

= Merry Christmas II You =

Merry Christmas II You is the second Christmas album and thirteenth studio album by American singer and songwriter Mariah Carey . It was released by Island Records on November 2 , 2010 . Recording began in April 2010 and continued while Carey became pregnant . She was the executive producer of Merry Christmas II You and worked with various record producers , including Bryan @-@ Michael Cox , Jermaine Dupri , Randy Jackson , James Poyser , Marc Shaiman , James " Big Jim " Wright and Johnny " Sev " Severin of RedOne . The album features Carey 's mother Patricia Carey as a guest vocalist on " O Come All Ye Faithful " / " Hallelujah Chorus " . The album is composed of original songs and covers , ballads and uptempo tracks . It incorporates R & B , soul and house music in its composition .

The album received mixed reviews from music critics , who complimented its relaxed yet lively and contemporary feel , while others felt it was predictable and too overproduced in places . It debuted at number four on the United States Billboard 200 album chart , and reached number one on both the Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums and Holiday Albums chart . It was later certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) , denoting shipments exceeding 500 @,@ 000 copies . Elsewhere , however , the album failed to make an impact , reaching the top thirty in Australia and Hungary , and the top fifty in Austria and Italy . It missed out on the top one @-@ hundred in the United Kingdom by one position , peaking at one @-@ hundred and one on the albums chart .

The album produced four singles , including the US Adult Contemporary record @-@ breaking song " Oh Santa ! " . It reached number @-@ one in its second week , the quickest ascent in the history of the chart and the only song to do so . Other singles included " Auld Lang Syne ( The New Year 's Anthem ) " , a single release version of " When Christmas Comes " in 2011 with John Legend and " Christmas Time Is in the Air Again " in 2012 . To support the album , Carey made promotional appearances on The Ellen DeGeneres Show and Lopez Tonight , and hosted her own television special called Mariah Carey : Merry Christmas to You .

= = Background and production = =

Mariah Carey 's twelfth studio album , Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel , was released in 2009 . It produced the US Billboard Hot 100 top ten and platinum certified track " Obsessed " . However , subsequent single releases failed to replicate its success , with " I Want to Know What Love Is " peaking at number 60 on the Hot 100 , and " H.A.T.E.U. " reaching number 72 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart . Carey revealed that she intended to re @-@ release Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel as a remix album in early 2010 , titled Angels Advocate , which would consist of remixes of the standard songs with new featured artists , including Mary J. Blige , Snoop Dogg , Trey Songz , R. Kelly , T @-@ Pain , Gucci Mane and OJ da Juiceman . A release date of February 23 , 2010 , was slated , and then pushed back to March 9 . It was then further pushed back to March 30 . " Angels Cry " and " Up Out My Face " from Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel were released as remixes with Ne @-@ Yo featuring on the former and Nicki Minaj on the latter . However , it was confirmed in March 2010 that production of Angels Advocate had halted and the project was shelved indefinitely . Carey 's record label Island Def Jam stated that the singer was instead working on a new project and " new surprises " . Metro revealed that Carey was either recording a new studio album or possibly a Christmas album .

In an interview for Rap @-@ Up in April 2010 , Jermaine Dupri said that he and Carey had already begun working on new songs , stating " The song of the decade crew is back in the lab . This [ is ] the first day of the new shit . " On April 24 , David LaChapelle said that he had shot the album artwork with fake snow and wooden cutout reindeers , thus confirming that the project was a Christmas album . On May 5 , Dupri confirmed that he and Carey were in the early stages of production for the album , that Bryan @-@ Michael Cox and Johntá Austin were involved in the project and that they hoped to release a single by the end of the year . Roger Friedman of Showbiz411 revealed some information about the album on June 3 , 2010 , saying " Mariah ? s

Christmas album is said to be very lush , with lots of strings and no hip hop . A lot of it is said to be ' live ' and there ? s an orchestra " and would feature a new version of her 1994 Christmas single , " All I Want for Christmas Is You " . It was reported by Showbiz411 in August 2010 that Carey had enlisted Broadway composer Marc Shaiman to work on the then untitled album ; the magazine described the pairing as " unusual " but noted that the outcome could be " colossal " . On September 1 , 2010 , Rap @-@ Up exclusively revealed the title of the album , Merry Christmas II You , and that it would be released on November 2 with original songs as well as covers . The II represents being a sequel to Carey 's first Christmas album , Merry Christmas ( 1994 ) .

= = Composition = =

The opening track " Santa Claus Is Coming to Town " is a twenty @-@ two second introduction produced by Carey and Shaiman . " Oh Santa ! " is an up @-@ tempo R & B song and is one of four new original compositions . It was written and produced by Carey , Dupri and Cox , and its instrumentation consists of sleigh bells , jingle bells , hand claps and a piano melody , backed by a " school @-@ yard chant beat " . Lyrically , Carey makes a plea to Santa Claus asking him to bring back her " baby " in time for Christmas , singing " Santa 's gon ' come and make him mine this Christmas . " Joey Guerra of the Houston Chronicle noted that it has a 1960s girl @-@ group swing feel to it . The third track on the album is a medley titled " O Little Town of Bethlehem " / " Little Drummer Boy " . Cary Ganz of Rolling Stone described it as a " straightforward and sweet " performance . " Christmas Time Is in the Air Again " is softly sung ballad backed by a string section and embellished with bells and chimes . The Village Voice writer Rich Juzwiak felt that " Christmas Time Is in the Air Again " was the only song on Merry Christmas II You that matched " the magic " of " All I Want for Christmas Is You " , describing it as " exquisite " .

Track five is an interlude which is another medley titled " The First Noel " / " Born Is the King " . " The First Noel " section is a soulful down @-@ tempo song which consists of Carey delivering a piano @-@ and @-@ voice epilogue backed by an 808 drum machine , while " Born Is the King " is a piece of " pure baby @-@ making magic " , according to Juzwiak . " When Christmas Comes " is a soul song with elements of R & B ; the instrumental consists of horns , including the trumpet performed by Rick Baptist and Greg Adams , and the trombone by Nick Lane . Other brass instruments include Dan Higgins on the sax and flute . Lyrically , the song is about " giving the gift of love " , as Carey sings " And me and you gon ' have ourselves a holiday / And we don 't need nobody else to celebrate / And we 're gon ' kiss our worries and our cares away / I can 't wait / Because this Christmas time , get together / It 's gonna be so nice , better than ever / And baby you ? re the one , special treasure . "

The seventh track on the album comes in the form of another medley , this time called " Here Comes Santa Claus ( Right Down Santa Claus Lane ) " / " Housetop Celebration " . Guerra noted that Carey adds some " club bounce " to " Here Comes Santa Claus ( Right Down Santa Claus Lane ) " , while Eric Henderson of Slant Magazine thought that the " Housetop Celebration " part of the medley " recycles the monolithic beat from Kurtis Blow 's instructive " Christmas Rappin ' " . " Charlie Brown Christmas " is a variation of the A Charlie Brown Christmas animated musical television special . A piece of nostalgia , as described by Guerra , it also makes use of traditional religious carols . A fourth medley titled " O Come All Ye Faithful " / " Hallelujah Chorus " features Carey 's mother , Patricia , who performs opera during the " Hallelujah Chorus " section . According to Bill Lamb of About.com , " Here Mariah Carey is at her best as she threatens to take everything too far sonically with operatic tones , impossibly high notes , and melisma in full force , but somehow it all holds together in exhilarating fashion . "

Track ten is a live recording of " O Holy Night " by Carey at the WPC in South Central Los Angeles . It makes use of the singer 's " deeper , throatier tones " and " octave @-@ scaling high notes " . It is followed by " One Child " , written by Carey and James Poyser , a retelling of the birth of Jesus . It encompasses a range of genres , including Christmas , adult contemporary , urban contemporary and religious music . " All I Want for Christmas Is You ? Extra Festive " is re @-@ recording of the original , which makes use of extra chimes , " beefier " production with softened bell rings and an

added kick drum and new vocals . The final track is a rewrite of " Auld Lang Syne " by Scottish poet and lyricist Robert Burns , which was written in 1788 and published in James Johnson 's Scots Musical Museum in 1796 . Produced by Carey , Randy Jackson and Johnny " Sev " Severin of RedOne , they re @-@ titled it " Auld Lang Syne ( The New Year 's Anthem ) " . It is a house track with a " thumping " instrumental .

= = Singles = =

" Oh Santa ! " was released as the lead single and premiered on October 1 , 2010 . It received a positive response from music critics , with many praising its composition and style . It became a record @-@ breaking entry on the Billboard Adult Contemporary songs chart . It debuted at number twelve and rose to number one the following week , becoming the first song to reach the peak in two weeks on the chart . It finished at number forty @-@ two on the 2011 Adult Contemporary year @-@ end chart . It also reached number one on the Holiday Digital Songs chart , and number one @-@ hundred on the Hot 100 . " Auld Lang Syne ( The New Year 's Anthem ) " was released as the second single in the form of a nine @-@ piece remix EP on December 14 , 2010 . It garnered a negative response from critics , all of whom disapproved of how Carey had re @-@ composed the traditional poem by Burns into a house music song . It peaked at number nine of the US Holiday Songs chart .

" When Christmas Comes " was released as the third single as a newly recorded duet with John Legend . The song was sent to Urban contemporary radio and made available for digital download on November 21 , 2011 . It was released in the United Kingdom on November 28 . Scott Shelter of PopCrush thought that the duet was " superior " to the original , and award it four stars our of five . An accompanying music video directed by Sanaa Hamri for " When Christmas Comes " was filmed at Carey 's Los Angeles home and features Carey and Legend throwing a celebratory Christmas house party , which includes a cameo by Nick Cannon . It features footage from the film A Charlie Brown Christmas . The duet reached number seventy on US Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart and number fifteen on the Adult R & B Songs chart . It debuted at number 1 on South Korea International Download Singles chart on November 27 , 2011 , with sales of 81 @,@ 624 . " Christmas Time Is in the Air Again " was released as the fourth single on December 2 , 2012 . It was positively received by critics , some of whom compared its high quality to the caliber of " All I Want for Christmas is You " . It reached number six on the South Korea International Download Singles chart .

= = Release and promotion = =

On October 20 , 2010 , Carey appeared on the Home Shopping Network ( HSN ) where she was interviewed about the album and previewed six tracks , including " The First Noel " / " Born Is the King " , " O Little Town of Bethlehem " / " Little Drummer Boy " and " O Come All Ye Faithful " / " Hallelujah Chorus " , the last featuring her mother Patricia Carey . Of recording a Christmas album , Carey said ? A lot of people look at making a Christmas album like , ' Oh , it 's just a throwaway thing and then I 'll do my real album ' . For me , these are timeless pieces of work that can last year after year after year and so I want to be able to listen to it . ? On November 2 , appeared for an interview on the The Ellen DeGeneres Show to discuss the album . Merry Christmas II You was released in Canada and the United States for digital download and as a CD on November 2 . A special edition containing a Die Cut Ornament and five holiday cards was released exclusively through Walmart the same day . A collector 's edition containing a golden gift box , a forty @-@ page hardcover photo album , a sticker tag sheet and a collectible butterfly ornament was released on November 16 via Amazon.com for \$ 60 @.@ 31 .

The following day , Carey appeared on Lopez Tonight . On November 19 , Carey taped a performance of " Oh Santa ! " at the NBC Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Lighting which aired later in the month . On December 3 , 2010 , Carey performed " Oh Santa ! " as well as " All I Want For Christmas Is You " at the Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade special , which featured

Carey surrounded by dancers , including ballerinas and cheerleaders , and ended with fireworks at the end of the performance . A pre-recorded ABC television special called Mariah Carey : Merry Christmas to You aired on December 13 . The show included performances of " Oh Santa ! " and " O Come All Ye Faithful " accompanied by her mother Patricia , and " All I Want for Christmas Is You " . It was filmed at the Orpheum Theatre in Los Angeles on November 6 , and executively produced by Carey and Joel Gallen . Accompanied by a gospel choir , Carey performed " One Child " and " O Come All Ye Faithful " at the Christmas in Washington event at the National Building Museum in Washington , D.C .. The performance aired on December 17 , 2010 , on TNT .

= = Critical reception = =

At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , Merry Christmas II You received an average score of 60 , based on eight reviews , which indicates " mixed or average " reviews . About.com writer Bill Lamb praised the album , writing that it has a " relaxed , comfortable " which is " engaging " . He wrote that the original compositions were " solid " , placing emphasis on " Oh Santa ! " , " One Child " and " When Christmas Comes " , but felt that " Christmas Time Is Here Again " was overshadowed by its heavy orchestration . He concluded by writing " Mariah Carey does know her way around Christmas albums . " Joey Guerra of the Houston Chronicle echoed Lamb 's sentiments , adding that the album ought to boost Carey 's career . He was complimentary of its overall feel , writing that manages to capture the " same magic " as her previous Christmas album , Merry Christmas , and that the original songs fit " snugly " with the Christmas classics . He finished his review with " There 's enough sweet spirit here to keep the holidays merry , musical and bright . "

Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic noted that the four new original compositions gave it " a lively modern feel , " and highlighted " Oh Santa ! " and " When Christmas Comes " as examples . He continued to write that although some covers , such as " Auld Lang Syne " and " Charlie Brown Christmas " sound " stiff " , the album as a complete body of work is " cheerful and engaging " and is a worthy successor to Carey 's previous Christmas album . BBC Music 's Mike Diver thought that although the album is not necessarily " clever " , it is " expectedly big " , and that while " Oh Santa ! " is not in the " same league " as " All I Want for Christmas Is You " , it 's a perfect stocking filler .

Rolling Stone writer Caryn Ganz disliked the two original ballads , " Christmas Time Is Here Again " and " One Child " , describing them " both thick with gooey orchestration " , but praised " Oh Santa ! " and " When Christmas Comes " for their uptempo melodies . However , she was confused by the re-recorded " All I Want for Christmas Is You " , saying that " It 's hard to figure out what 's ' extra festive ' " , and quipped that it is " far easier to determine what 's wrong with ' Auld Lang Syne ' ( an awkward dance beat ) " . Ganz concluded with " the LP 's warm heart is in the right place . " Eric Henderson of Slant Magazine gave the album two and a half stars out of five , writing " Everything about Carey 's sequel to 1994 's buoyant , if , in retrospect , safe , Merry Christmas is as desperate and habitual as it is reassuringly predictable . " While he continued to label it as an " incredibly adventureless album , " he also wrote that it is a " remarkably comforting listen " . He felt that Merry Christmas II You was not a sequel , or a remake , but rather an attempt at rewinding time on Carey 's part . Rich Juzwiak of The Village Voice was critical of Merry Christmas II You . He described " One Child " as a " needless retelling " , " Oh Santa ! " as trying too hard and too difficult to sing along to and " All I Want for Christmas Is You ( Extra Festive ) " as a desperate attempt at Carey canonising herself for re-recording her own song . " The near-crazed desperation to please listeners for her own sake is all over Merry Christmas II You : A " gift " to her fans ( or so she claims ) that they , of course , must pay for , it 's her fascinating , career-long saga of self-obsession in a nutshell . "

= = Commercial performance = =

In the United States , Merry Christmas II You debuted at number four on the Billboard 200 album chart , with first week sales of 55 ,000 copies . It became her sixteenth top ten album , and

placed her third amongst women for the most top ten entries , after Madonna with nineteen and Barbra Streisand with thirty . It also peaked at number one on both the Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums chart and the Holiday Albums chart ( her second to do so on the latter , following Merry Christmas in 1994 ) . The album also peaked at number seven on the Digital Albums chart . It was certified Gold denoting shipments exceeding 500 @,@ 000 copies by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) on January 11 , 2011 . As of March 2013 , it has sold 523 @,@ 000 copies in the United States . In Canada , the album peaked at number fourteen . Outside of the United States , the album failed to achieve similar success . It reached the top thirty in Australia and Hungary , peaking at number twenty @-@ seven and number thirty , respectively . It peaked at number forty @-@ one in Italy , and number forty @-@ five in Austria . It peaked at number one @-@ hundred and one on the UK Albums Chart on November 27 , 2010 .

= = Track listing = =

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications and sales = =