

will you survive the season?

Between parties, family time and exam stress,
can you find a moment to breathe?

by Karen Christino

1 Before break, the class president gets on the PA system with jingling bells and tales of ancient midwinter festivals. What's your take on this?

- (a) It puts you in the spirit—you can't wait to wrap presents!
- (b) It fills you with anticipation—this is your last week of classes till next year.
- (c) You shake your head—maybe if kids object on religious or cultural grounds, they'll stop the prez from playing elf.

2 It's Friday night, December 15: What are you doing this weekend?

- (a) Going to the mall with your girls to buy some gifts and look for a New Year's Eve party outfit.
- (b) Fretting about your last-minute shopping crisis and trying to score tickets for the Backstreet Boys concert.
- (c) Plans are for Santa's neurotic little helpers! Maybe you'll hang with your boyfriend or wash the car.

3 Your Dad has made plans for the family to visit your grandparents next week. You think,

- (a) Great! You enjoy hearing stories of the old neighborhood and helping your grandmother bake her amazing apple pie.
- (b) For a few days you can tolerate your grandfather's third degree about your college search.
- (c) You don't know how you'll ever survive Grandma's wall-shaking snoring or Grandpa's hourlong bathroom visits.

4 Which quirky *Simpsons* gal do you most identify with during the holiday season?

- (a) Maggie—you relax, laugh and enjoy the food.
- (b) Marge—it's most important to get together with family and friends and keep up meaningful traditions.
- (c) Lisa—your cards were sent out three weeks early, you've memorized your solo for the New Year's concert and you've studied for your English test.

5 Your mom is a fanatic about her annual bash and always expects you to help out. You tell her:

- (a) "I've got time to hang garlands and make cranberry bread—will that do?"
- (b) "Sure, but this year I refuse to serve eggnog wearing reindeer antlers!"
- (c) "Please drag someone else into it this time—I'm totally overbooked."

6 Your history grades are low, so your teacher suggests a grade-boosting extra credit report. The catch: You have to hand it in before winter break. You

- (a) prioritize: You sprint to the library after decorating for the Winter Dance.
- (b) opt against it: You'll just study harder after the holidays.
- (c) panic: You still have to bake cookies, buy CDs for your New Year's Eve bash, and plan game day at the nursing home.

7 Your boyfriend, Dave, invites you over for dinner. After dessert, his family goes around the table, stating New Year's resolutions. When your turn comes, you

- (a) think for a minute before deciding ►

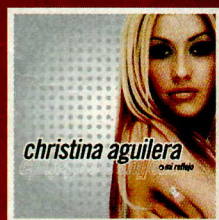


christina aguilera

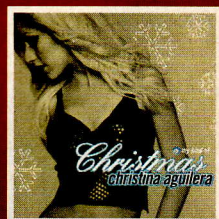
Now there are 3
albums from this year's
GRAMMY-winning
BEST NEW ARTIST



Christina Aguilera
featuring her latest smash
"Come On Over Baby" and
her three #1 hits
"Genie In A Bottle"
"What A Girl Wants"
"I Turn To You"



Mi Reflejo
Her first album in
Spanish featuring five
hits from her self-titled
debut and six hot new
Latin tracks—enhanced
CD includes videos



My Kind Of Christmas
Christina's brand-new
Christmas album featuring
your holiday favorites plus
"Christmas Time"
and "This Year"



available at

WHEREHOUSE MUSIC
CheckOut.com

www.christina.com www.digital2music.com/christina

quiz

will you survive the season? continued

on a good one: You resolve to compromise with your brother about on-line time instead of fighting.

(b) nervously joke that you're not into resolutions and then turn to Dave.

(c) mumble something about "peace on earth" and quickly volunteer to clear the table.

8 Your mom can never pick out anything you like, so she offers to take you shopping for a gift. You

(a) say, "Great idea! Let's do it!"

(b) suggest going after the holiday rush, when you can take your time

and shop the postseason sales.

(c) think, I don't have enough to do, now I have to buy my own presents!

9 When your big sister opens her gift, sees the cardigan you spent hours tracking down at the mall and grunts, you

(a) ignore it—you did your best and it's tough to please her.

(b) ask her if she'd like a brighter color and then give her the receipt and the store address.

(c) tell her you'll return it and get whatever she wants.

scoring

(Mostly A's) Holiday Cheer

You've studied for your midyear tests, you love giving and getting presents, and you look forward to fancy meals. And amid this snowstorm of activity, you still find the time to enjoy the holiday spirit. You don't even mind listening to Grandpa clear his throat for 20 minutes! "Enjoy it," says Dorothy Cantor, Psy.D., former president of the American Psychological Association in Washington, D.C., and coauthor of *Women in Power*. "Celebrate your good fortune in having family and friends whom you love to be with." Just don't overbook—too much of any good thing might make you feel a little Scrooged. You can't be expected to turn in straight A's, bake up a feast and party all season long. While you're making quality time for friends and family, be sure to set aside some "you" time as well.

(Mostly B's) Holiday Flurry

While you love planning the Winter Dance and picking out the perfect cards for all your friends, you can also get bogged down by pleasing others, waiting in long lines at stores and stressing over prebreak schoolwork. Luckily, you aren't willing to totally sacrifice yourself and a good time for the sake of others. "Negotiate with your parents if there's a long list of family obligations," says Cantor. "Make a deal for your favorite two or three activities and get excused from some others." Compromising and choosing the events that you most enjoy—plus one or two for Mom's sake—will definitely make it easier for you to deal with the upcoming bustle.

(Mostly C's) Holiday Crunch

You're feeling overwhelmed and cranky, and it's no wonder: You need to memorize the periodic table for your chemistry test, buy gifts for the whole family and you're expected to decorate the entire house. Before your heart shrinks three sizes too small, "figure out what's bothering you," suggests Cantor. "Is it the many have-tos? Or is it particular people you'd rather not be with? Or does the holiday spirit seem artificial? If you have some control, you'll feel better." Lighten your load by sending out e-mails instead of cards and shopping catalogs rather than hitting the mall. Most important: Don't try to make the holiday season what everyone else thinks it should be. (And relax. It'll all be over before you know it!) ■