

MUSIC

MARIAH CAREY TELLS t2 ABOUT HER SECOND XMAS ALBUM

Calling all ye faithfuls

Released in 1994, at the peak of Mariah Carey's early career, *Merry Christmas* has sold over 12 million copies worldwide and remains the best-selling Xmas album of all time. This year, the pop/R&B diva revisits her gospel roots with *Merry Christmas II You*, the follow-up to her record-breaking holiday offer. Celebrating Christmas, which is both "traditional yet fun and young", Carey spoke to t2 about her new album in an e-mail chat...

What made you consider making another Christmas album after the hugely successful *Merry Christmas*?

It's been a long time since my first Christmas album and I really loved making that album. I felt like this time in my life, right now, is a really appropriate time for me to be creating this type of music. I was fortunate enough to be able to work mostly from home.

From Big Jim Wright to Randy Jackson to Marc Shaiman, *Merry Christmas II You* features some of the best-known names — and longtime collaborators with you — of the music industry. Why this choice of multiple producers?

When I decided to do this new Christmas album I did use the first album as sort of a template. But I wanted to make it more sophisticated musically in certain ways.

I was inspired by the tra-



ditional, like Nat King Cole, and also the young festiveness of the Jackson Five, Christmas albums and stuff like that... (soul music legend) Donny Hathaway's amazing Christmas music.

There are a lot of different influences on this album. But I really wanted this to be like Part 2 of the *Merry Christmas* album; this is what has evolved musically. I wanted to keep it classic, keep it traditional and keep it festive, happy. I just want-

ed it to be a warm feeling for the holiday so that people would love it. *Oh Santa*, the first single, was sort of the same type of inspiration as *All I Want For Christmas Is You* but like more modern day.

The new album features an interesting mix of new songs and standards. How would you describe its sound?

I wanted to have a mix of songs. I really wanted to

turn the classics into soulful party music, keeping it simple. There is also a bit of classical music. Actually, I did a duet with my mother and I decided to do *O Come All Ye Faithful*, the classic song, for this album. I have kept it more traditional, more on the gospel side.

I tried to make this, produce this and worked closely with Big Jim Wright, who works with Sounds of Blackness. He does a lot of gospel arrangements. And

then I worked with Marc (Shaiman) and Randy (Jackson), and figured that we had a huge orchestra to the whole album.

But on this particular song, the classical section supportive of my mother's vocals was very important. We had to bring gospel and classical music together. So I thought it was a very cool thing and that's one of my favourite tracks on the album.

I think that sort of says what the album is trying to be — classic but new, modern and soulful, and also making you feel like Christmas. This is something that's traditional, yet it's fun, young and new.

How was it dueting with your mother on *O Come All Ye Faithful*?

I felt it would be really cool for my mother to do that part because she sings in a classical way. So, on a normal album I think it would be kind of difficult to put us together but I think for a Christmas album it was really no holds barred. We had a great time recording together.

When are you planning to come up with another album? Do you plan a tour of India in the near future?

I'm not sure about a tour right now. And as far as my next album goes, you'll see what I'll come up with.

Arka Das
Which is your favourite Mariah Carey song?
Tell t2@abpmail.com



Miti Adhikari with the Them Clones boys at studio Dream Digital. Picture by Sanjoy Chattopadhyaya

Brand new sound

After what they called a "lull year", Them Clones were in town last week to record two brand new songs with London-based producer Miti Adhikari. Named *Jealousy* and *All About A Heartbreak*, the two songs reflect the Clones sound "post-*Love.Hate.Heroes*", the band's 2009 debut album.

Them Clones had been following Adhikari's production work closely on albums by The Supersonics and Delhi's Menwhopause.

"We wanted to bring him on board; we needed a third person's insight into our songwriting. We had planned to record only *Jealousy*, but Mitiida took a listen to the second song and liked it even better. So here we are, recording both tunes," said drummer Dev.

"Them Clones sent me *Jealousy* three months back. I edited it, made it sound more upbeat and to the point, and sent it back. The second tune has been kept as close to the demo as possible. This sound is a departure from their earlier material and it's working," said Adhikari.

"The sound is more contemporary, instead of the riff-based material the Clones have done so far, which drew from the Nineties. In terms of content, look at the song names. The audience we are targeting is between Class XII and final year in college. We are writing songs about what's going on in their lives," explained bassist Clarence Gonsalves.

Them Clones went live at Someplace Else on Xmas Eve with a taste of the new sound.