

# jennifer hudson i remember me

*I remember me  
Same hands  
Same eyes  
Same feet  
But that's all that's left of me  
Of who I used to be  
Everything else  
It's all memory*

**- Jennifer Hudson**

"This album is a new introduction to me," says Jennifer Hudson. "It's the feeling of a journey, rediscovering myself and getting to know myself all over again."

Hudson's new record, *I REMEMBER ME*, is a remarkable step forward for one of the biggest and most talked-about stars to emerge in recent years. It's the follow-up to 2008's Grammy-winning, gold-certified *JENNIFER HUDSON*, the debut release from an artist who had already conquered the worlds of television (with her success on *American Idol*) and movies (though her triumphant, Academy Award-winning performance in *Dreamgirls*).

"The first album was all about finding out who I am, for me and for the listeners," she says. "This time, I've been able to be far more involved. We brought it up a notch and approached the album with a definite direction. I'm really proud that I could not be more content with it, or feel more present in it."

The songs on *I REMEMBER ME* were written and produced by an all-star line-up of the biggest talents in music today, including R. Kelly (who is behind the album's first single, the hit "Where You At"), Alicia Keys, Ne-Yo, Polow da Don, and Salaam Remi. Harvey Mason, who has worked with singers from Aretha Franklin to Justin Timberlake to Whitney Houston, produced Hudson's vocals throughout. The album producers are the legendary Clive Davis and Larry Jackson.

"This album really captures Jennifer's amazing signature sound doing material that's totally worthy of her," says Davis, Chief Creative Officer of Sony Music Entertainment. "It's all very special and I just know it will continue to resonate for many years to come."

"I woke up one morning and I just started writing," she says. "I feel like in 29 years I've led four different lives, and the me today versus the me from ten years ago, I can't even recognize that

person. The only way to identify myself is from my hands, my familiar face—sometimes that's the only reminder I have of my own identity and who I used to be. So I took this paragraph that I wrote, and I thought that the only person who could help me finish this song was Ryan Tedder."

(more)

"This diary entry was about Jennifer looking in a mirror and seeing her reflection," says Tedder, the producer of smash hits by the likes of Beyonce, Kelly Clarkson, and Leona Lewis. "The inspirational twist was that despite the tragedies, she still remembered who she was, and the one thing no one could take from her was a lifetime of memories and the love she holds for her family."

Echoes of Hudson's own history appear elsewhere on I REMEMBER ME. "I come from a big singing background in my family," she says. "We all grew up in the choir, and that's really where it kicked off. I knew at the age of 7 what I wanted to do—that's when I started going after that dream, and I never looked back."

The Chicago-born and -based singer maintains that she needs to retain that connection to her gospel roots. "I have to have an inspirational song on my album," she says, "and not a watered-down one—not one where you just smack Jesus' name in the middle of an R&B song, I can't deal with that!" Hudson's debut album concluded with a rendition of "Jesus Promised Me a Home Over There," and that same slot on I REMEMBER ME is also held by a spiritual number, though this one comes from an unlikely source.

Last year, Hudson performed at the farewell concert by superstar country duo Brooks and Dunn. They asked her to sing a 2005 hit of theirs titled "Believe." Though she wasn't initially sure why they made this selection, she says that she "fell in love with the song that night—I had to have it on the album." Produced by Harvey Mason, "Believe" ends the album on a soaring, emotional peak.

The song "Still Here" also offers a connection to Hudson's personal history. Written by Songwriters Hall of Famer Diane Warren, the lyrics are a moving tribute to the singer's family. "I will never forget how you touched my life," Hudson sings. "I still see you, I still feel you/And we'll never be apart."

Not that everything on I REMEMBER ME is such serious business. The three tracks co-produced by Alicia Keys all have an old-school funk/disco flavor ("kind of Chaka Khan-influenced, and brought up to date," says Hudson). The song "Angel," says the singer, "has that kick in it—it's like the school band comes drilling down the aisle, with Jennifer singing at the front of it."

Long associated with the great Nina Simone, the sultry "Feeling Good" has been adopted by Hudson as the celebratory theme for her Weight Watchers campaign. More inspiration comes from the jubilant "I Got This," produced by the hit machine known as Stargate. "Going back to

when Brandy had 'Sittin' on Top of the World,' I always wanted one of those songs," says Hudson. "It's an anthem, a reminder that you got this, you can do it. I can see everybody chanting that, singing it together and lifting each other up."

Intense and intimate, joyous and danceable, I REMEMBER ME demonstrates the range and growth of Jennifer Hudson as an artist. It's a testament to music's power to heal, and to the continuing maturity of a singer who is practically a household name, but still in the early stages of her career.

"I'm in a different place, and the album reflects that," says Hudson. "You can feel the energy of everybody that participated in this whole project, and it just feels amazing."



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