

## Beyonce - I Am... Sasha Fierce(2008)

Written by bluelover

Saturday, 05 June 2010 10:18 - Last Updated Sunday, 26 June 2016 11:37

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### Beyonce - I Am... Sasha Fierce (2008)



CD1 1. *Beyoncé - If I Were A Boy* (4:10) 2. *Beyoncé - Halo* (4:21) 3. *Beyoncé - Disappear* (4:28) 4. *Beyoncé - Broken-Hearted Girl* (4:38) 5. *Beyoncé - Ave Maria* (3:41) 6. *Beyoncé - Smash Into You* (4:31) 7. *Beyoncé - Satellites* (3:08) 8. *Beyoncé - That's Why You're Beautiful* (3:41) CD2 9. *Beyoncé - Single Ladies (Put A Ring On It)* (3:13) 10. *Beyoncé - Radio* (3:38) 11. *Beyoncé - Diva* (3:20) 12. *Beyoncé - Sweet Dreams* (3:28) 13. *Beyoncé - Video Phone* (3:35) 14. *Beyoncé - Hello* (4:16) 15. *Beyoncé - Ego* (3:56) 16. *Beyoncé - Scared Of Lonely* (3:42)

Though she's only 27, Beyoncé goes out of her way to be an old-fashioned celebrity, the type offended by Pete Wentz blogging about Oscar the Grouch or Britney Spears Twittering her life away. "I feel that, especially now with the Internet and paparazzi and camera phones, it's so difficult to maintain mystery," she said earlier this year. "It's almost impossible to have superstars now, because people will never get enough." And, in our TMZ-addled world, her reluctance to entertain most questions about her personal life is both refreshing and a bit stubborn. She's a megawatt anachronism in sky-high heels and a frozen smile. So, without much outside interference, Beyoncé's fan-artist connection relies almost wholly on her music--the only place to find the "real" Beyoncé is on her albums. With that direct relationship in mind comes *I Am... Sasha Fierce*, a supposed window into the soul of Beyoncé as well as her hair-flipping sexpot alter ego who happens to be blessed with the ultimate "Project Runway" moniker.

The "split-personality" gimmick is now a tired and, more often than not, hapless pop theme (see: Garth Brooks's proto-emo character Chris Gaines, T.I. vs. T.I.P, the street vs. boardroom dynamic of hubby Jay-Z's *Kingdom Come*). *Sasha Fierce* will not disturb that unfortunate trend. Unlike 2006's underrated funk-fest *B'Day*, which held together remarkably well as an LP and saw Beyoncé ditching sap for sass, this record isn't supposed to coalesce. Speaking once again to her penchant for the outdated and obsolete, it's a 2xCD affair also available in a deluxe edition with five additional tracks. (Didn't anyone tell her about Christina Aguilera's recent

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diva-fied double disc disappointment Back to Basics ... and that you're supposed to put the deluxe edition out six to eight months after the regular edition?) Sasha Fierce puts Beyoncé back into the "singles artist" column-- only the blindly devout would consider slogging through the deluxe edition multiple times; only the foolishly puritanical would deny the occasional high-gloss super hits.

Nobody wins the Beyoncé vs. Sasha battle-- often, the listener loses. On the Beyoncé side, while tracks like the effective (and affecting) gender-bender "If I Were a Boy" and the stunning love-as-god power ballad "Halo" (courtesy of "Bleeding Love" scribe Ryan Tedder) find the singer both strident and exposed, there's lots of wispy nonsense seemingly dug out of Celine Dion's scrap pile. Her twist on "Ave Maria" is vocally impeccable, but it reads more like recital fodder rather than a true confessional. Flip to Sasha, which is more listenable overall, but also more pandering. There's the one that sounds like past Beyoncé hits ("Single Ladies [Put a Ring on It]"), the one that sounds like "A Milli" ("Diva"), and the one that sounds like Rihanna ("Sweet Dreams"). For someone famous for effortlessly sparking trends, there are a surprising amount of opportunistic retreads here.

Beyoncé is a capital-S Star, and one glimpse of her onstage makes it clear why she's earned her right to operate above the fray. But an album isn't a concert, and there are simply not enough Sasha Fierce songs worthy of her or our time. (The hopelessly benign "Smash Into You" will provide a prime bathroom break moment on her next world tour, though.) While this LP is more painstaking than B'Day, the extra effort dulls any emotional wallop; B'Day, in all its hectic glory, offered a much more vivid peek into the elusive mind of Beyoncé than Sasha Fierce, which often reads more like projection than reality. Considering the wealth of characters this multi-talent is currently amassing between movies and alter egos, the notion of Beyoncé is more splintered now than ever. Sasha Fierce doesn't help her put the pieces back together.

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