

= Vision of Love =

" Vision of Love " is a song by American singer and songwriter Mariah Carey . It served as Carey 's debut single , the first from her self @-@ titled debut album . Written by Carey and Ben Margulies , " Vision of Love " was released on May 15 , 1990 , by Columbia Records . After being featured on Carey 's demo tape for Columbia , the song was re @-@ sung and produced by Rhett Lawrence and Narada Michael Walden . " Vision of Love " features a slow @-@ dance theme tempo and backing vocals sung by Carey herself , and introduces her usage of the whistle register . Lyrically , the song describes a past and present relationship with a lover . Carey describes the " vision of love " she dreamed of , as well as the present love she feels for him .

The song 's music video was filmed in April 1990 . It features Carey in a large cathedral , where she meditates and sings by a large carved window . " Vision of Love " was performed on several television and award show ceremonies , such as The Oprah Winfrey Show , The Arsenio Hall Show and the 33rd Annual Grammy Awards . It has been performed at almost every one of Carey 's concerts and tours , and is featured on Carey 's live album MTV Unplugged ( 1992 ) and on many of her compilation albums , Number 1 's ( 1998 ) , Greatest Hits ( 2001 ) and The Ballads ( 2008 ) .

" Vision of Love " was lauded by contemporary music critics . While the production of the song was typical of late 1980s pop , the vocals were not , being much more showy and expressing a wider range than artists popular at the time such as Paula Abdul and Debbie Gibson . It has been credited with popularizing the use of melisma in modern popular music and for inspiring several artists to pursue a career in music . The New Yorker named " Vision of Love " the " Magna Carta of melisma " for its and Carey 's influence on pop and R & B singers and American Idol contestants . Additionally , Rolling Stone said that " the fluttering strings of notes that decorate songs like " Vision of Love , " inspired the entire American Idol vocal school , for better or worse , and virtually every other female R & B singer since the nineties . " The song topped the singles charts in Canada , New Zealand and the United States , where it spent four weeks atop the chart .

= = Background and recording = =

Throughout 1986 , Carey had already begun writing music while in high school . After composing a song with her friend , Gavin Christopher ( of " Once You Get Started " fame ) , Carey met a young drummer and songwriter , Ben Margulies . After initially meeting and becoming friends , the pair began spending time in his father 's old studio , writing material and composing new songs . Together , the first song they compiled was titled " Here We Go Around Again . " Although the song was Carey 's first composition ; it was never recorded . As the year wore on , they had composed seven songs for Carey 's demo tape ; of them was the rough and unfinished version of " Vision of Love " . In an interview with Fred Bronson , Carey described how she met and came to work with Margulies .

" We needed someone to play keyboards for a song I did with Gavin Christopher . We called someone and he couldn 't come , so by accident we stumbled on Ben . Ben came to the session , and he can 't really play keyboards very well @-@ he 's really more of a drummer @-@ but after that day , we kept in touch , and we just sort of clicked as writers .

After meeting Brenda K. Starr and being introduced to Tommy Mottola , the future head of Sony Music Entertainment , the song was re @-@ done in a professional studio , with the assistance of two producers . Carey flew to Los Angeles to work with Rhett Lawrence , one of the album 's main producers . After hearing the original version of the song , Lawrence described it as having a " ' 50s sort of shuffle . " After Carey agreed to alter the song , Lawrence contemporized its tempo . " Vision of Love " was recorded at the Skyline Studios in New York , and featured Lawrence behind the keyboard , Margulies on the drums , bassist Marcus Miller , drum programmer Ren Klyce and guitarist Jimmy Ripp . Lawrence took Carey 's vocals from the original demo version , and used them as background vocals for the song 's final version . After adding different instrumentation to the song , Lawrence and Narada Michael Walden produced " Vision of Love . "

## = = Composition = =

" Vision of Love " is a love song with pop and R & B influences . It incorporates heavy backup vocals during the song 's bridge and features usage of Carey 's whistle register and melisma . Author Chris Nickson described the song and its vocals :

" [ ' Vision of Love ' ] was the perfect introduction to her voice . With an ideal slow @-@ dancing tempo , it still managed to swing , with Mariah 's background vocals ( herself multi @-@ tracked ) answering her lead . On the final chorus , her voice flew towards those trademark high notes before the instruments drop out , leaving Mariah to sing her way out to the tune 's climax alone . "

According to the sheet music published at Musicnotes.com by Sony / ATV Music Publishing , " Vision of Love " is set in common time and in the key of C major . Carey 's vocal range spans from the low note of Eb3 to the high whistle note of C7 . The song 's lyrics and melody were written and composed by Carey , with Margulies , Miller , Klyce and Rip on the instrumentals . Lawrence and Walden produced the song , which heavily deviated from its original version on Carey 's demo . Michael Slezak from Entertainment Weekly wrote regarding the song 's instrumentation and vocals " From those opening sci @-@ fi @-@ esque synths to that signature dog @-@ whistle high note , Mariah 's very first single is inspired : Even folks who object to her trademark vocal excesses are hard @-@ pressed to fault this rousing , gospel @-@ tinged song about finding ' the one that I needed . ' "

## = = Lyrical content = =

The song 's lyrics have been subject to various interpretations and suggested relationships by critics . Some have noted the relationship between Carey and God , while others point out one with a lover . Carey has yielded to both , while claiming them to have a connection to her childhood and obstacles growing up . Michael Slezak wrote " Though it 's not clear if she 's celebrating a secular love or her relationship with a higher power , this exuberant ballad is a near @-@ religious listening experience . " In an interview with Ebony in 1991 , Carey spoke of the song 's lyrics and success .

" Consider the lyrics : Prayed through the nights / Felt so alone / Suffered from alienation / Carried the weight on my own / Had to be strong / So I believed / And now I know I 've succeeded / In finding the place I conceived . Well , just because you are young doesn 't mean that you haven 't had a hard life . It 's been difficult for me , moving around so much , having to grow up by myself , basically on my own , my parents divorced . And I always felt kind of different from everyone else in my neighborhoods . I was a different person ? ethnically . And sometimes that can be a problem . If you look a certain way everybody goes , ' White girl , ' and I 'd go , ' No , that 's not what I am . ' "

According to Nickson , Carey chose to express her innermost feelings in her songs rather than becoming depressed and bitter throughout the hardships in her life . " You really have to look inside yourself and find your own inner strength , and say , ' I 'm proud of what I am and who I am , and I 'm just going to be myself . "

## = = Critical reception = =

" Vision of Love " has been lauded by contemporary music critics for its lyrical content , vocals , and use of melisma . In a retrospective review on the album in 2005 , Entertainment Weekly called the song " inspired " and complimented Carey 's use of the whistle register in the song . In 2006 , Sasha Frere @-@ Jones from The New Yorker named the song " the Magna Carta of melisma " for it and Carey 's influence on pop and R & B singers and American Idol contestants . Additionally , Rolling Stone said that " the fluttering strings of notes that decorate songs like " Vision of Love , " inspired the entire American Idol vocal school , for better or worse , and virtually every other female R & B singer since the nineties . " Slant Magazine critic Rich Juzwiak , wrote " I think [ " Vision of Love " ] was a vision of the future world of American Idol . " In a separate review from Slant , RJ wrote " The last half of " Vision Of Love " ( starting with the belted bridge ) is a series of crescendos that get so intense that another Mariah has to step in to keep up the momentum . " Additionally , RJ

complimented the usage of the whistle register in the song " And then there 's the whistle note . And then there 's the final vocal run that 's more like a roller @-@ coaster track . If you think these aren 't climaxes , she proves you wrong with her denouement , the way the last word , " be , " sort of wanes into an " mm hmm hmm . " Bill Lamb from About.com said that " ' Vision of Love ' is one of the best songs of Mariah 's recording career [ ... ] It is simply one of the most stunning debut releases ever by a pop recording artist . "

= = = Legacy = = =

" Vision of Love " was nominated for three Grammy Awards at the 33rd annual ceremony , held on February 20 , 1991 : Record of the Year , Song of the Year and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance , winning the latter . Additionally , the song received the Soul Train Music Award for Best R & B / Soul Single , Female and a Song of the Year Award at the BMI Pop Awards . Devon Powers from Popmatters has stated during the release of Carey 's Greatest Hits album that " Mariah 's Greatest Hits moves chronologically through that remarkable career , beginning with ? Vision of Love ? , the 1990 single that introduced the singer to instant stardom . Still , after so many years and songs , it ? s by far among her best , if not the best ? a simple testament to the incredible pipes that gave her a permanent place in pop cultural memory . Powers added that " From its first moments , the song demands to be legendary ? a gong crash smolders low as Mariah ? s gospel @-@ inspired vocals hum confidently , grandly . "

VH1 named " Vision of Love " the 14th greatest song of the 1990s . About.com ranked it fourth on its top ten pop hits of 1990 list and 28th on its top 100 pop songs of the 1990s list . Entertainment Weekly included it on their " 10 Great ( and 10 Grating ) Karaoke Songs " list as a grating karaoke song , saying : " You cannot do this song . Seriously . Tackling this lung @-@ crusher might seem like a fun challenge , but three minutes , five octaves , and one 10 @-@ second note later , you will realize that you did not conquer ' Vision of Love . ' ' Vision of Love ' conquered you . " USA Today critic Elysa Gardner picked " Vision of Love " as one of the most intriguing tracks , saying that it is still Mariah 's best song . T. Field and a research team discovered that " Vision of Love " is one of the songs that has physiological and biochemical effects on depressed female adolescents . R & B singer Beyoncé Knowles said that she began doing vocal " runs " after listening to " Vision of Love " for the first time . Similarly , pop singers Rihanna and Christina Aguilera cited the song and Carey as big influences in her career as a singer . In an interview during the early stages of her career , Aguilera said " I 've totally looked up to Mariah since ' Vision of Love ' came out . "

The song was featured in a late 1990 episode of the daytime soap opera All My Children as well as 1991 episodes of Santa Barbara and The Young and the Restless .

= = Chart performance = =

In the United States , " Vision of Love " entered the Billboard Hot 100 at number 73 during the week of June 2 , 1990 , and reached the chart 's summit nine weeks later . The song remained atop the chart for four consecutive weeks , and was ranked sixth on the Hot 100 year @-@ end chart . After four weeks at number one , it fell to number eight , and spent seven weeks lingering in the top ten . It also topped the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs for two weeks and Hot Adult Contemporary Tracks for three weeks . In August 1990 , the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) certified the song gold , denoting shipments of over 500 @,@ 000 units . In Canada , " Vision of Love " entered the Canadian RPM Singles Chart at number 75 , during the week of July 7 , 1990 . In its eighth week on the chart , the song reached number one and remained on the chart a total of 17 weeks . " Vision of Love " finished eighth on the Top 100 Hit Tracks of 1990 . " Vision of Love " entered the Australian Singles Chart at number 67 during the week of August 5 , 1990 . It peaked at number nine , and spent a total of 19 weeks in the top 100 . The Australian Recording Industry Association ( ARIA ) certified the song gold , denoting shipments of over 35 @,@ 000 units .

In the Netherlands , the song entered the singles chart at number 99 , during the week of July 14 . It spent a total of 17 weeks in the chart , spending two weeks at its peak position of number eight . "

Vision of Love " entered the French Singles Chart at number 39 on November 11 , 1990 . It peaked at number 25 , spending two weeks at the position and a total of 14 on the chart . In Ireland , the song peaked at number ten , and spent six weeks in the singles chart . " Vision of Love " topped the chart in New Zealand , spending two consecutive weeks atop the singles chart . After fluctuating for 24 weeks in the chart , the song was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of New Zealand ( RIANZ ) , denoting shipments of over 7 @, @ 500 units . In the United Kingdom , the song entered the UK Singles Chart at number 74 , during the week of August 4 , 1990 . " Vision of Love " peaked at number nine in its seventh week , and spent a total of 12 weeks in the chart . According to MTV , sales in the UK are estimated at 170 @, @ 000 units .

= = Music video = =

= = Background = = =

After completing the album , Sony hired Bojan Bazelli to direct the song 's music video . After filming the video 's first version , record label executives felt the result was sub @-@ par in comparison to the quality of the music . They scrapped the first video and re @-@ filmed it with director Andy Morahan , changing the plot , scenery and imagery . After word got out of the two videos , a Sony employee spoke to the press about Carey , saying how " the special treatment really upset " him . He felt they treated Carey differently from how they would another artist signed to the label , and that they viewed her as a higher priority . He also claimed that Carey was the reason they re @-@ filmed , " they spend \$ 200 @, @ 000 on a video and Mariah doesn 't like it . No big deal . " Another employee estimated the figure of both videos at over \$ 450 @, @ 000 . After the reports were made , Don Ienner , the president of Sony , refuted the claims , calling them " total bullshit " although admitting , " If we 're going to take the time and effort that we did with Mariah , on every level , then we 're going to image her the right way . If it costs a few extra dollars to make a splash in terms of the right imaging , you go ahead and do it . "

= = Synopsis = = =

The video takes place in a large cathedral @-@ like room , with large winding staircases on each side . Throughout the video , the scenery changes several times from a cloudy and sunny day , to a glowing sunset . These time shifts are seen through a large carved window in the cathedral . The video begins with Carey 's hair in long golden curls , and her wearing a skin @-@ tight black jumper . She sits on the large ledge by the window , staring into the different colors in the sky . As the video progresses , Carey is joined by a small black dog , which accompanies her as she meditates on the large stairwell . After the song 's second verse , a large microphone is seen in the middle of the room , where scenes of Carey singing and standing on the window 's ledge interchange . The last scenes show Carey staring out into the meadow , smiling . According to author Chris Nickson , during the scenes of Carey by the large window , it is " obvious " that she is praying to God and connecting to her creator . He felt that alongside the song 's lyrics of faith and prayer , the video 's moments of meditation truly went " hand in hand . "

= = Live performances = =

Serving as her debut single , Carey performed " Vision of Love " on several live television and award show appearances , both stateside and throughout Europe . Carey 's first live performance of the song was on The Arsenio Hall Show , where she was joined on stage by the Billie T. Scott Ensemble , a trio of male background vocalists . Additionally , she sang it during a televised appearance at New York City 's TATU Club , where she also gave a live rendition of Ben E. King 's " Don 't Play That Song ( You Lied ) " . As part of a live segment and interview , Carey appeared on Good Morning America in July 1990 , where she gave a live performance of the song . In the further

months , Carey performed the song live on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson , The Oprah Winfrey Show and the 33rd Annual Grammy Awards . In Europe , Carey performed " Vision of Love " on Wogan in the United Kingdom , and Avis de Recherche and Le Monde Est A Vous in France . In 1992 , Carey performed the song on MTV Unplugged . It was released on her EP and home video that same year , as MTV Unplugged and MTV Unplugged + 3 respectively . In July 1993 , Carey recorded a live concert performance at Proctor 's Theatre which included " Vision of Love " . It was taped and released as Here Is Mariah Carey in December 1993 . Additionally , the song was part of a four @-@ song set @-@ list on BET 's Blueprint , where Carey performed in July 2005 .

" Vision of Love " was performed on several of Carey 's tours and concert shows . It was first featured on her Music Box Tour , her first full @-@ length stateside tour . For the song 's performances , Carey donned a large black trench coat , with matching pants and leather boots . She featured her signature curly locks , and was joined by Trey Lorenz , Melonie Daniels and Kelly Price . On her 1996 Daydream World Tour , Carey once again included the song on the tour 's set @-@ list . During her shows at the Tokyo Dome in Tokyo , Japan , Carey donned a long black gown , with teased up straightened hair and a matching head @-@ band . For the European leg on the tour , Carey wore a long white gown , and was joined by additional background vocalists . Carey included the song on her set @-@ list for her Butterfly World Tour ( 1998 ) , where she once again featured the same trio of supporting singers . For the show 's performances , she donned a sheer and beige mini @-@ dress , with long and wavy golden hair . Additionally , she wore a cream @-@ colored long @-@ sleeve sheer sweater with matching high @-@ heeled sandals . " Vision of Love " was included on Carey 's Rainbow World Tour in 2000 , as well as the Charmbracelet World Tour : An Intimate Evening with Mariah Carey ( 2002 ? 03 , and The Elusive Chanteuse Show ( 2014 ) . During The Adventures of Mimi Tour in 2006 , Carey performed the song at select shows . For the performances of the song , she donned a long yellow cocktail gown and black Christian Louboutin pumps . Once again Lorenz was featured on stage , however with the addition of two different female back @-@ up singers , MaryAnn and Sherry Tatum . Carey also performed the song at the 2015 Billboard Music Awards along with Infinity to promote her number 1 To Infinity album . Carey also included the song in her Las Vegas residency , Mariah Carey Number 1 's , a chronicle of her 18 US number 1 hits . The song was first in the chronological setlist , and for the performance Carey donned a black sequined gown , and her signature curls .

= = Formats and track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from the Mariah Carey linear notes .

Songwriting ? Mariah Carey , Ben Margulies

Production ? Rhett Lawrence , Narada Michael Walden

Instruments and programming ? Rhett Lawrence , Jimmy Ripp

Recording ? Rhett Lawrence

Audio engineering ? Narada Michael Walden

Background vocals ? Mariah Carey

Programming ? Ben Margulies , Marcus Miller , Ren Klyce

Mixing ? Rhett Lawrence , Narada Michael Walden

= = Charts and certifications = =