



MARY J. BLIGE
Stronger With Each Tear
 [Geffen]

For her ninth album, the Queen Of Hip-Hop Soul has rounded up collaborators like Akon, Drake, T.I., The Runners and Rodney Jerkins—but even this show of R&B/hip-hop cred can't hide the impression that Mary J. Blige is increasingly embracing the pop world. It's refreshing for a woman who has notoriously played the "woe-is-me" card to offer such an upbeat and happy album, with optimism-drenched grooves that celebrate self-love ("Said and Done"), horn-blasting flirtation ("Good Love") and downright elation ("I Feel Good"). The ambitious orchestral epic "We Got Hood Love" is particularly blessed with a great melody and an irresistible arrangement. Of course, it wouldn't be a Mary J. Blige album without one gut-wrenching tearjerker; the killer heartstring ballad here is the beseeching "In The Morning," where she pulls out all the stops. —Nick Krewen

AS SEEN IN:



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- *M Music & Musicians*

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