

Christina Aguilera  
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Some call it luck, others may call it pure vocal talent, but 19-year-old pop sensation, Christina Aguilera, calls her recent chart-topping success a "dream finally becoming a reality."

Aguilera's '99 RCA self-titled debut album opened at No. 1, propelling the diminutive 5' 2" vocalist into a overnight music industry giant as smash singles, "Genie In A Bottle," and "What A Girl Wants," sky-rocketed album sales beyond quintuple ( 5x ) platinum.

"Christina just has such a natural way of singing," producer and songwriter, Steve Kipner said. "She's just immediately 'on' a song."

The musical prodigy was one of two daughters born to Ecuadoran-American Army sergeant, Fausto Aguilera, and violinist/pianist mother, Kelly. Her father's active military career allowed the family to travel all over the world and live briefly in Japan, Florida, Texas, and New Jersey.

After her parents divorced, Aguilera, younger sister Rachel, and mother Kelly moved in with maternal grandmother, Delcie Fidler, in the Pittsburgh suburb of Wexford, PA.

Throughout her youth, Aguilera steadily pursued her vocal dreams by performing in various school talent shows.

"I wanted to perform as long as I can remember," the blond, blue-eyed Latina said. "I was six or seven when I used to sing at local block parties. Afterwards, the crowd would come up and ask me for autographs. That feeling alone was just incredible. And that made me want more of it."

Aguilera's vocal calling card is derived from a blend of pop, R&B, blues and gospel musical influences.

"Around eight years old, I got into blues a lot," Aguilera said. "I would sing riffs over B.B. King's guitar licks, and things like that. ( I have ) a huge love for Whitney Houston. And, of course, Mariah ( Carey ) and Etta James."

Opportunity came ringing in '89 when the vocalist sang Whitney Houston's "The Greatest Love of All," on the nationally syndicated television show, "Star Search."

"We used to always watch 'Star Search,' " Aguilera said. "Actually, it was while we were watching 'Star Search' that I got the phone call saying that I had made it (won a spot on the show). I just freaked out. I was crying and really excited. It was really a big thing for me."

Even though she was not the "Star Search" winner, Aguilera never lost sight of her singing aspirations. By age ten, she was belting out a solid rendition of the National Anthem at Pittsburgh Steelers and Penguin athletic events.

Aguilera earned her Mousketeer ears at age 12 after landing a two-year stint with "The New Mickey Mouse Club." The Orlando-based children's variety show was also responsible for launching the careers of Britney Spears, Keri Russell of "Felicity" TV fame and J.C. Chasez and Justin Timberlake of 'N' Sync.

"On The Mickey Mouse Club we would do comedy skits, dance numbers and cover songs," Aguilera said. "We all had a blast."

Aguilera left the weekly Disney show at 14 in order to explore overseas musical opportunities and record a duet and accompanying video for "All I Wanna Do," with Japanese pop star Keizo Nakanishi.

Returning to the States in '98, she received a invitation to audition for the "Mulan" movie soundtrack single, "Reflection."

"I had just turned 17, and my now A&R guy, Ron Fair, gave me a call one day," Aguilera said. "He wanted me to audition for 'Mulan,' and asked, 'Can you hit the high E above middle C ?' Next thing I know, I am on a plane and then I'm standing in producer Matthew Wilder's living room. Matthew had me singing with this little piano and everything. And I sang it on the spot. The next thing I know, Matthew puts his hand out and says, 'Congratulations ! You have the job.' They could have had anyone they wanted, and (they picked) me, a kid from Pittsburgh ! A couple of months later, I was recording in the studio for RCA on my first album."

"Mulan" premiered in June of '98, with the Top 15 A/C single, "Reflection" garnering a Golden Globe Nomination for best original song in a motion picture.

"The song's theme - the struggle to establish your identity - was something I could really relate to as a teenage girl myself," Aguilera said.

Showcased within the 12 selections of the reigning Grammy award-winning Best New Artist's debut CD are soaring uptempos, thrilling ballads and powerhouse vocals.

"Christina just walked into the studio," producer and songwriter, Guy Roche said. "I mean, she was this little girl, not shy, but beautiful. And she sounds very mature. I don't know where she learned to sing like this. It feels like she is an old soul."

Aguilera's third single, scheduled for a spring release, will be the Diane Warren penned, "I Turn to You."

"I love working with great singers," songwriter Diane Warren said. "It is what it is all about for me. And Christina is a great singer. That last chorus, ( of "I Turn To You"), forget it - she joined the diva club big time on that."

Aguilera recently contributed a new song, "Don't Make Me Love You," to the newly released Madonna and Rupert Everett movie soundtrack, "The Next Best Thing."

Other future endeavors for the songstress include compiling a Spanish version of her debut album, gathering and writing songs for upcoming sophomore album and recording a Christmas album.

"Right now, I'm continuing to focus on my singing," Aguilera said. "I've been waiting for this moment my whole life."