

= MTV Unplugged (Mariah Carey EP) =

MTV Unplugged is a live EP by American singer and songwriter Mariah Carey , released in the United States on June 2 , 1992 by Columbia Records . Following the success of Carey 's previous two albums and the growing critical commentary on her lack of concert tours and unsubstantial televised performances , Sony BMG organised a performance show at the Kaufman Astoria Studios , New York on March 16 , 1992 . The show , titled MTV Unplugged , originally aired on MTV to help promote Carey 's album Emotions , as well as help shun critics who deemed Carey a possible studio artist . However , after its success , the show was released to the public as an EP , with an accompanying VHS titled MTV Unplugged + 3 .

Upon release , the EP garnered generally positive reviews from music critics , many of whom complimented Carey 's vocals . Commercially , the album was a success , peaking at number three on the Billboard 200 , and was certified three times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) , denoting shipments of three million copies within the United States . Additionally , the EP experienced strong success in several international markets , such as the Netherlands and New Zealand , where it reached number one and was certified double platinum . MTV Unplugged peaked within the top five in the United Kingdom , and in the top ten in Australia and Canada .

" I 'll Be There " was chosen as the lead single from the album . Due to its critical success until that point , it was released one month before its parent EP , eventually becoming Carey 's sixth chart topper in the United States , and one of the few songs to do so by two different acts . Globally , the song was successful , topping the charts in Canada , the Netherlands and New Zealand , as well as attaining the top five position in Ireland and the United Kingdom . After its success , " If It 's Over " , a song from Carey 's second studio effort Emotions was released , due to its exposure on the show and EP .

= = Background = =

After the release of Carey 's second studio album , Emotions (1991) , critics began wondering whether Carey would finally embark on a worldwide tour , having not toured to promote her self @-@ titled debut album . Although Carey had done several sporadic award show appearances , as well as television program performances , critics began accusing Carey of being a studio artist , not capable of delivering or replicating the same quality vocals live , especially her whistle register . During several televised interviews , Carey addressed the accusations , claiming that she did not tour out of fear of the long travel times and distances , as well as the strain on her voice performing her songs back @-@ to @-@ back . However , in hopes of putting any claims of her being a manufactured artist to rest , Carey and Walter Afanasieff decided to book an appearance on MTV Unplugged , a television program aired by MTV . The show 's purpose was to present name artists , and feature them " unplugged " or stripped of studio equipment . While live , the show allowed several musicians and back up vocalists , while recorded in an acoustic setting . The issues Carey faced once the show was booked was the content ; she didn 't know what material to present at the intimate concert . While Carey felt strongly of her more soulful and powerful songs , it was decided that her most popular content to that point would be included . Days prior to the show 's taping , Carey and Afanasieff thought of adding a cover version of an older song , in order to provide something different and unexpected . They chose " I 'll Be There " , a song made popular by The Jackson 5 in 1970 , rehearsing it few times before the night of the show .

= = Synopsis = =

Carey 's performance was recorded on March 16 , 1992 at Kaufman Astoria Studios in Queens , New York . The show featured a number of musicians , back @-@ up vocalists and just a crew of ten , for filming and recording . Directed by Larry Jordan , who previously worked with Carey on the music video for " Someday " . Dana Jon Chapelle was chosen as the sound mixer , having worked

with Carey on her previous two studio albums . The show began with the song " Emotions " Carey entered the studio dressed in a black jacket and matching pants and boots . Prior to the song 's studio introduction , Carey opened the song with an impromptu gospel and a cappella number , eventually leading to the song 's chorus led by David Cole . After the song , Carey introduced the band and staff ; to her left was a four @-@ piece string section with Belinda Whitney Barnett , Cecilia Hobbs @-@ Gardner , Wince Garvey and Laura Corcos , while San Shea played the harpsichord and harmonium . The show 's rhythm section was led by Gigi Conway on the drums , Randy Jackson on bass , Vernon Black on guitar , and Sammy Figueroa and Ren Klyce , both percussionists . Additionally , Carey had ten background singers on stage , led by Trey Lorenz and Patrique McMillan . The next song on the set @-@ list was " If It 's Over " , a collaboration with Carole King . Walter Afanasieff replaced Cole on the piano , during which time a set of five male musicians were brought on stage . They were Lew Delgado , baritone saxophone ; Lenny Pickett , tenor saxophone ; George Young , alto saxophone ; Earl Gardner , trumpet ; and Steve Turre , trombone . They had been present during Carey 's live performance of the song on Saturday Night Live a few months prior . As Carey introduced the song , she said " this next song I wrote with one of my idols , Carole King " , beginning the performance shortly after . For " Someday " , Cole returned to the stage , replacing Afanasieff on the keyboard . During the song , Carey would often place her index finger over her left ear , especially while using the whistle register . She later explained to the audience that it would help her in hearing herself more precisely , something needed to properly execute a higher ranged note . Once again , as Carey began " Vision of Love " , her " first single ever " , Afansieff swapped positions with Cole . The performance varied heavily from the studio version , as it was more low key and only used voices in a cappella form , without any heavy instrumentation . Prior to beginning the fifth song on the set @-@ list , " Make It Happen " , Afanasieff shared the organ with Cole , playing the bass while the latter handled the treble . After the song began , the back @-@ up began " piling their vocals " over Carey 's , according to author Chris Nickson , and allowed the song to attain a more " churchy feel " . He felt the song was superior to the studio version , due to its stripped performance and vocals :

" The roughness of this version succeeded in a way the recorded version on ' Emotions ' could never manage . In the sterile atmosphere of a studio , where perfection , technology , and overdubbing were the rules , spontaneity had no place . On the stage , it was valued , and this performance had it . Everyone pushed everyone just a little further , to create something wonderful , and judging by the response , the audience realized it , as did Mariah when the song was finished . "

Soon after completing " Make It Happen " , Carey eagerly presented the final song on the set list , " I 'll Be There " . The way the song was arranged , Carey took Michael Jackson 's lead , while Trey Lorenz sang the second lead , originally sung by Jermaine Jackson . After performing the song alongside a very simple arrangement and minimal instrumentals , the back @-@ up singers began humming to the tune of " Can 't Let Go " , leading Carey to present " another final " song for the show . Several days after the concert , Carey sat down with Melinda Newman from Billboard , telling her of the experience recording the show , as well as her view on it from a creative perspective . She said " Unplugged taught me a lot about myself because I tend to nitpick everything I do and make it a bit too perfect because I 'm a perfectionist . I 'll always go over the raw stuff , and now I 've gotten to the point where I understand the raw stuff is usually better . "

= = Release = =

Originally , MTV planned to air the show several times during April 1992 , it was normal for MTV Unplugged sessions to air around six times during the month of release , before being archived . Carey 's version was met with critical acclaim and extended popularity , leading to it being shown more often than usual . Fans from around the United States made multiple requests for the show to be aired on television , and by the end of April 1992 , Carey 's episode of MTV Unplugged had aired over three @-@ times as much as an average episode would . The concert 's success tempted Sony officials to use it as some form of an album . However , Carey and Afansieff were already

making headway on a new album set tentatively for release in 1993 . This being so , Sony decided to release it as an EP , selling for a reduced price due to its shorter length .

= = = Video = = =

After the success of the EP 's lead single " I 'll Be There " , Sony chose to release not only the EP , but a VHS accompaniment package ; a video of the actual concert titled MTV Unplugged + 3 . Aside from featuring the seven song 's performed at Kaufman Astoria Studios , it held three music videos ; " Can 't Let Go " , " Make It Happen " , and a rare remix version and video of " Emotions " . The video peaked atop the Billboard video chart , and was certified platinum by the RIAA , denoting shipments of 100 @, @ 000 units throughout the United States .

MTV Unplugged + 3 garnered generally positive reviews from music critics . Allmusic editor Shawn M. Haney gave the video three out of five stars , praising Carey 's vocals as well as her cover of " I 'll Be There " . Haney wrote " Gradually , the power and esteem of these tales lift to new heights and remain at a peak with the breathtaking , moment @-@ making performance of " I 'll Be There , " a charming song first cut by The Jackson 5 . " Writing for the St. Petersburg Times , Sabrina Miller called Carey an " artiste " and wrote " Programs like MTV Unplugged showcase talent like hers with an exclamation point . " Journalist and writer from The New York Times Jon Pareles branded the performance " shrewd " , and claimed Carey 's cover of " I 'll Be There " " set off fireworks " . A writer for Entertainment Weekly called the show a " vocal Tour de force " , and wrote " in addition to her breathtaking pipes , she has developed a commanding stage presence . " Additionally , they felt Carey 's performance of " I 'll Be There " was " killer " and concluded their review with " In the process , this rare public appearance reminded us there was a big @-@ league performer inside that party dress . "

= = Critical reception = =

MTV Unplugged garnered generally positive reviews from music critics . Allmusic editor Shawn M. Haney gave the album three out of five stars , praising Carey 's vocals as well as her cover of " I 'll Be There " . Haney wrote " Gradually , the power and esteem of these tales lift to new heights and remain at a peak with the breathtaking , moment @-@ making performance of " I 'll Be There , " a charming song first cut by the Jackson 5 . " Writing for the St. Petersburg Times , Sabrina Miller called Carey an " artiste " and wrote " Programs like MTV Unplugged showcase talent like hers with an exclamation point . " Journalist and writer from The New York Times Jon Pareles branded the performance " shrewd , " and claimed Carey 's cover of I 'll be There " " set off fireworks . " A writer for Entertainment Weekly called the show a " vocal Tour de force , " and wrote " in addition to her breathtaking pipes , she has developed a commanding stage presence . " Additionally , they felt Carey 's performance of " I 'll Be There " was " killer " and concluded their review with " In the process , this rare public appearance reminded us there was a big @-@ league performer inside that party dress . " Carey was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for the album .

= = Commercial performance = =

MTV Unplugged debuted at number eight on the Billboard 200 , during the week of June 20 , 1992 . In its third week , the album peaked at number three . In total , the album remained in the top @-@ twenty for fourteen weeks , and on the chart for fifty @-@ seven (making one re @-@ entry) . MTV Unplugged was certified triple @-@ platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) , denoting shipment of three million copies throughout the country . As of April 2013 , Nielsen SoundScan estimates actual sales of the album at 2 @, @ 774 @, @ 000 in the United States . On June 20 , 1992 , MTV Unplugged entered the Canadian RPM Singles Chart at number thirty @-@ seven , eventually peaking at number six five weeks later . During the week of November 22 , 1992 , the album spent its last week on the chart , exiting at number eighty @-@ seven after spending

twenty @-@ four weeks on the album 's chart . To date , the album has been certified platinum by the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA) , denoting shipments of 70 @,@ 000 units throughout the country . In Australia , the album debuted at number thirty @-@ four on the ARIA Charts , during the week ending July 12 , 1992 . Weeks later , it peaked at number seven , where it remained for four consecutive weeks , and a total of twenty @-@ five weeks in the top 50 , and thirty @-@ three weeks in the top 100 . The album was certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) , denoting shipments of 70 @,@ 000 copies .

Outside the United States , the album experienced success in several European markets . In Austria , MTV Unplugged entered the albums chart at number thirty @-@ nine , eventually peaking number twenty @-@ one and spending a total of ten weeks on the chart . In France , the album peaked at number twenty @-@ two , and was certified double @-@ gold by the Syndicat National de l'Édition Phonographique (SNEP) , with estimated sales of 144 @,@ 000 copies . In the Netherlands , the EP entered the MegaCharts at number sixty @-@ six during the week of June 20 , 1992 . It eventually peaked at number one , staying there for three consecutive weeks , and a total of 116 weeks on the chart . The Nederlandse Vereniging van Producenten en Importeurs van beeld- en geluidsdragers (NVPI) certified the album double @-@ platinum , denoting shipments of 200 @,@ 000 units throughout the country . MTV Unplugged entered the New Zealand Albums Chart at number four during the week of August 2 , 1992 . After spending three weeks at number one , and a total of nineteen in the chart , the album was certified double @-@ platinum by the Recording Industry Association of New Zealand (RIANZ) . On the Swiss Albums Chart dated September 13 , 1992 , the album reached its peak position of number nineteen . After only five weeks charting within the country , it was certified gold by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) . In the United Kingdom , the album debuted and peaked at number three on the UK Albums Chart , during the week dated July 18 , 1992 . After spending ten weeks on the chart , the album was certified gold by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) , denoting shipments of 100 @,@ 000 units .

= = Singles = =

After the decision to release the EP was made , Sony decided to release Carey 's live version of " I 'll Be There " as the only single , due to its critical success . The song debuted at number thirteen on the Billboard Hot 100 , becoming Carey 's highest debut on the chart at the time . After four weeks , the song topped the chart , becoming Carey 's sixth number one in the United States , and spending two weeks there . Its success across the globe was strong , peaking at number one on the singles charts in Canada , the Netherlands , and New Zealand , and reached number two and three in the United Kingdom and Ireland , respectively . " I 'll Be There " was certified gold by both the Australian Recording Industry Association and Recording Industry Association of New Zealand , denoting shipments of 35 @,@ 000 and 7 @,@ 500 units of the song in their respective countries . After its success , " If It 's Over " , a song from Carey 's second studio effort Emotions was released , due to its exposure on the show and EP . It was given a very limited release , and only charted in the Netherlands , peaking at number 80 .

= = Track listing = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits for MTV Unplugged adapted from AllMusic .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

