

= Beautiful (Christina Aguilera song) =

" Beautiful " is a song recorded by American singer Christina Aguilera for her fourth studio album , Stripped (2002) . It was released as the album 's second single on November 16 , 2002 . A pop ballad , " Beautiful " was written and produced by Linda Perry . Lyrically , it discusses inner beauty , as well as self @-@ esteem and insecurity issues . Aguilera commented that she put " her heart and her soul " into the track , which she felt represented the theme of Stripped . The song was later re @-@ recorded in an electronic style for her first greatest hits album Keeps Gettin ' Better : A Decade of Hits (2008) .

Upon its release , " Beautiful " received universal acclaim from music critics , who have ranked it among Aguilera 's strongest material . It won a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance and was also nominated for Song of the Year at the 2004 ceremony . " Beautiful " was also a commercial success , topping the charts in Australia , Belgium , Canada , Ireland , New Zealand and the United Kingdom . The song peaked at number two on the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States , where it was certified Gold for 500 @,@ 000 units shipped .

" Beautiful " has been widely embraced as an anthem by the LGBT community for its message of self @-@ empowerment and inner beauty . An accompanying music video was directed by Jonas Åkerlund , and earned Aguilera a GLAAD Media Award for its positive portrayal of gay and transgender people . In 2011 , UK LGBT rights organization Stonewall named " Beautiful " the most empowering song of the previous decade for gay , lesbian , and bisexual people . In 2009 , Rolling Stone and VH1 listed it as one of the best songs of the 2000s (decade) . The song is widely recognized as one of Aguilera 's signature songs and has been covered on numerous occasions and featured on several television shows .

= = Background and recording = =

" Beautiful " was written and produced by Linda Perry . Aguilera recorded the song at two studios : The Enterprise Studios in Burbank , California , and Conway Recording Studios in Hollywood . Prior to the collaboration with Aguilera , Perry had written the song and originally wished to keep the " personal " record for her own singing career . Perry initially previewed the song for Pink during the recording sessions of Pink 's second studio album Missundaztood (2001) , on which Perry is a producer . However , after hearing Aguilera sing the song at Perry 's house to " break the ice " , Perry was very impressed and allowed Aguilera to include the track on her then upcoming record Stripped , effectively deciding not to pursue a solo career . The choice resulted in a feud between Pink against Aguilera and Perry , with the former commenting that it was " annoying " for the latter to collaborate with artists " [she] didn 't like " . Perry later revealed to ASCAP , " When Christina came over to my house to start working , she asked me to play some songs to break the ice . [...] I had a long conversation with my manager about it . We both decided to hear Christina sing it . We demoed the song with her singing it , and I was like , ' Wow ' . That rough vocal is what is out there on radio . It was that vocal that got her the song " . Perry 's wife Sara Gilbert confirmed on her show The Talk that the final version was " just a demo " and Aguilera wanted to rerecord the song which Perry denied the request because the song is supposed to be about imperfection and being vulnerable .

= = Composition and lyrics = =

" Beautiful " is a gentle pop ballad that discusses issues of self @-@ esteem and insecurity , promoting a message of self @-@ empowerment and embracing inner beauty . Larry Flick of Billboard added that the song talks about " overcoming life 's trials " , Chuck Taylor also of Billboard observed that it has a message of " holding oneself up against criticism from the outside , " and Todd Burns of Stylus noted that the song " also explores the main theme of the record , being stripped bare in front of the public . " Its instrumentation incorporates bass guitar , cello , drum kits , keyboards , piano , and violin . " Beautiful " was composed in the key of E ? major and moving at a slow 76 beats per minute . Aguilera 's vocal range spans over two octaves from E ? 3 to G5 ; she

uses several melismas in the song , fitting as many as seven notes in one syllable .

= = Release and reception = =

" Beautiful " was released as the second single from Stripped . It was first sent to American contemporary hit and rhythmic radio stations on November 16 , 2002 . The song was later released as a CD single on January 27 , February 24 , and February 25 , 2003 , in Germany , the United Kingdom , and France , respectively . Also on February 25 , a digital remix EP of " Beautiful " was released worldwide . Two days later , the single was released as a maxi single in Canada . On March 11 , 2003 , the single was released as a CD in the United States .

= = Critical reception = =

Upon its release , " Beautiful " received universal acclaim from music critics . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic complimented the song for not following the " club and street @-@ level R & B , which fit her poorly " . Similarly , a reviewer from Billboard recognized " Beautiful " as a " single @-@ worthy ballad " from a record of " pleasantly surprising depth " . In a separate review , Chuck Taylor from the same magazine labeled the song " breathtaking " , and recognized its melody and lyrical message . Entertainment Weekly 's David Browne called the song one of Stripped 's " moments " , noting that it is " more restrained " than the other songs from the album . Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine commented that the collaboration with Linda Perry found Aguilera " truly naked " and reflective of the album 's title . Stylus Magazine 's Todd Burns gave Stripped a negative review , but complimented " Beautiful " for " tastefully [reining] in Aguilera 's frequent vocal acrobatics " . Jane Dark of The Village Voice compared the song to the works of Mariah Carey " made back when she was a natural " . In contrast , Amanda Murray from Sputnikmusic criticized the " platitude @-@ drenched " lyrics but praised the overall production . At the 2004 Grammy Awards , " Beautiful " won the award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance and was nominated for Song of the Year .

" Beautiful " is considered to be Aguilera 's signature song and has been recognized as being among her strongest tracks . The song was recognized as her third @-@ best single by Rachel McRady of Wetpaint , who commented that " Xtina 's inspiration ballad motivated an entire generation " . PopCrush 's Alexandra Capotorto named it as her favorite track by Aguilera , opining that the song is " definitely one of the most memorable and greatest Christina Aguilera songs to date " . Rolling Stone ranked " Beautiful " at number 52 on their list of the 100 best songs of the 2000s (decade) , elaborating that it is " delivered with full @-@ fathom force by the bottle @-@ blond with the biggest voice " . Similarly , VH1 positioned the track at number 18 on their list of the 100 greatest songs of the past decade .

= = Commercial performance = =

" Beautiful " was quickly released after the underperformance of the album 's first single , " Dirty " . It achieved international success and was the highest @-@ charting single from Stripped in several territories . The song peaked at number 2 on the US Billboard Hot 100 and became Aguilera 's longest @-@ charting solo track , spending twenty @-@ seven weeks on the chart . The song additionally topped Billboard Adult Contemporary , Hot Dance Club Songs , and Pop Songs component charts . By March 2006 , it was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for shipments of 500 @, @ 000 copies .. As of August 2014 , the single has sold 1 @, @ 512 @, @ 000 digital copies in that country . In Canada , the song reached number 1 on the Billboard Canadian Hot 100 .

" Beautiful " proved similarly successful in Europe , where it peaked within the top five of most markets in which it was released . Spending a total of fifty @-@ one weeks on the UK Singles Chart , the song eventually peaked atop the chart ; it was certified silver by the British Phonographic Industry . It peaked at numbers 3 and 18 on the Belgian Ultratop 50 and Ultratop 40 , respectively . In Germany , the song peaked at number 9 after charting for thirteen weeks on the Media Control

Charts . However , " Beautiful " proved less successful on the French Syndicat National de l'Édition Phonographique , where it reached number 27 . In the Pacific regions , the song failed to chart in any Asian markets , but maintained a strong performance in Oceania . It peaked at number 1 on the Australian ARIA Charts , where it spent a total of thirteen weeks . " Beautiful " was later certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) for shipments of 70 @, @ 000 units . The song also charted on the New Zealand Top 40 Singles Chart for twenty @-@ three weeks , during which period it peaked at number 1 . After passing 7 @, @ 500 shipments , " Beautiful " was recognized with a gold certification by the Recording Industry Association of New Zealand (RIANZ) .

= = Music video = =

The accompanying music video for " Beautiful " was directed by Jonas Åkerlund and premiered on December 9 , 2002 . It opens with Aguilera speaking the line " Don 't look at me " , followed by scenes of her singing alone in a room intercut with self @-@ image @-@ related sequences of other people . An anorexic girl examines herself in a mirror , eventually punching through it ; a thin teenage boy stands lifting weights in a room plastered with images of bodybuilders ; and an African @-@ American girl rips out pages of women 's magazines including photos of only white women and throws them into a fire . In one sequence , a girl is physically bullied by several peers , and in another , a goth man sits at the back of a bus while several people get up and move . The video also touches on LGBT issues ; one scene features a gay couple , portrayed by Jordan Shannon and Justin Croft , kissing on a bench and ignoring the stares of people who pass them . Another shows a transgender person , played by Robert Sherman , putting on makeup , a wig , and women 's clothing . The music video debuted at number 2 on Total Request Live , spending a total of fifty days on the chart and retiring at number 6 . It topped MuchMusic 's Countdown for two consecutive weeks and remained on the countdown for fifteen weeks . The video received a Special Recognition award , presented by David LaChapelle , from the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation at its 14th GLAAD Media Awards . After an a cappella performance of the song , Aguilera stated in her acceptance speech that " this song is definitely a universal message that everybody can relate to ? anyone that 's been discriminated against or unaccepted , unappreciated or disrespected just because of who you are . "

= = Live performances = =

Recognized as one of her signature songs , Aguilera has performed " Beautiful " at a number of venues and events . During the promotion of Stripped , she appeared on VH1 's Big In Awards , Top of the Pops , and the 46th Grammy Awards . The song was included on the setlists of The Stripped Tour , the Justified and Stripped Tour in 2003 and the Back to Basics Tour in 2006 . " Beautiful " was also sung on the television special VH1 Storytellers in 2010 . " Beautiful " has also been performed on charity events and fundraisings , such as CNN Heroes introduced by Anderson Cooper saying , " It 's my pleasure to introduce a performer with unparalleled range and passion ; her song is a reminder that out of great trials and tribulations we can all create something beautiful " ; Justin Timberlake & Friends in 2010 , and Hurricane Sandy : Coming Together in 2012 .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Recognition = = =

" Beautiful " has been embraced by the LGBT community as an anthem . On October 5 , 2010 , several hundred people gathered in front of the Massachusetts State House and sang " Beautiful " as a tribute to the teenagers who had committed suicide due to anti @-@ gay bullying during the previous months . In March 2011 , the Columbus Children 's Choir and Columbus Gay Men 's

Chorus joined to perform the song as a contribution to the It Gets Better Project . UK LGBT rights charity Stonewall named " Beautiful " the most empowering song of the decade for lesbian , gay and bisexual people ; media personality and Stonewall contributor Paul Gambaccini called the song " a major achievement that has inspired millions of young people around the world . " The result is based on the choice from 1 @,@ 007 readers . Aguilera commented of the song 's reception , " I cannot express in words how much the LGBT community means to me . On my darkest day their support lifts me up . I feel honored that some of my songs become anthems to them as well . "

= = = Cover versions = = =

Since its release , " Beautiful " has been covered by many performers . In 2003 , indie rock band Clem Snide released the song as part of their A Beautiful EP recording . Kidz Bop covered the original version for Kidz Bop 4 in 2003 , and later recorded a dance edit three years later for Kidz Bop 6 . Kenny G and Chaka Khan performed the song for the former 's 2003 project At Last ... The Duets Album . In 2004 , it appears on the French girl band L5 's live album Le Live , recorded during their concert tour in 2003 . In 2012 David Archuleta included his rendition on his fifth studio album Begin . Other performers that have recorded their own versions of the song are G4 in 2005 , Girl Authority in 2006 , The Lemonheads in 2009 , Zebrahead in 2009 , The Rebeatles Project in 2010 , Insane Clown Posse in 2012 , Me First and the Gimme Gimmes in 2014 , and Jordan Smith in 2016 . Many performers have also played " Beautiful " live on shows and concerts . British rock band The Zutons performed the song on their BBC Radio 1 Live Launch show , on May 28 , 2008 ; this version of the song was later released as part of the compilation album Radio 1 's Live Lounge ? Volume 3 . In 2011 , child singer Savannah Robinson performed the song on The Ellen DeGeneres Show , and in 2012 American singer Kelly Clarkson sang " Beautiful " during her Stronger Tour , by audience request . Other notable performers that have covered the song are Gloria Gaynor , Jason Mraz , Brett Anderson , and The All @-@ American Rejects .

The song has also been performed by contestants on televised talent competitions . In 2003 , Alex Parks , the eventual winner of the first season of Fame Academy , covered the song on the series and re @-@ recorded a version for her debut studio album Introduction . In 2007 , Angy Fernández sang " Beautiful " during the inaugural season of Factor X in Spain . In 2010 , Sally Chatfield chose the song during the second season of the Australian version of The X Factor . The following year , Aguilera performed the song alongside her finalist Beverly McClellan on the first season finale of The Voice . The following week , it debuted at number 74 on the US Billboard Hot 100 and peaked at number 52 on the Hot Digital Songs diagram with first @-@ week sales of 42 @,@ 000 downloads on the iTunes Store . Later in 2011 , both Janet Devlin and Little Mix covered the song during the eighth series of The X Factor in the United Kingdom . Additionally , cover versions of the song have been featured on scripted television series such as A.N.T. Farm , Glee , House , Smash , and Orange Is the New Black .

= = Track listings = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Recording locations

Mixed at The Enterprise Studios , Burbank , CA

Engineered at Mad Dog Studios , Burbank , CA

Additional recording at The Enterprise Studios , Burbank , CA

Mastered at Bernie Grundman Mastering

Personnel

Source :

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =