

One Glorious Talent

Gloria Estefan sees the big picture

The first thing that strikes you about Gloria Estefan is the balance she has in her life. There's a wonderful warmth about her, and she displays respect for all people. Her priorities are clearly set, and she doesn't take herself very seriously.

Don't expect to see Estefan as a prima donna or someone who doesn't grasp the big picture. "From early on in my life, I had many difficult things to deal with. My father was very ill for years, and I cared for him. I quickly learned about things that are of true value in life."

Husband Emilio Estefan started a band known as Miami Latin Boys, but when Gloria joined, the group's name was changed to Miami Sound Machine. "Emilio used to play the accordion for tips in restaurants. A friend of his asked him to do a party at a house and to bring along more musicians. When I came in, I brought my ballad influences, and it got very involved on the musical side."

With enormous demands on her time and people constantly pulling at her, Estefan refuses to let her celebrity status interfere with her marriage. "Ultimately, a marriage is a relationship. What's difficult for an artist is meeting someone who loves you for you. We were lucky that Emilio and I met before any of this happened, so we truly fell in love with each other."

Most of us got our first glimpse of Gloria Estefan in Miami Sound Machine's 1986 "Bad Boys" video, an experience she remembers as being grueling. "We shot it in downtown Los Angeles, and it was something like 30 degrees. The video process is great, but they usually come right on the heels of when you finish an album, and it's a lot of work. In previous times, you'd do the record and that would be it."

But there are some videos she enjoys. "Obviously, the fun ones for me are live ones that capture everything quickly. Technical ones like 'Heaven's What I Feel' are more difficult, although I did enjoy

that one, because I was in a harness for six hours, doing flips. After I took the dramamine, I was okay. It just depends on the workload. They certainly add another feature to the song and broaden your view of it to the audience."

With her upbeat attitude and energy, it's remarkable to consider what happened to her on March 20, 1990, near Scranton, PA. A fully-loaded 18-wheeler crashed into Estefan's tour bus as the singer was heading to a Poconos concert date. "I was taking a nap and opened my eyes because I thought we were at the concert. We were rear-ended, and it felt like an explosion. It was weird."

"When I opened my eyes and couldn't move my legs, it was my worst nightmare. You're always thinking about crashes and accidents. But since you're in a tour bus, you figure you're safe. We just got unlucky to be sandwiched between the only thing bigger than our bus."

It was, understandably, an extremely rough year for her. "But so many people sent beautiful prayers my way and gave me a lot of strength. I wouldn't change what happened because I now live my life with so much more appreciation than I would have. I've always been content, but starting again from scratch has allowed me to live such a full life."

And the good news is Estefan says she's stronger than ever and probably in the best physical shape of her life. "This was eight years ago, so I say that I'm officially 8 years old. I have spare parts in my body, and I have to work out to feel my best. If I'm at home doing nothing, I usually work out five days a week, and at least three times a week on the road. If I go more than three days a week without exercising, I feel stiff. It's a real good motivator for working out."

The first song she wrote after the accident was "Coming Out Of

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The Dark," and she explains, "It was meant for all the fans and all their help and the love they sent my way."

Having collaborated with Diane Warren, Estefan jokes. "I love her. She's a great writer, but she's a lunatic, because she's totally driven. She goes to work to write at 9am and will be at it all day. She came to the house for four days, and we wrote four songs. On her way out, she was still trying to get me to do something else. I just told her I was completely dry."

It's significant to her that, so many years into her career, she can still be relevant and put out material that people enjoy.

"This album will probably be one of the most difficult for AC, because it's totally dance. We did the 'backwards thing.' Usually you do a ballad and then do a remix. We unmixed the remix and did a ballad of the up-tempo one, which turned out really nice."

"I'll always eventually come back with ballads, and I know AC will be there for me. I always want to keep in contact with AC

radio, because without it, we'd be selling encyclopedias somewhere."

Don't look for Estefan to be out on the road anytime soon though. "I don't foresee a tour probably until 2000, because I got off touring a year ago, and I was out for 14 months. That's a long time to be away from home."

Since Estefan's live show has a lot of energy, it can be difficult to be "up" for every performance. "I sleep a lot and can mentally gear up and prepare myself for what I'm going to do. It's been able to get me through some very tough moments in my life; I'm very focused."

"I have to gather up all this energy before I go out. It's like getting on a train and not even thinking about it until you're close to getting off. The only reason I ever really go out is for the fans and to cement that relationship. It's given us a lot of longevity."

Estefan's Hit Machine

Arranged by R&R chart position, these are Gloria Estefan's 24 AC hits.

Peak	Title	Peak Date
No. 1	"Words Get In The Way" *	5/9/86
No. 1	"Can't Stay Away From You" *	1/29/88
No. 1	"Anything For You" *	4/8/88
No. 1	"Don't Wanna Lose You"	7/21/89
No. 1	"Here We Are"	1/19/90
No. 1	"Cuts Both Ways"	7/13/90
No. 1	"Coming Out Of The Dark"	2/22/91
No. 1	"Can't Forget You"	7/12/91
No. 1	"Live For Loving You"	10/18/91
No. 2	"1-2-3" *	8/12/88
No. 2	"Reach"	6/21/96
No. 3	"Falling In Love (Uh-Oh)" *	12/5/86
No. 3	"Get On Your Feet"	11/10/89
No. 3	"I See Your Smile"	3/12/93
No. 5	"Always Tomorrow"	11/20/92
No. 5	"I'm Not Giving You Up"	2/14/97
No. 7	"Bad Boy" *	5/9/86
No. 7	"Everlasting Love"	3/17/95
No. 9	"Turn The Beat Around"	12/16/94
No. 9	"Heaven's What I Feel"	+
No. 13	"It's Too Late"	7/14/95
No. 17	"If We Were Lovers"	11/5/93
No. 24	"Oye Mi Canto"	4/27/90
No. 25	"Bet'cha Say That" *	10/30/87

* Gloria Estefan with the Miami Sound Machine

+ Still charting

SNAPSHOTS

FELICIA SWERLING

Epic Director/National Pop Promotion



Sales, early callout, and phone requests have Swerling optimistic about her current priority, Anggun. "She's already an international sensation with a mesmerizing ability to captivate an audience. We believe in her 100% as an artist."

Other females made a profound musical effect in recent months. "Artists like Billie Myers and Natalie Imbruglia brought an eclectic feel to the format."

Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You," Toni Braxton's "Un-Break My Heart," and Madonna's "Frozen" top Swerling's list of Love Song preferences.

