

LEANN RIMES BIO

When a performer grows up in the spotlight, it's often hard for public perception to mature along with them. Some people still picture LeAnn Rimes as the pretty teenager with the incredible voice who first burst on the national scene with the hit "Blue." In reality, LeAnn Rimes is so much more. As an artist, she's matured into a songwriter of considerable depth and as a vocalist; she's grown into her gift in an even more impressive way.

Her new album, "Family," marks the first time LeAnn has written or co-written every song. "I'm just completely baring my insides," LeAnn confesses. "People feel like they've known me for so long. They've grown up with me and I've grown up with them. A lot of people believe what they read and what they see on the surface, but there's so much underneath for me as a human being, not as an artist, and that's where this is coming from. It's coming from real life."

LeAnn's new songs run the gamut from the autobiographical title track to the light-hearted up tempo "Nothin' Better to Do," the album's first single. "There are songs on the record that are flirtatious and fun like "Nothin' Better To Do," she says of the sassy number. "I was born in Mississippi, but grew up in Texas. We wanted to write kind of this song from this altar ego. What would have happened if I would have never left small town Mississippi where there's nothing better to do than to cause trouble?"

Whether pondering what might have been or delving into what actually happened, LeAnn explores a lot of territory on her new disc. She readily admits it's not easy to lay her soul bare for the whole world, yet there's also a freedom in becoming that transparent. "It's hard to be that vulnerable, but it's exhilarating all at the same time," she says. "I'm definitely accepting myself for who I am. I'm letting it speak for itself, loving my real emotions and letting who I am come across in my music. It is exhilarating to know that what I'm putting out there is really me as an adult and not me as a kid singing someone else's songs. I'm not discrediting anything that I've done. I've had incredible hits written by some great writers, but I finally felt that it all came together on this record."

LeAnn will be 25 on August 28, the day her new album hits store shelves. Born in Jackson, Mississippi, she won her first talent contest at age five and at seven she had recorded her first album. By then her family had relocated to Garland, Texas. She began honing her skills as a country artist performing on Johnnie High's Country Music Revue in Ft. Worth, a popular show that featured local artists and national acts. LeAnn recorded her second album at

the tender age of 11. That project featured "Blue," and caught the attention of legendary executive Mike Curb who signed her to Curb Records. By 13, she had a national hit.

The rest has become history. She has won two Grammy Awards, including the first Best New Artist accolade ever won by a country artist. She has sold more than 37 million records, won an American Music Award, three Academy of Country Music honors and 12 Billboard Awards. She's scored numerous hit singles, among them "One Way Ticket," "I Need You," "Nothin' 'Bout Love Makes Sense," "Probably Wouldn't Be This Way," "Can't Fight The Moonlight" which was a #1 song in 11 countries, and "How Do I Live," which was the longest running single ever on the Billboard Hot 100, spending a record-setting 69 weeks on the chart.

She has written children books, acted in film and on television and has become a musical icon both in the U.S. and in Europe. In 2006, she released "Whatever We Wanna" in Europe, a successful pop album for which LeAnn co-wrote 10 of the 15 tracks. LeAnn has become confident enough as a songwriter to pitch tunes to other artists and has songs being considered by Faith Hill and Jamie O'Neal.

Along the way, the little girl with the big voice has matured into a woman, and the songs on "Family" reflect her priorities in life. "This whole album is about real relationships," says LeAnn, who has been married to husband, Dean Sheremet for five years. "It talks about relationships between a husband and wife, between mother and daughter, and also my friends, who are very much my extended family."

LeAnn sees "Family" as the first in what may become a trilogy. "This is a clarifying record for me, talking about what I've gone through," she says. "I feel like this may be the beginning of three records for me with the next record being the growth--kind of sifting through where I'm at and where I'm going; maybe the third record [will be about] becoming a mom."

Though the songs on "Family" are intensely personal, LeAnn has also managed to create music that is universal in its appeal. The challenges and triumphs she chronicles represent experiences everyone can relate to. "I wanted to write so that people would be able to find themselves in the songs and hear their stories," she says. "It's part me and part them. That's why I really wanted to call the record 'Family' because I really feel like as they've grown up with me, I've grown up with them. The whole world kind of became my family in a way."

Opening her heart and pouring such feeling into the songs on this album

propelled LeAnn's vocals to another level. Never has she sounded more confident and more compelling, particularly on the poignant ballad "What I Cannot Change." It's a song about forgiveness, acceptance and personal growth that finds LeAnn delivering a performance that is achingly vulnerable yet carries an underlying current of rock solid strength.

During a recent concert, she was amazed at the impact the song had on her audience. "I performed it for the first time the other day at a show and I knew not to look down at the crowd, because somebody was going to be crying and if I saw them, I would lose it," she relates. "When I was done with the song, I opened my eyes and the whole crowd was bawling and the whole crowd just stood up at once. I lost it for about five minutes and I could not stop crying. I just realized the magnitude of what I had done--to have written a song that moved people that much. It's not someone else's words right now. It's my words and I'm really attached to them. It's pretty intense. I've never had a project before that I've felt this way about."

Not only does the new album plum the depths of her emotional arsenal, it also showcases her diversity as a vocalist. There's an engaging duet with Louisiana born singer/songwriter Marc Broussard on "Nothing Wrong." LeAnn recently recorded "'Til We're Not Strangers," a sultry duet with Bon Jovi that appears on the band's new album, "Lost Highway," and as a bonus track on "Family."

LeAnn again turned to her friend Dan Huff to produce the album. "I've worked with him on several projects now and I knew he was the right person because we're both very honest with each other," she says. "I knew I would push him to places that he's never gone and he would push me to places that I wasn't comfortable going."

That creative chemistry has produced an album that is a landmark in an already distinguished career. It chronicles the myriad relationships and experiences that have shaped the life of one of America's most successful artists. But more than that, it represents the growth and maturity of a young woman who has grown up in the public eye, and unlike many of her pop star peers, has avoided the pitfalls of fame. "People are just waiting for you to self-destruct because that's what happens," she says. "I just wanted to prove people wrong. It's been really hard at times, but I feel like I'm in a really good place right now. I know that the success that I've had, and am having, is rare for anyone, but especially anyone who started as a kid. I have been very blessed. I've had my moments. I'm a human being like everyone else, but I really feel like I've made a conscious decision to learn from all of those moments."

LeAnn Rimes has learned from the moments that have defined her young life, and she's poured those experiences into her music. She's no longer the teen with the big voice. She's an intelligent, mature young woman with much to say. "I do feel like I've become this artist and not just this voice," LeAnn says. "There's this whole other side of me that's always been there. I've been writing my whole life, but never have I felt confident enough. The confidence I felt in my singing is now how confident I feel in my writing. That's an exciting place to be and a new place to be. I feel like I'm really moving forward and growing as a human being and as an artist. It's a good thing."