björn Ulvaeus remarked " It is a wonderful track ? 100 per cent solid pop music . " " Sorry " , the second single , became Madonna 's twelfth number @-@ one single in the UK .

Madonna embarked on the Confessions Tour in May 2006 , which had a global audience of 1 @. @ 2 million and grossed over \$ 193 @. @ 7 million , becoming the highest @-@ grossing tour to that date for a female artist . Madonna used religious symbols , such as the crucifix and Crown of Thorns , in the performance of " Live to Tell " . It caused the Russian Orthodox Church and the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia to urge all their members to boycott her concert . At the same time , the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) announced officially that Madonna had sold over 200 million copies for her albums alone worldwide .

While on tour Madonna participated in the Raising Malawi initiative by partially funding an orphanage in and traveling to that country . While there , she decided to adopt a boy named David Banda in October 2006 . The adoption raised strong public reaction , because Malawian law requires would @-@ be parents to reside in Malawi for one year before adopting , which Madonna did not do . She addressed this on The Oprah Winfrey Show , saying that there were no written adoption laws in Malawi that regulated foreign adoption . She described how Banda had been suffering from pneumonia after surviving malaria and tuberculosis when she first met him . Banda 's biological father , Yohane , commented , " These so @-@ called human rights activists are harassing me every day , threatening me that I am not aware of what I am doing They want me to support their court case , a thing I cannot do for I know what I agreed with Madonna and her husband . " The adoption was finalized in May 2008 .

A clothing line titled M by Madonna , in collaboration with Swedish clothing retailer H & M , was launched internationally in 2006 . The collection consisted of leather trench coats , sequined shift dresses , cream @-@ colored calf @-@ length pants , and matching cropped jackets . H & M said the collection reflected Madonna 's " timeless , unique and always glamorous style . "

= = = 2007 ? 10 : Filmmaking , Hard Candy and business venture = = =

Madonna released the song " Hey You " for the Live Earth series of concerts . The song was available as a free download during its first week of release . She also performed it at the London Live Earth concert . Madonna announced her departure from Warner Bros. Records , and a new \$ 120 million , ten @-@ year 360 deal with Live Nation . She produced and wrote I Am Because We Are , a documentary on the problems faced by Malawians . The documentary was directed by Nathan Rissman , who worked as Madonna 's gardener . She also directed her first film Filth and Wisdom . The plot of the film revolved around three friends and their aspirations . The Times said she had " done herself proud " while The Daily Telegraph described the film as " not an entirely

unpromising first effort [but] Madonna would do well to hang on to her day job . " On March 10 , 2008 , Madonna was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in her first year of eligibility . Madonna did not sing at the ceremony but asked fellow Hall of Fame inductees and Michigan natives The Stooges to perform her songs " Burning Up " and " Ray of Light " . She thanked Christopher Flynn , her dance teacher from 35 years earlier , for his encouragement to follow her dreams .

Madonna released her eleventh studio album , *Hard Candy* , in April 2008 . Containing R & B and urban pop influences , the songs on *Hard Candy* were autobiographical in nature and saw Madonna collaborating with Justin Timberlake , Timbaland , Pharrell Williams and Nate " Danja " Hills . The album debuted at number one in 37 countries and on the Billboard 200 . Don Shewey from Rolling Stone complimented it as an " impressive taste of her upcoming tour . " It received generally positive reviews worldwide though some critics panned it as " an attempt to harness the urban market " .

" 4 Minutes " was released as the album 's lead single and peaked at number three on the Billboard Hot 100 . It was Madonna 's 37th top @-@ ten hit on the chart ? it pushed Madonna past Elvis Presley as the artist with the most top @-@ ten hits . In the UK she retained her record for the most number @-@ one singles for a female artist ; " 4 Minutes " becoming her thirteenth . At the 23rd Japan Gold Disc Awards , Madonna received her fifth Artist of the Year trophy from Recording Industry Association of Japan , the most for any artist . To further promote the album , Madonna embarked on the *Sticky & Sweet Tour* ; her first major venture with Live Nation . With a gross of \$ 280 million , it became the highest @-@ grossing tour by a solo artist then , surpassing the previous record Madonna set with the *Confessions Tour* ; it was later surpassed by Roger Waters ' *The Wall Live* . It was extended to the next year , adding new European dates , and after it ended , the total gross was \$ 408 million .

Life with My Sister Madonna , a book by Madonna 's brother Christopher , debuted at number two on The New York Times bestseller list . The book caused some friction between Madonna and her brother , because of the unsolicited publication . Problems also arose between Madonna and Ritchie , with the media reporting that they were on the verge of separation . Ultimately , Madonna filed for divorce from Ritchie , citing irreconcilable differences , which was finalized in December 2008 . She decided to adopt from Malawi . The country 's High Court initially approved the adoption of Chifundo " Mercy " James ; however , the application was rejected because Madonna was not a resident of the country . Madonna appealed , and on June 12 , 2009 , the Supreme Court of Malawi granted Madonna the right to adopt Mercy James .

Madonna concluded her contract with Warner by releasing her third greatest @-@ hits album , *Celebration* , in September 2009 . It contained the new songs " *Celebration* " and " *Revolver* " along with 34 hits spanning her career with the label . *Celebration* reached number one in several countries , including Canada , Germany , Italy , and the United Kingdom . She appeared at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards on September 13 , 2009 , to speak in tribute to deceased pop star Michael Jackson . Madonna ended the 2000s as the best @-@ selling single artist of the decade in the U.S. and the most @-@ played artist of the decade in the UK . Billboard also announced her as the third top @-@ touring artist of the decade ? behind only The Rolling Stones and U2 ? with a gross of over \$ 801 million , 6 @.@ 3 million attendance and 244 sell @-@ outs of 248 shows .

Madonna performed at the *Hope for Haiti Now : A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief* concert in January 2010 . Her third live album , *Sticky & Sweet Tour* , was released in April , debuting at number ten on the Billboard 200 . It also became her 20th top @-@ ten album on the Oricon Albums Chart , breaking The Beatles ' record for the most top @-@ ten album by an international act in Japan . Madonna granted American TV show *Glee* the rights to her entire catalogue of music , and the producers planned an episode featuring Madonna songs exclusively . *Glee : The Music , The Power of Madonna* , an EP containing eight cover versions of Madonna songs featured in the episode , was released afterward and debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 . Madonna released the *Material Girl* clothing line , which she designed with her daughter , Lourdes . The 1980s inspired clothing line , borrowed from Madonna 's punk @-@ girl style when she rose to fame in the 1980s , was released under the Macy 's label . In October , Madonna opened a series of fitness centers around the world named *Hard Candy Fitness* . Madonna and MG Icon also released the

second fashion brand called Truth or Dare by Madonna to include footwear , underclothing , and accessories .

== 2011 ? 13 : W.E. , Super Bowl XLVI and MDNA ==

Madonna directed her second feature film , W.E. , a biographic about the affair between King Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson . Co @-@ written with Alek Keshishian , the film was premiered at the 68th Venice International Film Festival in September 2011 . Critical and commercial response to the film was negative . Madonna contributed the ballad " Masterpiece " for the film 's soundtrack , which won her a Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song . In February 2012 , Madonna performed at Super Bowl XLVI halftime show , visualized by Cirque Du Soleil and Jamie King and featured special guests LMFAO , Nicki Minaj , M.I.A. and Cee Lo Green . It became the then most @-@ watched Super Bowl halftime show in history with 114 million viewers , higher than the game itself . Following her 360 deal with Live Nation , Madonna signed a three @-@ album deal with Interscope Records , since Live Nation was not a record company .

Her twelfth studio album , MDNA , was released in March 2012 and saw collaboration with various producers , most notably with William Orbit again and Martin Solveig . The album was well received by music critics , with Priya Elan from NME calling it " a ridiculously enjoyable romp " , citing its " psychotic , soul @-@ bearing stuff " as " some of the most visceral stuff she 's ever done . " MDNA became Madonna 's fifth consecutive studio album to debut at the top of the Billboard 200 . She also became the solo artist with the most number @-@ one albums in the UK and Australia , breaking the record previously held by Elvis Presley in the UK and Jimmy Barnes in Australia . The lead single " Give Me All Your Luv ' " , featuring guest vocals from Minaj and M.I.A. , became Madonna 's record @-@ extending 38th top @-@ ten hit on the Billboard Hot 100 .

The MDNA Tour , which further promoted the album , began in May 2012 in Tel Aviv , Israel . The tour has received positive critical reception , but featured controversial subjects such as violence , firearms , human rights , nudity and politics . Lawsuits threatened against Madonna have also been engaged from the tour . It was a box office success with a gross of \$ 305 @. @ 2 million from 88 sold @-@ out shows , and became the highest @-@ grossing tour of 2012 and the tenth highest @-@ grossing tour of all time . At the 2013 Billboard Music Awards , Madonna won three trophies for Top Touring Artist , Top Dance Artist and Top Dance Album . Madonna was named the top @-@ earning celebrity of the year by Forbes , earning an estimated \$ 125 million , due to the success of the tour . Madonna 's fourth live album , MDNA World Tour , was released in September 2013 . It debuted at number one on the US Top Music Videos chart , becoming her tenth release to top the chart ? the most for any artist .

By 2013 , Madonna 's Raising Malawi organization built ten schools to educate 4 @, @ 000 children in Malawi at a value of \$ 400 @, @ 000 . When Madonna visited the schools in April 2013 , President of Malawi Joyce Banda expressed criticism of the star and her charity , accusing her of exaggerating her charity 's contribution . Madonna responded by releasing a statement saying she was saddened that Banda had chosen to act negatively about her endeavors . " I have no intention of being distracted by these ridiculous allegations , " she added . Later , it was confirmed that Banda had not approved the statement released written by her press team and was " incandescent with anger " over the mix @-@ up .

Working with photographer Steven Klein , Madonna completed a 17 @-@ minute film called secretprojectrevolution . The BitTorrent company was selected by Madonna to release the film as part of a Madonna bundle . It was released on September 24 , 2013 , and consisted of the 17 @-@ minute film , its stills , a Vice interview , and a message from Madonna . With the film she launched the Art for Freedom initiative , which helped to promote " art and free speech as a means to address persecution and injustice across the globe " . The website for the project has had over 3 @, @ 000 art related submissions since its inception , with Madonna regularly monitoring and enlisting the help of other artists like David Blaine and Katy Perry as guest curators .

== 2014 ? present : Rebel Heart ==

Madonna extended her business ventures and in February 2014 the singer premiered MDNA Skin , a range of skin care products , in Tokyo , Japan . After visiting her hometown of Detroit during May 2014 , Madonna decided to contribute funds to three of the city 's organizations , to help eliminate poverty from there . The singer released a statement saying that she was inspired by their work , adding that " it was obvious to me that I had to get involved and be part of the solution to help Detroit recover " . Madonna began work on her thirteenth studio album , with collaborators including Avicii , Diplo and Kanye West . In December 2014 , thirteen demos recorded for the album leaked onto the Internet . She posted in response that half of the tracks would not be used on the final release , while the other half had " changed and evolved " . Titled Rebel Heart , the album was released in March 2015 . Music critics responded positively towards the album , calling it her best effort in a decade . Rebel Heart became Madonna 's first album to miss the top position of the Billboard 200 since 1998 , but it reached number one in other major music markets , including Australia , Canada , Germany and Italy .

From September 2015 , she embarked on the Rebel Heart Tour to promote the album ; the tour ended in March 2016 and traveled throughout North America , Europe and Asia and was the singer 's first visit to Australia in 23 years , where she also performed a one @-@ off show for her fans . It grossed a total of \$ 169 @.@ 8 million from the 82 shows , with over 1 @.@ 045 million ticket sales . While on tour Madonna became embroiled in a legal battle with Ritchie , over the custody of her son Rocco . The dispute started when Rocco decided to continue living in England with Ritchie when the Rebel Heart Tour had visited there , while Madonna wanted him to return with her . Court hearings took place in both New York and London , and after multiple deliberations , Madonna decided to withdraw her application for custody , and appealed for a mutual discussion between herself and Ritchie about Rocco .

= = Artistry = =

= = = Musical style and songwriting = = =

Madonna 's music has been the subject of much analysis and scrutiny . Robert M. Grant , author of Contemporary Strategy Analysis (2005) , commented that what has brought Madonna success is " certainly not outstanding natural talent . As a vocalist , musician , dancer , songwriter , or actress , Madonna 's talents seem modest . " He asserts Madonna 's success is in relying on the talents of others , and that her personal relationships have served as cornerstones to the numerous reinventions in the longevity of her career . Madonna 's approach was far from the music industry wisdom of " Find a winning formula and stick to it . " Her musical career has been a continuous experimentation with new musical ideas and new images and a constant quest for new heights of fame and acclaim . Grant concluded that " having established herself as the queen of popular music , Madonna did not stop there , but continued re @-@ inventing . " Musicologist Susan McClary wrote that " Madonna 's art itself repeatedly deconstructs the traditional notion of the unified subject with finite ego boundaries . Her pieces explore various ways of constituting identities that refuse stability , that remain fluid , that resist definition . " Critics noted that Madonna has " pushed the boundaries " in her music and image .

Throughout her career Madonna has been involved in writing and producing most of her own music . Madonna 's early songwriting skill was developed during her time with the Breakfast Club in 1979 . According to author Carol Gnojewski , her first attempts at songwriting are perceived as an important self @-@ revelation , as Madonna said : " I don 't know where [the songs] came from . It was like magic . I 'd write a song every day . I said ' Wow , I was meant to do this ' . " Madonna later became the sole writer of five songs on her debut album , including " Lucky Star " which she composed on synthesizer . Rolling Stone has named her " an exemplary songwriter with a gift for hooks and indelible lyrics . " According to Freya Jarman @-@ Ivens , Madonna 's talent for developing " incredible " hooks for her songs allows the lyrics to capture the attention of the

audience , even without the influence of the music . As an example , Jarman @-@ Ivens cites the 1985 single " Into the Groove " and its line " Live out your fantasy here with me , just let the music set you free ; Touch my body , and move in time , now I know you 're mine . " Though Madonna has worked with producers across many genres , her songs have been consistently stamped with her own sensibility and inflected with autobiographical detail . Some of her lyrics contain innuendos and double entendre , which led to multiple interpretations among music critics and scholars . Madonna has been nominated for being inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame twice , for 2014 and 2016 ceremony . Rolling Stone listed Madonna at number 56 on the " 100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time " .

Before emerging as a pop star , Madonna has spent her early years in rock music alongside her bands , Breakfast Club and Emmy . While performing with Emmy , Madonna recorded about 12 @-@ 14 songs which resemble the punk rock of that period . Her early rock roots also can be found on the demo album Pre @-@ Madonna . Stephen Thomas Erlewine noted that with her self @-@ titled debut album , Madonna began her career as a disco diva , in an era that did not have any such divas to speak of . In the beginning of the ' 80 's , disco was an anathema to the mainstream pop , and according to Erlewine , Madonna had a huge role in popularizing dance music as mainstream music . The album 's songs reveal several key trends that have continued to define her success , including a strong dance @-@ based idiom , catchy hooks , highly polished arrangements and Madonna 's own vocal style . Her second album , Like a Virgin (1984) , foreshadowed several trends in her later works . It contained references to classical works (pizzicato synthesizer line that opens " Angel ") ; potential negative reaction from social groups (" Dress You Up " was blacklisted by the Parents Music Resource Center) ; and retro styles (" Shoo @-@ Bee @-@ Doo " , Madonna 's homage to Motown) .

Her mature artistic statement was visible in True Blue (1986) and Like a Prayer (1989) . In True Blue , she incorporated classical music in order to engage an older audience who had been skeptical of her music . Like a Prayer introduced live recorded songs and incorporated different genres of music , including dance , funk , R & B and gospel music . Her versatility was further shown on I 'm Breathless , which consists predominantly of the 1940s Broadway showtune @-@ flavoured jazz , swing and big band tracks . Madonna continued to compose ballads and uptempo dance songs for Erotica (1992) and Bedtime Stories (1994) . Both albums explored element of new jack swing , with Jim Farber from Entertainment Weekly saying that " she could actually be viewed as new jack swing 's godmother . " She tried to remain contemporary by incorporating samples , drum loops and hip hop into her music . With Ray of Light , Madonna brought electronic music from its underground status into massive popularity in mainstream music scene .

Madonna experimented with more folk and acoustic music in Music (2000) and American Life (2003) . A change was noted in the content of the songs in Music , with most of them being simple love songs , but with an underlying tone of melancholy . According to Q magazine , American Life was characterized by " a thumping techno rhythm , liquid keyboard lines , an acoustic chorus and a bizarre Madonna rap . " The " conventional rock songs " of the album were suffused with dramatic lyrics about patriotism and composition , including the appearance of a gospel choir in the song " Nothing Fails " . Madonna returned to pure dance songs with Confessions on a Dance Floor , infusing club beats and retro music with the lyrics about paradoxical metaphors and reference to her earlier works . Madonna moved to urban direction with Hard Candy (2008) , mixing R & B and hip hop music with dance tunes . MDNA (2012) largely focused in electronic dance music , which she has embraced since Ray of Light .

= = = Voice and instruments = = =

Possessing a mezzo @-@ soprano vocal range , Madonna has always been self @-@ conscious about her voice , especially in comparison to her vocal idols such as Ella Fitzgerald , Prince , and Chaka Khan . Mark Bego , author of Madonna : Blonde Ambition , called her " the perfect vocalist for lighter @-@ than @-@ air songs " , despite not being a " heavyweight talent . " According to MSNBC critic Tony Sclafani , " Madonna 's vocals are the key to her rock roots . Pop vocalists

usually sing songs " straight , " but Madonna employs subtext , irony , aggression and all sorts of vocal idiosyncrasies in the ways John Lennon and Bob Dylan did . " Madonna used a bright , girlish vocal timbre in her early albums which became passé in her later works . The change was deliberate since she was constantly reminded of how the critics had once labelled her as " Minnie Mouse on helium " . During the filming of *Evita* , Madonna had to take vocal lessons , which increased her range further . Of this experience she commented , " I studied with a vocal coach for *Evita* and I realized there was a whole piece of my voice I wasn 't using . Before , I just believed I had a really limited range and was going to make the most of it . "

Besides singing Madonna has the ability to play several musical instruments . She learned to play drum and guitar from her then @-@ boyfriend Dan Gilroy in the late 1970s before joining the Breakfast Club line @-@ up as the drummer . This helped her to form the band Emmy , where she performed as the guitarist and lead vocalist . Madonna later played guitar on her demo recordings . On the liner notes of Pre @-@ Madonna , Stephen Bray wrote : " I 've always thought she passed up a brilliant career as a rhythm guitarist . " After her career breakthrough , Madonna focused mainly in singing but was also credited for playing cowbell on *Madonna* (1983) and synthesizer on *Like a Prayer* (1989) . In 1999 , Madonna had studied for three months to play the violin for the role as a violin teacher in the film *Music of the Heart* , before eventually leaving the project . After two decades , Madonna decided to perform with guitar again during the promotion of *Music* (2000) . She took further lessons from guitarist Monte Pittman to improve her guitar skill . Since then Madonna has played guitar on every tour , as well as her studio albums . At the 2002 Orville H. Gibson Guitar Awards , she received nomination for Les Paul Horizon Award , which honors the most promising up @-@ and @-@ coming guitarist .

= = = Influences = = =

According to Taraborrelli , the defining moment of Madonna 's childhood was the tragic and untimely death of her beloved mother . Psychiatrist Keith Ablow suggests her mother 's death would have had an immeasurable impact on the young Madonna at a time when her personality was still forming . According to Ablow , the younger a child is at the time of a serious loss , the more profound the influence and the longer lasting the impact . He concludes that " some people never reconcile themselves to such a loss at an early age , Madonna is not different than them . " Conversely , author Lucy O 'Brien feels the impact of the rape she suffered is , in fact , the motivating factor behind everything Madonna has done , more important even than the death of her mother : " It 's not so much grief at her mother 's death that drives her , as the sense of abandonment that left her unprotected . She encountered her own worst possible scenario , becoming a victim of male violence , and thereafter turned that full @-@ tilt into her work , reversing the equation at every opportunity . "

As they grew older Madonna and her sisters would feel deep sadness as the vivid memory of their mother began drifting farther from them . They would study pictures of her and come to think that she resembled poet Anne Sexton and Hollywood actresses . This would later raise Madonna 's interest in poetry , with Sylvia Plath being her favourite . Later , Madonna commented : " We were all wounded in one way or another by [her death] , and then we spent the rest of our lives reacting to it or dealing with it or trying to turn into something else . The anguish of losing my mom left me with a certain kind of loneliness and an incredible longing for something . If I hadn 't had that emptiness , I wouldn 't have been so driven . Her death had a lot to do with me saying ? after I got over my heartache ? I 'm going to be really strong if I can 't have my mother . I 'm going to take care of myself . " Taraborrelli felt that in time , no doubt because of the devastation she felt , Madonna would never again allow herself , or even her daughter , to feel as abandoned as she had felt when her mother died . " Her death had taught [Madonna] a valuable lesson , that she would have to remain strong for herself because , she feared weakness ? particularly her own ? and wanted to be the queen of her own castle . "

In 1985 , Madonna commented that the first song to ever make a strong impression on her was " These Boots Are Made for Walkin ' " by Nancy Sinatra ; she said it summed up her own " take @-@

charge attitude ". As a young woman , she attempted to broaden her taste in literature , art , and music , and during this time became interested in classical music . She noted that her favorite style was baroque , and loved Mozart and Chopin because she liked their " feminine quality " . Madonna 's major influences include Karen Carpenter , The Supremes and Led Zeppelin , as well as dancers Martha Graham and Rudolf Nureyev . She also grew up listening to David Bowie , whose show was the first rock concert she ever attended .

Madonna 's Italian @-@ Catholic background and her relationship with her parents are reflected in the album Like a Prayer . It was an evocation of the impact religion had on her career . Her video for the title track contains Catholic symbolism , such as the stigmata . During The Virgin Tour , she wore a rosary and prayed with it in the music video for " La Isla Bonita " . The " Open Your Heart " video sees her boss scolding her in the Italian language . On the Who 's That Girl World Tour , she dedicated the song " Papa Don 't Preach " to Pope John Paul II .

During her childhood , Madonna was inspired by actors , later saying , " I loved Carole Lombard and Judy Holliday and Marilyn Monroe . They were all incredibly funny ... and I saw myself in them ... my girlishness , my knowingness and my innocence . " Her " Material Girl " music video recreated Monroe 's look in the song " Diamonds Are a Girl 's Best Friend " , from the film Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953) . She studied the screwball comedies of the 1930s , particularly those of Lombard , in preparation for the film Who 's That Girl . The video for " Express Yourself " (1989) was inspired by Fritz Lang 's silent film Metropolis (1927) . The video for " Vogue " recreated the style of Hollywood glamour photographs , in particular those by Horst P. Horst , and imitated the poses of Marlene Dietrich , Carole Lombard , and Rita Hayworth , while the lyrics referred to many of the stars who had inspired her , including Bette Davis , described by Madonna as an idol . However , Madonna 's film career has been largely received negatively by the film critic community . Stephanie Zacharek , critic for Time magazine , stated that , " [Madonna] seems wooden and unnatural as an actress , and it 's tough to watch , because she 's clearly trying her damndest . " According to biographer Andrew Morton , " Madonna puts a brave face on the criticism , but privately she is deeply hurt . " After the box office bomb Swept Away (2002) , Madonna vowed that she would never again act in a film , hoping her repertoire as a bad actress would never be discussed again .

Influences also came to her from the art world , most notably through the works of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo . The music video of the song " Bedtime Story " featured images inspired by the paintings of Kahlo and Remedios Varo . Madonna is also a collector of Tamara de Lempicka 's Art Deco paintings and has included them in her music videos and tours . Her video for " Hollywood " (2003) was an homage to the work of photographer Guy Bourdin ; Bourdin 's son subsequently filed a lawsuit for unauthorised use of his father 's work . Pop artist Andy Warhol 's use of sadomasochistic imagery in his underground films were reflected in the music videos for " Erotica " and " Deeper and Deeper " .

Madonna is dedicated to Kabbalah , and in 2004 she adopted the name Esther which in Persian means " star " . She has donated millions of dollars to New York and London schools teaching the subject . She faced opposition from rabbis who felt Madonna 's adoption of the Kabbalah was sacrilegious and a case of celebrity dilettantism . Madonna defended her studies , saying : " It would be less controversial if I joined the Nazi Party " , and that her involvement with the Kabbalah is " not hurting anybody " . The influence of the Kabbalah was subsequently observed in Madonna 's music , especially albums like Ray of Light and Music . During the Re @-@ Invention World Tour , at one point in the show , Madonna and her dancers wore T @-@ shirts that read " Kabbalists Do It Better " . Her 2012 MDNA album has also drawn many influences from her Catholic upbringing , and since 2011 she has been attending meetings and services at an Opus Dei center , a Catholic institution that encourages spirituality through every day life .

= = = Music videos and performances = = =

In The Madonna Companion biographers Allen Metz and Carol Benson noted that more than any other recent pop artist , Madonna had used MTV and music videos to establish her popularity and enhance her recorded work . According to them , many of her songs have the imagery of the music

video in strong context , while referring to the music . Cultural critic Mark C. Taylor in his book *Nots* (1993) felt that the postmodern art form par excellence is video and the reigning " queen of video " is Madonna . He further asserted that " the most remarkable creation of MTV is Madonna . The responses to Madonna 's excessively provocative videos have been predictably contradictory . " The media and public reaction towards her most @-@ discussed songs such as " Papa Don 't Preach " , " Like a Prayer " , or " Justify My Love " had to do with the music videos created to promote the songs and their impact , rather than the songs themselves . Morton felt that " artistically , Madonna 's songwriting is often overshadowed by her striking pop videos . "

Madonna 's initial music videos reflected her American and Hispanic mixed street style combined with a flamboyant glamor . She was able to transmit her avant @-@ garde downtown New York fashion sense to the American audience . The imagery and incorporation of Hispanic culture and Catholic symbolism continued with the music videos from the *True Blue* era . Author Douglas Kellner noted , " such ' multiculturalism ' and her culturally transgressive moves turned out to be highly successful moves that endeared her to large and varied youth audiences . " Madonna 's Spanish look in the videos became the fashion trend of that time , in the form of boleros and layered skirts , accessorizing with rosary beads and a crucifix as in the video of " *La Isla Bonita* " .

Academics noted that with her videos , Madonna was subtly reversing the usual role of male as the dominant sex . This symbolism and imagery was probably the most prevalent in the music video for " *Like a Prayer* " . The video included scenes of an African @-@ American church choir , Madonna being attracted to a statue of a black saint , and singing in front of burning crosses . This mix of the sacred and the profane upset the Vatican and resulted in the Pepsi commercial withdrawal . In 2003 , MTV named her " *The Greatest Music Video Star Ever* " and said that " Madonna 's innovation , creativity and contribution to the music video art form is what won her the award . "

Madonna 's emergence occurred during the advent of MTV ; Chris Nelson from *The New York Times* spoke of pop artists like Madonna saying , " MTV , with its almost exclusively lip @-@ synched videos , ushered in an era in which average music fans might happily spend hours a day , every day , watching singers just mouth the words . " The symbiotic relationship between the music video and lip @-@ syncing led to a desire for the spectacle and imagery of the music video to be transferred to live stage shows . He added , " Artists like Madonna and Janet Jackson set new standards for showmanship , with concerts that included not only elaborate costumes and precision @-@ timed pyrotechnics but also highly athletic dancing . These effects came at the expense of live singing . " Thor Christensen of *The Dallas Morning News* commented that while Madonna earned a reputation for lip @-@ syncing during her 1990 *Blond Ambition World Tour* , she has subsequently reorganized her performances by " stay [ing] mostly still during her toughest singing parts and [leaves] the dance routines to her backup troupe ... [r] ather than try to croon and dance up a storm at the same time . "

To allow for greater movement while dancing and singing , Madonna was one of the earliest adopters of hands @-@ free radio @-@ frequency headset microphones , with the headset fastened over the ears or the top of the head , and the microphone capsule on a boom arm that extended to the mouth . Because of her prominent usage , the microphone design came to be known as the " *Madonna mic* " . Metz noted that Madonna represents a paradox as she is often perceived as living her whole life as a performance . While her big @-@ screen performances are panned , her live performances are critical successes . Madonna was the first artist to have her concert tours as reenactment of her music videos . Author Elin Diamond explained that reciprocally , the fact that images from Madonna 's videos can be recreated in a live setting enhances the realism of the original videos . Thus her live performances have become the means by which mediatized representations are naturalized . Taraborrelli said that encompassing multimedia , latest technology and sound systems , Madonna 's concerts and live performances are deemed as " *extravagant show piece , a walking art show* . "

= = Legacy = =

Various music journalists , critical theorists , and authors have deemed Madonna the most

influential female recording artist of all time . Author Carol Clerk wrote that " during her career , Madonna has transcended the term ' pop star ' to become a global cultural icon . " Rolling Stone of Spain wrote that " She became the first viral Master of Pop in history , years before the Internet was massively used . Madonna was everywhere ; in the almighty music television channels , ' radio formulas ' , magazine covers and even in bookshops . A pop dialectic , never seen since The Beatles 's reign , which allowed her to keep on the edge of tendency and commerciality . " Laura Barcella in her book *Madonna and Me : Women Writers on the Queen of Pop* (2012) wrote that " really , Madonna changed everything the musical landscape , the ' 80s look du jour , and most significantly , what a mainstream female pop star could (and couldn 't) say , do , or accomplish in the public eye . " William Langley from *The Daily Telegraph* felt that " Madonna has changed the world 's social history , has done more things as more different people than anyone else is ever likely to . " Alan McGee from *The Guardian* felt that Madonna is a post @-@ modern art , the likes of which we will never see again . He further asserted that Madonna and Michael Jackson invented the terms Queen and King of Pop .

According to Tony Sclafani from MSNBC , " It 's worth noting that before Madonna , most music mega @-@ stars were guy rockers ; after her , almost all would be female singers ... When The Beatles hit America , they changed the paradigm of performer from solo act to band . Madonna changed it back ? with an emphasis on the female . " Howard Kramer , curatorial director of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum , asserted that " Madonna and the career she carved out for herself made possible virtually every other female pop singer to follow ... She certainly raised the standards of all of them ... She redefined what the parameters were for female performers . " According to Fouz @-@ Hernández , subsequent female singers such as Britney Spears , Christina Aguilera , Kylie Minogue , the Spice Girls , Destiny 's Child , Jennifer Lopez , and Pink were like her " daughters in the very direct sense that they grew up listening to and admiring Madonna , and decided they wanted to be like her . " Time magazine included her in the list of the " 25 Most Powerful Women of the Past Century " , where she became one of only two singers to be included , alongside Aretha Franklin . She also topped VH1 's lists of " 100 Greatest Women in Music " and " 50 Greatest Women of the Video Era " .

Madonna 's use of sexual imagery has benefited her career and catalyzed public discourse on sexuality and feminism . As Roger Chapman documents in *Culture Wars : An Encyclopedia of Issues , Viewpoints , and Voices* , Volume 1 (2010) , she has drawn frequent condemnation from religious organizations , social conservatives and parental watchdog groups for her use of explicit , sexual imagery and lyrics , religious symbolism , and otherwise " irreverent " behavior in her live performances . The Times wrote that she had " started a revolution amongst women in music ... Her attitudes and opinions on sex , nudity , style and sexuality forced the public to sit up and take notice . " Professor John Fiske noted that the sense of empowerment that Madonna offers is inextricably connected with the pleasure of exerting some control over the meanings of self , of sexuality , and of one 's social relations . In *Doing Gender in Media , Art and Culture* (2009) , the authors noted that Madonna , as a female celebrity , performer , and pop icon , is able to unsettle standing feminist reflections and debates . According to lesbian feminist Sheila Jeffreys , Madonna represents woman 's occupancy of what Monique Wittig calls the category of sex , as powerful , and appears to gleefully embrace the performance of the sexual corvée allotted to women . Professor Sut Jhally has referred to Madonna as " an almost sacred feminist icon . "

Madonna has received acclaim as a role model for businesswomen in her industry , " achieving the kind of financial control that women had long fought for within the industry " , and generating over \$ 1 @.@ 2 billion in sales within the first decade of her career . Professor Colin Barrow from Cranfield School of Management described Madonna as " America 's smartest businesswoman ... who has moved to the top of her industry and stayed there by constantly reinventing herself . " London Business School academics called her a " dynamic entrepreneur " worth copying ; they identified her vision of success , her understanding of the music industry , her ability to recognize her own performance limits (and thus bring in help) , her willingness to work hard and her ability to adapt as the keys to her commercial success . Morton wrote that " Madonna is opportunistic , manipulative , and ruthless ? somebody who won 't stop until she gets what she wants ? and that 's something you

can get at the expense of maybe losing your close ones . But that hardly mattered to her . " Hazel Blackmore and Rafael Fernández de Castro in the book ¿ Qué es Estados Unidos ? from the Fondo de Cultura Económica , noted : " Madonna has been undoubtedly the most important woman in the history of popular music and a great businesswoman in herself ; creating fashion , breaking taboos and provoking controversies . " According to Forbes , Madonna is the wealthiest woman in the music business .

= = Achievements = =

Madonna has sold more than 300 million records worldwide . The Guinness World Records acknowledged her as the best @-@ selling female recording artist and the fourth best @-@ selling act of all time , behind The Beatles , Elvis Presley , and Michael Jackson . According to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) , she is the best @-@ selling female rock artist of the 20th century and the second top @-@ selling female albums artist in the United States , with 64 @.@ 5 million certified albums . Madonna is the most certified artist of all time in United Kingdom , with 45 awards from the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) as of April 2013 . Billboard named Madonna as the top touring female artist of all time . She is also the highest grossing solo touring artist , with over \$ 1 @.@ 31 billion in concert gross , starting from the Blond Ambition World Tour ; she first crossed a billion gross with The MDNA Tour . Overall , Madonna ranks third on all @-@ time top @-@ grossing Billboard Boxscore list , with just The Rolling Stones (\$ 1 @.@ 84 billion) and U2 (\$ 1 @.@ 67 billion) ahead of her . Madonna has been honored with 20 MTV Video Music Awards ? the most for any artist ? including the lifetime achievement Video Vanguard Award in 1986 .

Madonna holds the record for the most number @-@ ones on all combined Billboard charts , including twelve number @-@ one songs on the Billboard Hot 100 and eight number @-@ one albums on the Billboard 200 . With 45 songs topping the Hot Dance Club Songs chart , Madonna became the artist with the most number @-@ one songs on an active Billboard chart , pulling ahead of George Strait with 44 number @-@ one songs on the Hot Country Songs chart . She has also scored 38 top @-@ ten singles on the Hot 100 , more than any other artist in history . In 2008 , Billboard magazine ranked her at number two , behind The Beatles , on the Billboard Hot 100 All @-@ Time Top Artists , making her the most successful solo artist in the history of American singles chart .

= = Discography = =

Madonna (1983)
Like a Virgin (1984)
True Blue (1986)
Like a Prayer (1989)
Erotica (1992)
Bedtime Stories (1994)
Ray of Light (1998)
Music (2000)
American Life (2003)
Confessions on a Dance Floor (2005)
Hard Candy (2008)
MDNA (2012)
Rebel Heart (2015)

= = Filmography = =

= = Tours = =

The Virgin Tour (1985)
Who 's That Girl World Tour (1987)
Blond Ambition World Tour (1990)
The Girlie Show World Tour (1993)
Drowned World Tour (2001)
Re @-@ Invention World Tour (2004)
Confessions Tour (2006)
Sticky & Sweet Tour (2008 ? 09)
The MDNA Tour (2012)
Rebel Heart Tour (2015 ? 16)

= = Enterprises = =

Boy Toy , Inc
Webo Girl Publishing , Inc (1992)
Maverick (1992)
Semtex Girls (2006)
Hard Candy Fitness (2010)
Truth or Dare by Madonna (2011)