

**ABOUT KRISTINE W**

Named by Billboard Magazine as the #8 *Greatest Dance Artist of All Time*, Kristine W has proven herself a lasting talent. Through nearly twenty-five years in music, she has consistency delivered songs that touch hearts and souls and compel bodies to find the mighty groove out on the dance floor. Her latest single, “Out There,” the title track from her soon-to-be-released album, continues her legacy, recently climbing to #3 on the US dance charts.

Kristine W launched her career in 1994. In that time, she has scored 16 #1 dance hits on Billboard and a record-setting string of nine consecutive #1s on the Hot Dance Club Songs chart. Her chart successes have broken records held by the likes of Madonna and Janet Jackson (most consecutive #1s) as well as Mariah Carey (most #1 dance hits). She is named among the top three of the last decade’s club play artists trailing only Madonna and Beyoncé. While she has the talents of a diva in spades, Kristine W eschews all the excesses too often associated with the term such as narcissism and egoism.

She keeps her focus on the art and profession of being a singer, songwriter and musician, and enjoys a grassroots mutual aﬀection with fans who revere her voice, appreciate how the aspects of life and emotions she sings about echo their own feelings and experiences, and enjoy how Kristine continually pushes the envelope to forge dynamic grooves and mixes that keep the dance floor pulsing.

So how did a ranch-raised small-town girl from rural Washington State end up as “the most soulful vocalist in dance music, period,” according to All Music Guide? Kristine credits Donna Summer for instilling the love of dance into her.

“She had that big gorgeous voice,” says Kristine of the late disco music pioneer and superstar. “Her voice sounded almost like gospel to me. It was dance with the big background vocals and the layered harmonies and she also has a jazzy overtone to her voice. She was everything I would aspire to: Wow, that’s what I want to do. How do I do this?”

Kristine’s mother was also an entertainer. She showed Kristine that a singing career was possible. “Mom did it because my Dad passed away when we were babies and it was a matter of survival. That’s what she got a job doing right away and how she was able to keep food on the table for us,” Kristine explains.

Her maternal grandmother, who helped raise Kristine and her four siblings, was a classical violinist who was struck by lightning – “One of the few people to survive that,” Kristine notes – which threw her arms out of their shoulder sockets. After they were wired back in place, she could no longer play the violin, so she taught herself how to play the guitar set in her lap. “It just showed me the power of music because she continued to be musical, and figured out ways to adapt to her situation. She was an amazing woman.”

Kristine’s paternal grandfather was a rancher and competitive horseman. “He was like John Wayne.” Her late father was a rodeo champion and country music singer. “I had a lot of inspirational people around and nurturing me. I was blessed,” she says of her childhood.

From almost the time she could walk Kristine was singing in church, talent contests and local Oprys. The music she heard ranged from the sophisticated jazz her mother sang to hard-core country to the classical warhorses and all between, plus the pop music on the radio. When she first heard Summer, Kristine saw how all she was learning was also a part of her icon’s training and background.

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“When you latch onto an artist like that at such a young age and just immerse yourself in their music, you pick up on all of their nuances,” Kristine explains. “She really was a huge influence on how I approached my music career, including taking opera lessons.”

Kristine learned to play guitar and piano from her grandmother and took up alto saxophone at seven years old to help her with her scat singing and improvisation. She would ride her bike around her hometown of Pasco, WA searching out classic jazz albums at yard and garage sales. “I studied with jazz coaches and was in all the jazz choirs, church choirs and in R&B groups. Won all the local talent contests and then went to Seattle and Portland and Spokane and beat them all there.”

Ultimately Kristine won the biggest local competition, Miss Washington, and went on to compete for Miss America, winning the opening swimsuit and talent categories (the latter by singing the Gershwin Broadway classic “Summertime”). The scholarship funds she earned enabled her to head out from Pasco to pursue her musical dreams.

“I decided to take my scholarship money and head to Las Vegas,” Kristine explains. “I couldn’t aﬀord UCLA, it was too expensive. I couldn’t drive to New York because my car was too old and beat up. So I thought: I can make it to Vegas and I can aﬀord to go to school there. And I know I can work my way through college performing. And I did. As soon as I arrived here I started getting hired to do everything.”

She was determined to front and lead her own band as her mom had done. “I heard a lot of you can’t do that, you can’t do this, you’re not going to be a female bandleader, it’s not gonna happen, you’re going to have to sing with somebody else’s band. I was like I’m going to sing with other people’s bands until I make enough money to buy my own PA and put together my own band.”

And so she did, leading her group Kristine W and the Sting to prominence in the fiercely competitive Vegas market, eventually performing at the Las Vegas Hilton more than any other entertainer, including Elvis. “I won Entertainer of the Year, Best Singer, Best Band, Best Showband,” explains Kristine. “I had 18 employees. I was the most successful female bandleader probably ever as far as showbands go.”

Record labels and production companies constantly courted Kristine with oﬀers to sing every style of popular music imaginable. But her band’s specialty – molding pop and rock hits and classics into propulsive dance numbers – belied her musical aim. “I’m a high energy person,” she says. “I love the energy of dance music, always have. It’s really joyful and happy. To me dance music is like the energy of life.”

So she took her voice and songs to Europe, where dance music reigns supreme and most of the genre’s cutting edge producers and mixers are found, and recorded her first album in London. In 1996, “Feel What You Want,” Kristine’s debut single, made an immediate mark in the dance clubs, soaring to #1 here and abroad and becoming a dance floor classic. “One More Try” followed for another #1 dance hit, and a third chart-topper on the album’s title song, “Land of the Living,” secured Kristine’s place as a new dance floor star. When the album was oﬃcially released in 1997, Kristine’s in-store concert at the Virgin Megastore in Times Square drew lines of adoring fans around the block.

She signed with RCA Records and followed with more #1 hits on her 2000 album, *Stronger* like its title tune and “Lovin’ You.” Just as she was establishing her career, Kristine was diagnosed with a particularly aggressive strain of leukemia and given only a 30 percent chance of survival. She was given an experimental stem cell transplant and spent two years fighting the disease while also raising two infant children. Ironically, songs she had written before being struck by the disease like “Land of the Living” and “One More Try” proved almost prophetic as well as motivational as Kristine struggled to overcome the disease. “My music always seems to give me the inspiration to keep fighting for it,” Kristine notes.

When Kristine returned with Fly Again on the pioneering indie dance label, Tommy Boy, in

2003, she racked up three more #1s: the title song, “Save My Soul” and “The Wonder of It All.” Writing the album while hospitalized and recovering, Kristine further distinguished herself as an artist whose songs of struggle and triumph speak to the lives of countless fans as well. After topping the charts again with her dance remake of the Ashford/Simpson-penned Diana Ross

hit “The Boss,” Kristine then debuted as a totally independent and self-managed artist with *The Power of Music* in 2009. Its seven #1 hits proved Kristine’s enduring appeal as a major dance music artist.

Next up was a longtime singer’s dream project that also fulfilled a promise to her mother: *Straight Up with a Twist*, a Top 15 two CD jazz chart album, on which she enjoyed three radio hits, including a sensual reworking of her first dance hit, “Feel What You Want” and a jazz rendition of heroine Donna Summers’ disco music landmark, “On The Radio.” Kristine also transformed such rock classics as “Stairway to Heaven” and “Take It to the Limit” into vocal

jazz stunners, redid “The Boss” in yet another genre, and closed the set with her impassioned reading of the folk-pop standard “First Time Ever I Saw Your Face.”

Kristine returned to dance with her next album, *New & Number Ones,* revisiting some of her past hits with new mixes and edits and oﬀering new songs that also topped the charts. The collection featured seven re-worked Kristine W originals, including “I Get Up,” “So Close To Me,” Glow On,” “Busted,” “and “Through the Fire.” “Land of the Living” (1997) got a Subgroover edit, ‘96’s “One More Try” enjoyed an expansive JRMX mix, and “Lovin’ You” from

2001 was edited by Soul Seekerz. “Love Come Home” opened the album in Subgroover style

and closed the set with a Frankie Knuckles Vs. Bitrocka Epic Club Duet. (*Love Come Home*

went Top 5 on Billboard’s Clubs Songs Chart in 2015 and Top 30 on the UK Club Chart.)

The collection was rounded out by covers of Chaka Khan’s “Through the Fire” and Donna

Summer’s “Sometimes Like Butterflies”; a tribute edit that recalled the golden days of disco.

Kristine’s next album, “Out There,” is scheduled to release this summer. She has enlisted a global team of producers to flavor the new project with their personal styles of house beats and EDM. Featured talent include Freejak, Hans Mallon (who has worked with Tiesto), Kespa, Subgroover’s Bob Sandee, Phill Wellz, Mr. Mig, and Dido producer Richard Dekkard. Kristine says she looks forward to letting her voice, soul and spirit fly again.

“I love creating the work and seeing people’s reaction to it,” she concludes. “My voice is a gift and I’m thankful for it. It has definitely made my life very interesting. I’ve gotten to make a diﬀerence and bring a lot of joy to the world, and that’s really what’s important.”

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