



entertainment in lexington and beyond

[Back to web version](#)
Tuesday, May 4, 2010

Posted on Fri, Apr. 23, 2010

Jennifer Lopez has a comeback plan: 'The Back-Up Plan'

In the wake of flops and a hiatus, Jennifer Lopez aims to return to the heights she once reached

By Frank Lovece
Newsday

Dancer-singer-actress Jennifer Lopez hadn't danced, sung or acted much since taking time off to have kids — although People reportedly paid her and husband Marc Anthony \$4 million to \$6 million in 2008 to parade them on a magazine cover, ironically the most successful thing she has done in years.

Before her hiatus, she had a string of flop movies, a single that didn't crack the Billboard Top 10, and an American Music Award downshift from favorite pop/rock female artist in 2003 to the more niche-y favorite Latin artist in 2007. Oh, and her record label just dropped her.

Now, at 40, she is calibrating a comeback that has included guest appearances on *How I Met Your Mother*, *Saturday Night Live* and reportedly an upcoming episode of *Glee*, all to support her romantic comedy *The Back-Up Plan*, opening Friday.

In the meantime, with businesses encompassing music, movies, a clothing line and a Cuban restaurant, she's the ninth-richest woman in entertainment, says Forbes magazine, which in 2007 estimated her net worth at \$110 million.

So shed no tears for her career. Dancer-singer-actress or waitress-writer-dog walker, we all have our highs and lows. Here are hers:

Fledgling, 1986-93

After her film debut as a teen in the 1986 indie drama *My Little Girl*, she gained a toehold as a professional dancer. Joining the Fly Girls troupe on the sketch-comedy series *In Living Color* in 1991, she left after two seasons to dance in Janet Jackson's and Puff Daddy's videos, and to play a prominent role in the 1993 TV movie *Nurses on the Line: The Crash of Flight 7*. At this point, she's just another fresh face — but clearly a performer driven to succeed in more than one field.

Up-and-comer, 1993-95

Lopez quickly got cast in the short-lived CBS drama *Second Chances*, becoming one of only two in the ensemble to transition to its brief revamp as *Hotel Malibu*. After three episodes of the Fox drama *South Central*, she gained attention and an Independent Spirit Award nomination in 1995 for her role in Gregory Nava's *My Family*. That same year, her first big studio film, the Woody Harrelson-Wesley Snipes action flick *Money Train*, flopped — but it showcased her as the next hot young ingenue.

Big break, 1996-97

Next hot young ingenues get opportunities. After Francis Ford Coppola's *Jack* (1996) and Bob Rafelson's *Blood and Wine* (1997) came the explosion: *Selena*, Nava's 1997 biopic of the murdered Tejano singer did modest box office but made Lopez a star. The horror hit *Anaconda*, starring Lopez's tight, sweaty T-shirt, swiftly brought more attention. Not even the flop *U Turn*, her third film that year, could tamp down her rise.

Big time, 1998-2001

Lopez scored great reviews for her out-of-the-box performance as a federal marshal in Steven Soderbergh's *Out of Sight* (1998), opposite George Clooney. She scored a No. 1 single, *If You Had My Love*, in 1999, and her debut album, *On the 6*, went to No. 8. Now she was riding high as a movie star, with the successful *The Cell* (2000) and *The Wedding Planner* (2001), plus a No. 1 album (2001's *J.Lo*) that spawned two chart-topping singles (*I'm Real* and *Ain't It Funny*, both featuring Ja Rule).

Cruising along 2001-03

Two movies tanked in a row (2001's *Angel Eyes*, 2002's *Enough*), although *Maid in Manhattan* proved a hit. And the album *J to Tha L-O!: The Remixes* made it to No. 1. Her next album, *This Is Me ... Then*, peaked at No. 2. Her signature single, *Jenny From the Block*, reached No. 3 in late 2002. Her next, *All I Have*, featuring LL Cool J, did hit the top a couple of months later. It was her last single to even come close.

Jenny from the flop, 2003-07

In the wake of media saturation of "Bennifer" — Jennifer and fiancé Ben Affleck — the couple's movie *Gigli* (2003) was a critical and commercial dud, becoming the first movie to sweep all six major categories of the Razzie Awards. She got mostly cut out of Kevin Smith's *Jersey Girl* (2004), and *Shall We Dance* did great internationally but flopped here. *Monster-in-Law* was a modest hit, but as University at Buffalo American studies professor Elayne Rapping, author of several books on popular culture, noted, "That was a Jane Fonda movie. Jennifer Lopez could have been anybody."

The prestige drama *An Unfinished Life* (2005) sank big time, as did *El Cantante* (2007), the biopic of salsa pioneer Hector Lavoe, which she produced and co-starred in with husband Marc Anthony. Her album *Rebirth* (2005) peaked at No. 2, and both *Brave* and her Spanish-language *Como Ama una Mujer* (both 2007) reached No. 12.

Comeback? 2009-10

Hard to say. Falling during a dance routine at the American Music Awards in November didn't help. Neither did that much-derided catsuit she wore on *Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve*. Epic Records dropped her in February, putting her album *Love?* in limbo. As for romantic comedies, Rapping wonders about that choice: "She's incredibly sexy, and her sexuality has always been a big part of her identity. That's not typical of women in romantic comedies, who tend more to be cute." Yet, after *The Back-Up Plan*, Lopez has another romantic comedy, *The Governess*, in the works.

Still, you never know. Jenny's been around the block, and she has confounded expectations before. We might just find ourselves high on J.Lo all over again.

© 2010 Kentucky.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.kentucky.com>