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American singer (born 1969) For her eponymous debut album, see Mariah Carey (album). Mariah CareyCarey in 2018Born (1969-03-27) March 27, 1969 (age 53)[a]Huntington, New York, U.S.EducationHarborfields High SchoolOccupationSingersongwriteractressrecord producerYears active1988–presentSpouse(s)Tommy Mottola (m. 1993; div. 1998)Nick Cannon (m. 2008; div. 2016)Children2AwardsFull listMusic careerGenresR&Bsoullhip hoppopLabelsColumbiaCraveVirginMonarCIslandDef JamEpicLegacyButterfly MCRCARecords UKMARIAH Websitemariahcarey.com Mariah Carey (məˈrɪə; born March 27, 1969)[a] is an American singer, songwriter, actress, and record producer. Referred to as the "Songbird Supreme" and the "Queen of Christmas", she is known for her five-octave vocal range, melismatic singing style, and signature use of the whistle register. Carey rose to fame in 1990 with her eponymous debut album. She was the first artist to have her first five singles reach number one on the Billboard Hot 100, from "Vision of Love" to "Emotions". Carey's debut album was released under the guidance of Columbia Records executive Tommy Mottola, whom she married three years later. Carey achieved further success with the albums Music Box (1993), Merry Christmas (1994), and Daydream (1995), with singles including "Hero", "Without You", "All I Want for Christmas Is You", "Fantasy", "Always Be My Baby", and "One Sweet Day", which topped the US Billboard Hot 100 decade-end chart (1990s). After separating from Mottola, Carey adopted a new image and incorporated more elements of hip hop with Butterfly (1997). Billboard named her the Artist of the Decade (1990s), while the World Music Awards honored her as the best-selling female pop-artist of the millennium. In 2001, after eleven consecutive years of U.S. number-one singles, Carey left Columbia and signed a \$100 million record deal with Virgin Records. Following her highly publicized physical and emotional breakdown and the failure of her film Glitter (2001) and its soundtrack, Virgin bought her contract for \$28 million and the following year she signed with Island Records. After some unsuccessful years Carey returned with The Emancipation of Mimi (2005), which became the best-selling album in the US and the world's second best-selling album of 2005. Its second single, "We Belong Together", topped the US Billboard Hot 100 decade-end chart (2000s). She won the Breakthrough Actress Performance award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival for her role in the 2009 film Precious. Carey's next ventures included being an American Idol judge, starring in the docu-series Mariah's World, appearing in the films The Butler (2013), A Christmas Melody (2015), and The Lego Batman Movie (2017), and publishing her 2020 memoir The Meaning of Mariah Carey. Carey is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, with sales of over 220 million records worldwide. Nineteen of her songs have topped the Billboard Hot 100. She holds the record for the most number-one singles by a solo artist, a female songwriter (eighteen), and a female producer (fifteen).[11] Carey is the highest-certified female artist in the United States, with 69.5 million certified album units. She was ranked second on VH1's list of the 100 Greatest Women in Music, and in 2019, Billboard named her "top-charting female solo artist", based on both album and song chart performances.[2] Carey has won five Grammy Awards, nineteen World Music Awards, ten American Music Awards,[3] and fifteen Billboard Music Awards.[4] She was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2022.[5] She is noted for inspiring other artists in R&B and for helping popularize hip hop within pop music.[6][7] Early life Mariah Carey was born on March 27, 1969, in Huntington, New York.[11][12] Her name was derived from the song "They Call the Wind Maria", originally from the 1951 Broadway musical Paint Your Wagon.[13][14] She is the youngest of three children born to Patricia (née Hickey), a former opera singer and vocal coach of Irish descent, and Alfred Roy Carey, an aeronautical engineer of African-American and black Venezuelan-American lineage.[15] The last name Carey was adopted by her Venezuelan grandfather, Francisco Núñez, after he emigrated to New York.[16][12] Patricia's family disowned her for marrying a black man.[16] Racial tensions prevented the Carey family from integrating into their community. While they lived in Huntington their neighbors poisoned the family dog and set fire to their car.[16] After her parents' divorce Carey had little contact with her father, and her mother worked several jobs to support the family. Carey spent much of her time at home alone and began singing at age three, often imitating her mother's take on Verdi's opera Rigoletto in Italian. Her older sister Alison moved in with their father; Mariah and her elder brother Morgan lived with their mother.[17][18] During her years in elementary school, she excelled in the arts, such as music and literature. Carey began writing poetry and lyrics while attending Harborfields High School in Greenlawn, New York.[19] where she graduated in 1987.[20] Carey began vocal training under the tutelage of her mother. Though she was a classically trained opera singer, Patricia Carey never pressured her daughter to pursue a career in classical opera. Mariah Carey recalled that she had "never been a pushy mom. She never said, 'Give it more of an operatic feel.' I respect opera like crazy, but it didn't influence me." [19][21] In high school Mariah Carey was often absent because of her work as a demo singer; as a result her classmates gave her the nickname Mirage.[21] Her work in the Long Island music scene gave her opportunities to work with musicians such as Gavin Christopher and Ben Margulies, with whom she co-wrote material for her demo tape. After moving to New York City she worked part-time jobs to pay the rent and completed 500 hours of beauty school.[22] Carey moved into a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan, and shared it with four other female students.[23] She landed a gig singing backup for freestyle singer Brenda K. Starr.[24] [25] Career 1988–1992: Career beginnings, Mariah Carey and Emotions Carey exiting Shepherd's Bush Empire after promoting her single "Vision of Love" on Wogan in 1990 In December 1988, Carey accompanied Starr to a CBS record executives' gala, where she handed her demo tape to the head of Columbia Records, Tommy Mottola.[26][27] After listening to the tape during the ride home, he immediately requested the driver turn around. Carey had already left the event, and in what has been described as a modern-day Cinderella story, he spent two weeks looking for her.[26] Another record label expressed interest and a bidding war ensued. Mottola signed Carey to Columbia and enlisted the talents of top producers Ric Wake, Narada Michael Walden, and Rhett Lawrence.[26] Columbia marketed Carey as the main female artist on their roster, competing with Arista's Whitney Houston and Madonna of Sire Records.[28] On June 5, 1990, Carey made her first public appearance at the 1990 NBA Finals, singing "America the Beautiful". The highlight was the piercing whistle note toward the song's conclusion, sparking CBS Sports anchor Pat O'Brien to declare, "The palace now has a queen." [29] Columbia spent upwards of \$1 million promoting Carey's debut studio album, Mariah Carey.[30] After a slow start, the album eventually topped the Billboard 200 for eleven consecutive weeks, after Carey's exposure at the 33rd Annual Grammy Awards, where she won the award for Best New Artist, and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for her single "Vision of Love".[31][32] The album's singles "Vision of Love", "Love Takes Time", "Someday", and "I Don't Wanna Cry" all topped the US Billboard Hot 100.[33] Mariah Carey was the best-selling album in the United States in 1991,[34] and achieved worldwide sales of 15 million copies.[35] The following year Carey co-wrote, co-produced and recorded her second studio effort, Emotions.[36][37] Described by Carey as an homage to Motown soul music, Carey employed the help of Walter Afanaseff, who only had a small role on her debut, as well as Robert Clivillés and David Cole, from the dance group C+C Music Factory.[38] Carey's relationship with Margulies deteriorated over a songwriting royalties dispute. After he filed a lawsuit against Columbia's parent company, Sony, the songwriting duo parted ways.[37] Emotions was released on September 17, 1991. The title track, the album's lead single, became Carey's fifth chart topper on the Billboard Hot 100, making her the first artist whose first five singles reached the chart's summit.[39] Though critics praised the album's content and described it as a more mature effort, the album was criticized as calculated and lacking originality.[40] While the album managed sales of eight million copies globally, Emotions failed to reach the commercial and critical heights of its predecessor.[41] Carey did not embark on a world tour to promote the album.[42] Although she attributed this to stage fright and the vocally challenging nature of her material, speculation grew that Carey was a "studio worm" and that she was incapable of producing the perfect pitch and 5-octave vocal range for which she was known.[43][44] In hopes of putting to rest any speculation of her being a manufactured artist, Carey booked an appearance on MTV Unplugged.[45] The show presented artists "unplugged" or in a stripped setting and devoid of studio equipment.[45] Days prior to the show's taping, Carey and Afanaseff chose to add a cover of the Jackson 5's 1970 song "I'll Be There" to the set-list. On March 16, 1992, Carey played and recorded an intimate seven-song show at Kaufman Astoria Studios in Queens, New York.[46] The acclaimed review was aired more than three times as often as the average episode.[47] It established Carey as a viable live act, with critics heralding it as a "vocal Tour de force".[48] Carey's live version of "I'll Be There" became her sixth number-one single on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Sony capitalized on its success and released it as an EP. It earned a triple-Platinum certification by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).[49] and earned Gold and Platinum certifications in several European markets.[50] 1993–1996: Music Box, Merry Christmas, and Daydream After Emotions failed to achieve the commercial heights of her debut album, Carey's subsequent release was to be marketed as adult contemporary and pop-friendly. Music Box was produced by Carey and Afanaseff, and began a songwriting partnership that would extend until 1997's Butterfly.[51] The album was released on August 31, 1993 to mixed reviews from music critics. Carey's songwriting was derided as clichéd and her vocal performances were described as less emotive and lazier in their delivery. In his review of the album, AllMusic's Ron Wynn concluded: "sometimes excessive spirit is preferable to an absence of passion." [52] In promotion of the album, Carey embarked on her debut tour, a six-date concert series, the Music Box Tour.[53] Music Box's second single, "Hero", became Carey's eighth chart-topper in the United States and has been recognized as her signature song. Her cover of Badfinger's "Without You" was a commercial breakthrough in Europe, becoming her first number-one single in Germany.[54] Sweden[55] and the United Kingdom.[56] Music Box remains Carey's best-seller and one of the best-selling albums of all time, with worldwide sales of over 28 million copies.[57] In mid-1994, Carey recorded and released a duet with Luther Vandross; a cover of Lionel Richie and Diana Ross's "Endless Love".[58] Merry Christmas, released on November 1, 1994, became the best-selling Christmas album of all time, with global sales of over 15 million copies.[59][60][61] The lead single, "All I Want for Christmas Is You", became a holiday standard and continues to surge in popularity each holiday season.[62] By October 2017, it had become the 11th-best-selling single in modern music.[63] In 2019, 25 years after the song's release, it finally peaked at number-one on the Billboard Hot 100 for the first time, and it continued to do so every December since, becoming the first song in history to hold the top position in more than two different chart years, as well as the longest-running holiday number-one song (eight weeks).[64] Additionally, it is the longest running number-one song on the Billboard Holiday 100, spending 44 cumulative weeks, of the chart's 49 total weeks since the list launched in 2011.[65] Carey performing with Boyz II Men at Madison Square Garden in October 1995 Carey's fifth studio album, Daydream, found her consolidating creative control over her career, leading to tensions with Columbia. The album featured a departure from her allegiance to her manager and gravitated heavily towards R&B and hip hop.[66] Critically, the album was described as Carey's best to date. The New York Times named it one of 1995's best albums and concluded: "[the album] brings R&B candy-making to a new peak of textural refinement... Carey's songwriting has taken a leap forward and become more relaxed, sexier and less reliant on thudding clichés." [67] The album's lead single, "Fantasy", became the first single by a female artist to debut at number one on the Billboard Hot 100.[68] and the second single, "One Sweet Day", a collaboration with R&B group Boyz II Men, remained atop the Billboard Hot 100 for a record-breaking 16 consecutive weeks, becoming, at the time, the longest-running number-one song in the history of the charts.[69] Daydream became Carey's biggest-selling album in the United States,[70] and her second album to be certified Diamond by the RIAA, after Music Box.[49] The album continued Carey's dominance in Asian music markets and sold in excess of 2.2 million copies in Japan alone and over 20 million copies globally.[71][72] Daydream and its singles were nominated in six categories at the 38th Grammy Awards.[73] Though considered a favorite to win the top awards of the evening, Carey was shut out, prompting her to comment "What can you do? I will never be disappointed again." [74] In early 1996, she embarked on her first international string of concerts, the Daydream World Tour. Its seven dates spanned three in Japan and four throughout Europe.[75] Forbes named Carey the top-earning female musician of 1996, collecting an estimated \$32 million.[76] During the recording of Daydream, Carey also worked on the alternative rock album Someone's Ugly Daughter by the band Chick, contributing writing, production, vocals and art direction. As Columbia Records refused to release the album with her lead vocals, Carey's friend Clarissa Dane was brought in to become the face of Chick, and her vocals were layered on top of Carey's, masking her voice.[77] Carey also directed the music video for the Chick song "Malibu". According to Carey, "I was playing with the style of the breezy-sungreen, punk-light white female singers who were popular at the time... I totally looked forward to doing my alter-ego band sessions after Daydream each night." [78] Her contributions were secret until the release of her 2020 memoir The Meaning of Mariah Carey.[78] 1997–2000: New image and independence, Butterfly, and Rainbow Carey's subsequent musical releases followed the trend that began with Daydream. Her music began relying less on pop and adult contemporary-tinged balladry and instead incorporating heavy elements of hip-hop and R&B. On Butterfly, Carey collaborated with a bevy of producers other than Afanaseff, such as Sean Combs, Q-Tip, Missy Elliott and Samuel Barnes from Trackmasters.[79] In mid-1997, after four years of marriage, Carey and Mottola separated. Carey described Mottola as increasingly controlling, and viewed her newfound independence as a "lease on life".[80] In the booklet of her twelfth studio album, Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel (2009), Carey wrote that she considers butterfly her magnum opus and a turning point in both her life and career. Butterfly introduced a more subdued style of singing, with critics noting Carey's incorporation of breathy vocals.[81] Some viewed her lack of propensity to use her upper range as a sign of maturity.[82] while others questioned whether it forebode waning vocal prowess.[83][84] The music video for the album's lead single, "Honey", her first since separating from Mottola, introduced a more overtly sexual image.[85] Butterfly became Carey's best-reviewed album, with attention placed on the album's exploration of more mature lyrical themes. In their review of the album, Rolling Stone wrote "It's] not as if Carey has totally dispensed with her old saccharine, Houston-style balladry... but the predominant mood of 'Butterfly' is one of coolly erotic reverie." [86] AllMusic editor Stephen Thomas Erlewine described Carey's vocals as "sultrier and more controlled than ever," and felt the album "illustrates that Carey continues to improve and refine her music, which makes her a rarity among her '90s peers." [87] Though a commercial success, the album failed to reach the commercial heights of her previous albums, Music Box and Daydream.[88] Carey at Edwards Air Force Base during the making of the "I Still Believe" music video in December 1998 After concluding her Butterfly World Tour, Carey partook in the VH1 Divas benefit concert on April 14, 1998, where she sang alongside Aretha Franklin, Céline Dion, Shania Twain, Gloria Estefan, and Carole King.[89] Carey began conceptualizing a film project All That Glitters, later re-titled to simply Glitter (2001).[90] and wrote songs for other projects, such as Men in Black (1997) and How the Grinch Stole Christmas (2000).[91] After Glitter fell into developmental hell, Carey postponed the project, and began writing material for a new album.[91] Sony Music executives insisted she prepare a greatest hits collection in time for the holiday season.[92] The album, titled #1's (1998), featured a cover of Brenda K. Starr's "I Still Believe" and a duet with Whitney Houston, "When You Believe", which was included on the soundtrack for The Prince of Egypt (1998).[93] #1's became a phenomenon in Japan, selling over one million copies in its opening week, making Carey the only international artist to accomplish this feat.[94] It sold over 3.25 million copies in Japan in its first three months on sale, and holds the record as the best-selling album by a non-Asian artist. [94] With only one album left to fulfill her contract with Sony, and with a burning desire to separate herself professionally from the record label her ex-husband still headed, Carey completed the album in three months in mid-1999.[95] Titled Rainbow, the album found Carey exploring with producers whom she had not worked with before. Rainbow became Carey's first album to not feature a collaboration with her longtime writing partner, Walter Afanaseff; instead she chose to work with David Foster and Diane Warren. The album's lead single, "Heartbreaker", featured guest vocals from rapper Jay-Z and a remix produced by DJ Clue.[96] Rainbow was released on November 2, 1999, to the highest first week sales of her career at the time, however debuting at number two on the Billboard 200.[97] Carey's tense relationship with Columbia grew increasingly fractious; she began posting messages on her website, sharing inside information with fans on the dispute, as well as instructing them to request "Can't Take That Away (Mariah's Theme)" on radio stations.[98] Ultimately, the song was only given a very limited and low-promotion release.[99] Critical reception of Rainbow was generally positive, with the general consensus finding: "what began as Butterfly as a departure ended up on Rainbow a progression – perhaps the first compelling proof of Carey's true colors as an artist." [100] Though a commercial success, Rainbow became Carey's lowest selling album at that point in her career.[110] 2001–2004: Personal and professional problems, Glitter and Charmbracelet Carey received Billboard's Artist of the Decade Award and the World Music Award for Best-Selling Pop Female Artist of the Millennium,[102] and parted from Mottola in 2001, after four years of marriage. Carey and Mottola separated. Carey described Mottola as increasingly controlling, and viewed her newfound independence as a "lease on life".[80] In the booklet of her twelfth studio album, Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel (2009), Carey wrote that she considers butterfly her magnum opus and a turning point in both her life and career. 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[121] To support the album, Carey embarked on the Charmbracelet World Tour, spanning North America and East Asia over three months.[122] The United States shows were booked in theaters. She described the show as "much more intimate so you'll feel like you had an experience. You experience a night with me." [123] While smaller venues were booked throughout the tour's stateside leg, Carey performed in stadiums in Asia and Europe, playing for a crowd of over 35,000 in Manila, 50,000 in Malaysia, and to over 70,000 people in China.[124] In the United Kingdom, it was her first tour to feature shows outside London, booking arena stops in Glasgow, Birmingham and Manchester.[125] The tour garnered generally positive reviews, with many praising the production and the quality of Carey's vocals.[126] 2005–2007: Resurgence with The Emancipation of Mimi Carey, pictured with former Island Records head L.A. Reid in 2005, at the release party for The Emancipation of Mimi Carey's tenth studio album, The Emancipation of Mimi, was produced with the Neptunes, Kanye West and Carey's longtime collaborator, Jermaine Dupri. She described the album as "very much like a party record... the process of putting on makeup and getting ready to go out... I wanted to make a record that was reflective of that." [127] The Emancipation of Mimi topped the charts in the United States, becoming Carey's fifth number-one album and first since Butterfly (1997), and was warmly accepted by critics. Caroline Sullivan of The Guardian defined it as "cool, focused and urban [...]... some of] the first Mariah Carey tunes in years which I wouldn't have to be paid to listen to again," [128] while USA Today's Elysa Gardner wrote, "The [songs] truly reflect the renewed confidence of a songbird who has taken her shots and kept on flying." [129] The album's second single, "We Belong Together", became a "career re-defining"[130] song for Carey, after a relatively unsuccessful period and a point when many critics had considered her career over.[131] Music critics heralded the song as her "return to form," [132] and as the "return of The Voice," [132] while many felt it would prove "faith" in Carey's potential as a balladeer.[127] "We Belong Together" broke several records in the United States and became Carey's sixteenth chart topper on the Billboard Hot 100.[133] After staying at number one for fourteen non-consecutive weeks, the song became the second longest running number one song in US chart history, behind Carey's 1996 collaboration with Boyz II Men, "One Sweet Day".















