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Carrie Underwood *My Gift* Album Bio



For Carrie Underwood, Christmas has always been a holiday filled with family, faith, gratitude, and music. It's the most wonderful time of the year, set to a soundtrack of carols and hymns. Season after season, those songs never fail to strike a chord... especially during challenging times.

My Gift, Underwood's highly-anticipated, first full-length collection of Christmas classics and new holiday-inspired originals, couldn't have arrived at a better time. Mostly written and entirely recorded during the 2020 health pandemic that brought the world to an unexpected and extended halt, it's a timely reminder of the many things still worth celebrating. With guest

appearances by John Legend (who appears on "Hallelujah," a gorgeous duet co-written by the "All of Me" chart-topper with Toby Gad), Isaiah Fisher (Underwood's 5 year-old son, who joins

her for a very special rendition of "Little Drummer Boy"), and a full orchestra led by legendary conductor David Campbell, **My Gift** is a personal and inspirational album that celebrates not only the larger-than-life power of Underwood's vocals and songwriting gifts, but also a reminder of the many things we can be grateful for this holiday season.

Underwood has many reasons to be thankful this year. Since kickstarting her career as the winner of American Idol's 2005 season, she's become a multi-media superstar whose milestones include 64 million records sold, 27 #1 hit songs, seven platinum-certified records, a New York Times best-selling book, 12 years as a member of the Grand Ole Opry, and more than 100 major awards (including seven Grammys, 15 ACM Awards including three for Entertainer of the Year (the first female in history to win twice and, as of 2020, the only female ever to win three times), 20 CMT Awards where she holds the record for the most award wins ever for the show, 7 CMA Awards, and 15 American Music Awards). One of the best-selling artists of the 21st century, Underwood has maintained a reputation as a leader in the industry, inspiring and lifting up emerging artists, and supporting women as she did with the all-female lineup for her 2019 Cry Pretty Tour 360.

It was during the final weeks of The Cry Pretty Tour 360 that she began pulling together plans for a Christmas record. As 2019 gave way to 2020, a global health crisis only strengthened her resolve to create an album that emphasized reverence and optimism.

"Now, more than ever, we all need to focus on what Christmas is about," says Underwood, who worked with many of the album's collaborators — including her co-writers and her Grammy-winning producer Greg Wells — via a series of Zoom sessions. "Even though it has been a tough year in so many ways, sometimes I feel like the greatest realizations can come at the worst times, or in the most stressful times, and it makes you more thankful for the things you do have."

A GRAMMY® Award-winning producer, mixer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, Wells produced and arranged the album. He has written and produced some of the best-selling and highest charting tracks of the past 15 years for such artists as Adele, Celine Dion, Keith Urban, and P!nk, as well as the worldwide smash The Greatest Showman soundtrack. **My Gift** features a world-class orchestra, led by the pre-eminent arranger, composer, and conductor David Campbell, whose many credits include iconic recordings by artists including Linda Ronstadt, Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, Barbra Streisand, Michael Jackson, Josh Groban, and his son Beck. **My Gift** is mixed by 14-time GRAMMY® Award winning mixer, Serban Ghenea. Acclaimed gospel quartet The McCrary Sisters, who have performed backing vocals on previous Underwood songs including "Choctaw County Affair" and "The Champion," will also be heard on the album.

Like most of Underwood's acclaimed work, ***My Gift*** mixes the fresh with the familiar. Newly-composed originals like "Let There Be Peace" and "Sweet Baby Jesus" — both written by Underwood and frequent collaborator Brett James (who previously penned her Grammy-winning single, "Jesus, Take the Wheel"), and David Garcia (who shared producing duties with Underwood on *Cry Pretty*) — are contemporary additions to the Christmas catalog, with lyrics that highlight the holiday's spiritual roots. Elsewhere, Underwood reinterprets some of the season's most beloved traditional songs. She fills "O Come All Ye Faithful" with a mix of heartfelt vocals, swooning strings, and woodwinds, turns "O Holy Night" into a cinematically slow-burning power ballad, and delivers a beautifully wistful performance of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" over acoustic guitars and light orchestration.

"Celebrating the birth of Christ, is very important to me," Underwood notes. "That is the heart of the album, but it also goes in different places and takes the listener on a journey. 'Mary, Did You Know?' looks at the birth from the perspective of the mother, and I love that lens change. 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' is about wanting good things for the world and being with your family. We wanted to celebrate hope and joy and all the things that are good about Christmas."

On an album filled with highlights, Underwood's multi-generational recording of "Little Drummer Boy" shines the brightest. The song's central character — a young boy who doesn't have material things to offer but is able to share the gift of his love of music — resonated with Underwood, who saw the same values reflected in her 5 year-old son. Isaiah joined her in the studio, resulting in an emotional duet that represents the age-old Christmas values of giving thanks and giving back. It was those same values that inspired her to name the album ***My Gift***.

"'Little Drummer Boy' became a cornerstone for this whole project," she explains. "It all goes back to the story of a little boy not having anything to give baby Jesus except his God-given talents and his love of music. I feel like my own gift in life is the gift and the love of music, that I am so lucky to be able to share. With this album, I wanted to give it back to Jesus, like the little drummer boy did."

My Gift is both timely and timeless, arriving during a time of need and destined to remain a holiday staple for decades to come. Underwood's musical contributions — a voice that swoons, sweeps, and swaggers; a songwriter's gift for combining moving melody with evocative storytelling; a rare ability to honor the past while still moving forward into unexplored territory — are on full display, highlighting a singular artist who has earned her spot as a country-pop icon. But she's not the only focus here. Instead, she shares the spotlight with Christmas itself, paying tribute to the holiday's spiritual roots along the way.

"Listeners can expect this album to help put them in the mood for Christmas," Underwood promises. "We go traditional. We go new. We sing songs about love. We sing happy songs about Christmas. Hopefully, it takes everyone on a journey and makes them feel a certain way — like Christmas."