

MARY J. BLIGE

Iconic Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter, actress and philanthropist, Mary J. Blige is a figure of inspiration, transformation and empowerment making her one of the defining voices of the contemporary music era. With a track record of eight multi-platinum albums, nine Grammy Awards (plus a staggering 32 nominations), a 2012 Golden Globe nomination, and five American Music Awards, Blige is a global superstar. And in the ensuing years, the singer/songwriter has attracted an intensely loyal fan base—responsible for propelling worldwide sales of more than 50 million albums.

Born in the Bronx, New York, Blige began moving people with her soulful voice when at 18 she signed with Andre Harrell's Uptown Records in 1989, becoming the MCA-distributed label's youngest and first female artist. Influenced at an early age by the music of Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan and Gladys Knight, Blige brought her own gritty, urban-rooted style—fusing hip-hop, soul and honest, frank lyrics—to the forefront on her 1992 debut album *What's the 411?* The multi-platinum set, executive produced by Sean "Diddy" Combs, quickly spun off several hits, including two No. 1s: *You Remind Me* and *Real Love*.

Blige helped redefine R&B and began forging a unique niche for herself on the more personal second album, 1994's *My Life*. Blige is an artist that uses her gift of song to lift spirits and touch lives while bringing her heart, soul and truth to those who are willing to listen. She is loved for her passionate, chart-topping hits like "Be Without You", "No More Drama" and "Family Affair" all of which have made her a force in music.

And thus began the Blige movement: connecting legions of fans that identify with and have accompanied her throughout her personal travails and growth—all fearlessly related through her music. Each subsequent album reads like a chapter from an autobiography: *Share My World* (1997), *Mary* (1999), *No More Drama* (2001), *Love & Life* (2003), the multiple Grammy-winning and hit-spewing *The Breakthrough* (2005), *Growing Pains* (2007) and *Stronger with Each Tear* (2009). Along the way, she's lined up a string of hit singles, including *Not Gon' Cry*, *Love Is All We Need*, *Seven Days*, *All That I Can Say*, *Family Affair* and *Just Fine*.

In October 2013, Blige for Matriarch Records/Verve Records/Interscope Records released her first-ever holiday album titled, *A Mary Christmas* in collaboration with legendary producer, David Foster. Blige's holiday album features her soulful interpretation of classic holiday tunes including *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas*, and *The Christmas Song*. Blige is joined by a number of A-list guests, such as Barbra Streisand, and duets with Jessie J, The Clark Sisters and Spanish collaboration with Mark Anthony.

Blige, who co-penned *I Can See in Color* for 2009's *Precious* soundtrack, has branched out into acting. She appeared in Tyler Perry's dramatic comedy, *I Can Do Bad All By Myself* in 2009 and starred in *Rock of Ages*, alongside Tom Cruise, Alec Baldwin and Russel Brand in 2012. Taking on a more dramatic role, in 2013, she starred as Betty Shabazz in the TV movie *Betty & Coretta*, a biographical story about the widows of Malcom X and Martin Luther King Jr. Then in November 2013 Mary J. Blige starred as the mysterious guardian angel "Platinum Fro," in the holiday musical film drama *Black Nativity*. Ramping up her acting career, Blige has guest-starred on the ABC comedy, *Black-ish* and the FOX musical drama *Empire* and as well as playing Evillene, the Wicked Witch of the West, on the NBC musical, *The Wiz LIVE!*

In 2014, Blige released her 13th studio album, *The London Sessions*, which reached the No.1 position on the Top R&B Albums chart and included a behind-the-scene documentary of her recording sessions that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2015.

Blige recently completed The King and Queen of Hearts World Tour with Maxwell and is finalizing her 14th album titled *Strength of a Woman*, slated for release April 28. Her single, "Thick of It," held the number 1 Adult R&B spot for more than 15 weeks after its release in November.

Blige most recently guest starred on ABC's, *How to Get Away with Murder* and is starring in *MUDBOUND*, opposite Carey Mulligan and Garrett Hedlund, which premiered to rave reviews this year at Sundance.