

CRYSTAL WATERS

Crystal Waters first burst onto the dance and pop music scenes with her 1991 smash hit, "Gypsy Woman (She's Homeless)." The memorable chorus of "La Da Di, La Di Da" and the social commentary that her lyrics provided – about the day-to-day life of a homeless woman – touched the right chords with club goers and radio programmers alike. Subsequent crossover hits such as "100% Pure Love" and "In De Ghetto" have made Crystal an undeniable star. In 2001, she is back with a new album and a new single that samples the familiar "The Price Is Right" theme. "Come On Down" is sure to be another smash hit.

Crystal Waters was born just outside of Philadelphia, into a family of musicians. Her father, Junior Waters, traveled all over the United States performing in a jazz group; her older brother was a bass player; and her older sister modeled and sang.

Crystal first found her voice as a child writing poetry, not music. But because she was shy and quiet at home, no one knew she wrote creatively until her mother found her book of poems. At the age of 13, she submitted some of her works and had them published by the American Poetry Society. She graduated from high school when she was only 16 and went on to study computer science and business management at Howard University in Washington, DC.

It was a psychic who first inspired Crystal to consider singing as a career. "She said that there was I something I wasn't doing with my voice," Crystal recalls. "She also told me that I would not be happy until I did it."

Soon after her experience with the psychic, she started singing background vocals in a studio with a West African group. Recording that album, she learned about singing from the heart. Once she stepped foot into the studio, she knew that was where she belonged.

asked me if I wanted to write songs for some dance tracks, planning to record them with dance music star Ultra Nate.

"They gave me several tracks. I wrote 'Gypsy Woman (She's Homeless)' sitting at my dining room table. There was something about the baseline and the melody I came up with – La Da Di, La Di Da – that just went so well together.

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But I was struggling to look for words to fill it, so I just left it there and figured I would fill it in later."

Crystal explains the origin of her first hit: "There was this woman who used to stand outside of my sister's office. She had a full face of make-up and she would stand out there with a can singing gospel songs. And I used to think so negatively of her. 'Why doesn't she just go get a job?' I thought.

"But then there was a story about her in the local paper. She had lost her job in retail and she wore the make-up to keep her self-respect and also she didn't want to disrespect people by looking all tattered and torn. So she only wore dark clothes because they hid the dirt.

"After I read her story, my opinion of her changed and we even spoke several times. Eventually, she disappeared. But I hear that she's got a nice place and back on track."

The Basement Boys shopped Crystal's demo to Mercury Records through record executives at A&M Records. By 1991, "Gypsy Woman (She's Homeless)" topped the dance and pop music charts and was certified gold in several countries. Her debut album, *Surprise*, was also certified gold and spawned several other dance hits, including the title track and "Makin' Happy."

Crystal's 1994 sophomore effort, *Storyteller*, was also certified gold and yielded several more dance hits, including "Ghetto Day," "What I Need," and "100% Pure Love." Her 1996 eponymous third album offered the reggae-flavored dance hit "In De Ghetto." That was followed by the release of a greatest hits album, *The Best of Crystal Waters*.

After that recording session, she found a keyboard player by placing an ad in the local paper. They wrote three or four songs together and shopped their demo around until she met the Basement Boys, a production team, in 1987. Crystal says that the first songs she wrote were "more laid-back jazzy things in the style of Sade, but the Basement Boys really liked my writing style. They

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In 2001, Crystal signed with Strictly Rhythm Records, an independent dance music label owned by Time Warner. She feels that her fourth and latest studio album "is some of the best stuff I've done. It's really coming along nicely and I'm really excited.

"When I got the track for the first single, a big smile just came over my face. It's one of those tracks that you can listen to as an artist and just know that something good is going to happen with it."

Crystal admits that she needed to make an adjustment moving from a major label to an independent label, "but I like it because I feel more in control and I have more freedom."

Influenced by her favorite artist, jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald, Crystal would like to do a jazz album someday. "Not that I want to be a jazz artist, but I just want to do it for myself – more of a labor of love. 'Gypsy Woman (She's Homeless)' has sort of a lazy jazzy feel to it."

She also hopes to write and publish her own book in the future. But for now, she is writing and producing her own music. "I just like people to know that I write my own songs. I am a songwriter and a singer." And with a new album and a new single, "Come On Down," the best is yet to come from singer/songwriter Crystal Waters.

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