

Single Reviews

EDITED BY LARRY FLICK

POP

► **GLORIA ESTEFAN** *Turn The Beat Around* (3:52)
PRODUCERS: Emilio Estefan Jr., Lawrence P. Derner
WRITERS: P. Jackson, G. Jackson
PUBLISHER: Unichappell, BMI
REMIXERS: David Morales, Phillip Damien, Pablo Flores, Javier Garza, Eric Schilling
Crescent Moon/Epic Soundtrax 77630 (c/o Sony) (cassette single)

Well-conceived cover of Vicki Sue Robinson's disco chestnut can be heard on both the soundtrack to "The Specialist" and Estefan's forthcoming "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me" collection of covers. She has not delivered a pop single with this much verve and energy in a long while. The groove is reminiscent of her own classic "Conga," and it is wrapped in delicious layers of live strings and horns. An inspired pairing of song and artist that will likely spark heavy top 40 and club activity.

► **TONI BRAXTON** *How Many Ways* (4:20)
PRODUCER: Vincent Herbert
WRITERS: V. Herbert, T. Braxton, N. Goring, K. Miller, P. Field
PUBLISHER: not listed
REMIXERS: R. Kelly, Vincent Herbert, Sean "Puffy" Combs, Carl "Chucky" Thompson
LaFace 4081 (c/o BMG) (cassette single)

Umpteenth single plucked from Braxton's five-times-platinum debut benefits from a refreshing R. Kelly remix that plugs into current top 40 and R&B radio trends. On its own merit, the song is a romantic ballad with an instantly memorable chorus. Braxton provides added dimension with a sultry, well-shaded vocal that is a reminder of why she is among the leading urban divas of the moment. What else can be said?

► **GIN BLOSSOMS** *Allison Road* (3:18)
PRODUCERS: John Hampton, Gin Blossoms
WRITER: R. Wilson
PUBLISHER: not listed
A&M 8202 (c/o PGD) (cassette single)

Some records are so good, so perfectly crafted that you never tire of 'em. Latest single from the Gin Blossoms' glorious 1993 "New Miserable Experience" opus glistens with a crisp acoustic and electric guitars, harmonious vocals, and a wildly infectious chorus that makes you nostalgic for bygone days of teen-age youth and AM radio.

★ **ROLLING STONES** *Out Of Tears* (4:12)
PRODUCERS: Don Was, the Glimmer Twins
WRITERS: M. Jagger, K. Richards
PUBLISHER: Promopub B.V., ASCAP
REMIXER: Bob Clearmountain
Virgin 14237 (c/o Cema) (cassette single)

Second single from "Voodoo Lounge" is an extremely pop-friendly rock ballad that shows Mick Jagger in a sweet, sensitive light. Driven by delicate piano lines instead of trademark guitars, single has lilting melody that draws you in before the end of the first verse. Easily the band's most viable top 40 competitor in a long time.

★ **DFC** *Things In Tha Hood* (4:24)
PRODUCERS: Warren G, Sedic "Swift" Barnett
WRITERS: B.T. Thompson, A. Breed, Warren G, S. Barnett
PUBLISHERS: What's Not/Tamu/To Be Cleared/Power Artist/Warren G./Too Swift, BMI
REMIXER: Chris "The Glove" Taylor
Assault/Big Beat 2149 (c/o Atlantic) (12-inch single)

With the red-hot Warren G at the production helm, this easy-paced hip-hop jam can't miss. He lays a textured midtempo groove that slinks nicely during the verses, building up an enticing steam during the chorus. The act offers an equally tasty blend of smooth singing and even-handed rapping. Thoroughly pleasing single demands instant play at several radio formats.

TORI AMOS *Pass The Mission* (4:05)
PRODUCER: not listed
WRITER: not listed
PUBLISHER: not listed
Atlantic 5888 (cassette single)

Amos is an acquired taste that many are wisely beginning to indulge in. This

haunting, piano-rooted tune gives her plenty of room to stretch her unique vocal style. Pleasing chord progressions have a sort of country-pop quality, which fits her piercing soprano quite nicely. Far more sophisticated than standard top 40 fare, but well worth the programming effort.

SASS JORDAN *Sun's Gonna Ride* (2:53)
PRODUCERS: Nick Dida, Stevie Salas, Sass Jordan
WRITER: S. Jordan, S. Salas
PUBLISHER: not listed
Impact/MCA 3078 (c/o Uni) (cassette single)

Jordan shines on this pillowy acoustic-pop nugget from her fine current album, "Rats." Iced with silvery violins and a fluid electric guitar solo, single has limber legs to trot onto album rock and AC playlists—though popsters who love their music (mostly) unplugged should look no further.

COLOUR CLUB *Freedom Words* (4:01)
PRODUCERS: Bernard, Pierce
WRITERS: Bernard, Pierce
PUBLISHER: Colour Club, BMI
JVC 8005 (CD single)

Fans of US3-style acid-jazz will dig this jaunty, retro-splashed ditty. Classic-funk purists will nosh on the wriggling beat and hand-waving backing chants, while popsters will dine on the jangly guitar licks and slinky female vocals. A kinetic new groove collective that will sound equally fine on radio airwaves and in smoky jazz clubs. Be sure to investigate the act's debut album.

R & B

► **TONY TERRY** *When A Man Cries* (4:04)
PRODUCERS: Jerry Barnes, Katreese Barnes
WRITERS: J. Barnes, K. Barnes
PUBLISHER: Jareese, BMI
Virgin 14206 (c/o Cema) (cassette single)

This sensitive ballad should have lady listeners melting in agony and ecstasy. Terry boldly, beautifully swoons on this well-produced effort. Detailing the difficulty that men have in expressing themselves, Terry croons a vulnerable message about modern men in the '90s and the importance of positive communication. Deep thoughts, indeed.

★ **BARRY WHITE** *Practice What You Preach* (3:59)
PRODUCERS: Barry White, Gerald Levert, Tony Nicholas
WRITERS: B. White, G. Levert, E. Nicholas
PUBLISHERS: Seven Songs/Super Songs/Divided/Zomba Songs/Warner-Tamerlane/Ramati, BMI
A&M 8337 (c/o PGD) (CD single)

White sure hasn't lost his seductive touch—as proven vividly on this shimmering ballad from his new set, "The Icon Is Love." He sings with tingling force, framing the track with his signature love talk. Collaborators Gerald Levert and Tony Nicholas keep the

music contemporary and primed for instant R&B radio approval. We'd love to see some of today's young turks "freak" with this kind of sex appeal.

BLACKGIRL *Where Did We Go Wrong* (3:59)
PRODUCER: Daryl Simmons
WRITER: D. Allen
PUBLISHERS: ATV/Penny Funk, BMI
Kaper/RCA 62910 (c/o BMG) (cassette single)

Heaven-sent vocals rise to the occasion of this demanding Daryl Simmons-produced ballad, drastically reworked from the original album cut. Angelic harmonies supplement the sweetness, as newly added keyboards and lush voices sweep through the enhanced production. From the CD "Treat U Right."

A FEW GOOD MEN *A Lil' Somethin'* (4:24)
PRODUCERS: Christopher Stewart, Sean Hall
WRITERS: C. Stewart, S. Hall
PUBLISHERS: Gimme Some Hot Sauce/More Better Grooves/Tunes On The Verge Of Insanity/Famous, ASCAP
LaFace 4078 (c/o BMG) (cassette single)

Helped by the magic touch of executive producers L.A. Reid, Babyface, and Daryl Simmons, this steamy foursome debuts with a sexy, soulful crooner. As a steady hip-hop beat beckons, a woo-ing vocal harmony offers an irresistible hook. The Allstar's radio edit adds an echoed rap and slow funk edge. All in all, it's a few good minutes of soul.

KLYMAXX *4 The Ole Dawg N U* (3:40)
PRODUCERS: William Burke, Joyce Irby
WRITERS: L. Embry, B. Cooper, W. Burke, J. Irby, C. Berry
PUBLISHERS: Diva One/Slap Me One/EMI, ASCAP
1863-EP 940014 (c/o Valley Vue) (CD single)

Venerable all-female band returns with a muscular funk throwdown that showcases the skills of new lead singer/bassist Joyce Irby to cool effect. Founding member Bernadette Cooper makes a special appearance, lending her distinctive brand of sass and diva polish. One good reason to check out the group's fab new "One Day." Contact: 619-778-6510.

★ **A. DEE** *Mishale* (4:01)
PRODUCER: Eric Foster White
WRITER: A. Dee
PUBLISHER: not listed
REMIXER: Richie Jones
Metroblue 79878 (c/o Capitol) (CD single)

Videogenic newcomer is high-steppin' with a reggae-kissed R&B ditty that will initially draw comparisons to Seal and Terence Trent D'Arby. However, this single is far more jubilant, and likely to inspired countless hours of jiggling. Should not be limited to R&B playlists; top 40, modern-pop, and AC programmers should find elements to tap into, too. For a harder tone, check out Richie Jones' "Dub Cult" remix.

COUNTRY

► **TRACY LAWRENCE** *I See It Now* (3:37)
PRODUCER: James Stroud
WRITERS: P. Nelson, L. Boone, W. Lee
PUBLISHERS: Sony Tree, BMI; Sony Cross Keys/WB, ASCAP
Atlantic 5792 (cassette single)

Lawrence employs that ol' heartbroke vocal thang to full effect on this bittersweet song of regret. One of his best-ever performances, this debut single bodes well for Lawrence's upcoming third album, "I See It Now."

► **THE MAVERICKS** *There Goes My Heart* (3:16)
PRODUCER: Don Cook
WRITERS: Malo, Kostas
PUBLISHERS: Sony Tree/Raul Malo/Songs of Polygram International/Seven Angels, BMI
MCA 54909 (c/o Uni) (7-inch single)

While this band is being hailed as country's new cutting edge, it is turning out some truly (and delightfully) retro music. This playful shuffle, with its perfectly placed fiddle and pedal steel breaks, wouldn't sound out of place on an early Ray Price album.

► **JOHN ANDERSON** *Country 'Til I Die* (3:02)
PRODUCERS: James Stroud, John Anderson
WRITERS: T. Seals, E. Setser, J. Anderson
PUBLISHERS: Irving/Baby Dumplin', BMI; Almo/Holmes Creek, ASCAP
BNA 62935 (c/o BMG) (7-inch single)

Whether or not you needed the reminder, Anderson is proud to tell you once again that he is countrified. This is sure to provide some toe-tapping entertainment, but there's a good reason why Nashville refers to songs like this one as "no-brainers."

BILLY DEAN *Men Will Be Boys* (2:47)
PRODUCERS: Jimmy Bowen, Billy Dean
WRITERS: G. Clark, V. Thompson
PUBLISHERS: EMI-April/GSC/ides of March, ASCAP
Liberty 79054 (c/o Cema) (CD promo)

Here's a case where two seasoned Nashville songwriters have absolutely nothing to say, and decide to say it anyway. This song kicks off with a pointless chorus and goes nowhere from there.

DANCE

ELLYN HARRIS *Got A Green Light* (6:11)
PRODUCER: Costantino "Mixmaster" Padovano
WRITER: E. Harris
PUBLISHER: not listed
REMIXERS: Maurizio Verbeni, Martin Aurelio
Unity 002 (12-inch single)

Hi-NRG siren ends a lengthy break from recording with a house-angled twirler that relies heavily on her breathy, sex-kitten vamps. Producer Costantino Padovano surrounds Harris with a flurry of rolling piano lines and a phat bassline. A double-pack of remixes should trigger interest from several club formats. Contact: 212-860-0500.

THE ISMAILIS *We Are Friends With Everybody* (6:20)
PRODUCER: L-D
WRITER: L-D
PUBLISHER: Artlos
Pow Wow 492 (12-inch single)

Spacious trance mover glides at a breezy pace, weaving blippy, rave-ish keyboards and disjointed male-voiced mantras into a frenetic beat base. Dubby treat will keep parties in motion for hours. Flip the record over and enjoy "Essence" by Trunk and "Bliss" by the Wizzard. All tracks from Pow Wow's fab "Trans-House Express" compilation. Contact: 212-245-3010.

VALLI ROSE *Shame* (5:27)
PRODUCERS: Joe Magic, Al Pizarro
WRITERS: R. Cross, J.H. Fletcher
PUBLISHER: Unichappell, BMI
REMIXERS: Joe Magic, Al Pizarro
Black Rose 1012 (12-inch single)

Club ingenue from takes a stab at the Evelyn "Champagne" King evergreen with mixed results. She gives the song a brash, urban vibe, standing tall against a busy house arrangement—and that is where the problem begins. The track sometimes swerves too quickly between bright disco vibes and dark, underground intensity. A more even-paced remix would turn this single into a serious contender. Contact: 212-777-1740.

AC

► **KENNY ROGERS** *You Are So Beautiful* (3:26)
PRODUCER: David Foster
WRITER: not listed
PUBLISHER: not listed
Atlantic 5878 (CD promo)

Rogers makes the switch to Atlantic and christens his upcoming album of pop standards with a love song made famous by Joe Cocker. Rogers has the creaking rasp to maintain a minor edge amid producer David Foster's sweeping, quasi-orchestral string arrangement. A lovely soundtrack to an evening of romance. AC programmers take note.

NAJEE *My Angel* (6:14)
PRODUCER: not listed
WRITER: not listed
PUBLISHER: not listed
EMI 19923 (c/o Cema) (CD cut)

Preview into the gifted sax player's new "Share My World" collection flutters

with lovely solos, and is anchored by percussive jazz/R&B foundation. Warm and soothing instrumental would be a welcome addition to both AC and adult-skewed R&B playlists.

ROCK TRACKS

★ **ELASTICA** *Stutter* (no timing listed)
PRODUCER: not listed
WRITERS: J. Frischmann, Elastica
PUBLISHER: not listed
Sup Pop 275 (7-inch single)

It may be a stretch, but this indie quartet is best described as a better-natured Hole. Both acts feature sassy fronting females, impatient melodies, and gritty guitar riffs. The energetic tone here, however, is uplifting—not brooding. Equally interesting is the flip side, "Pussycat."

★ **WEEZER** *Undone: The Sweater Song* (3:58)
PRODUCER: Ric Ocasek
WRITER: not listed
PUBLISHER: not listed
DGC/Geffen 4662 (c/o Uni) (CD promo)

This kooky song about a sweater is already getting lots of airplay at modern rock. Fragments of strange conversations mingle with an acoustic opening and sedate vocal. The party soon rages into a loud burst of grunge, then resumes the wacky verbiage. The result is catchy—in a twisted, dysfunctional kind of way. Put it in high cycle.

DILLON FENCE *Living Room Scene* (3:40)
PRODUCERS: Mark Freegard, Dillon Fence
WRITER: G. Humphreys
PUBLISHERS: Dillon Fence/Threptos, BMI
Mammoth 5842 (c/o Atlantic) (CD promo)

Armchair rockers will appreciate this ode to life in the living room. This well-versed quartet may hit a bit too close to home for many who lead the lazy life. Pressing guitar riffs hint at grunge, while the raw vocals range from a soft whisper to a loud, raspy roar. Now get a life, already.

RAP

G-MO *It's An Everyday Thing To Roll* (3:39)
PRODUCER: G-Mo
WRITER: G-Mo
PUBLISHER: It Music/Gimeno, BMI
Zoo 14171 (c/o BMG) (CD single)

This laid-back anthem supports casual "rolling" in more ways than one. The title has a double meaning—both cruising down the avenue and smoking indo. A sedate rap saunters over a lazy groove, as playful keyboards tease and taunt. Light 'er up.

RON C Mobbin' (no timing listed)
PRODUCER: Johnny Z.
WRITERS: R. Carey, J. Zunino, E. Carey
PUBLISHERS: Promuse/Ron C/Deep Groove Muzik, BMI
Profile 7424 (CD single)

With a deep beat, Ron C bumps a hardcore bass rap that recalls the stark contrasting imagery found in Ice Cube's "It Was A Good Day." The Dallas-based rapper's sister \$A\$ guests on this sobering street saga. The "Somethin' 2 Slide 2" remix adds an additional deep synth dub beat, which sounds like an updated bass derivative of the acid-house craze of the late '80s.

VOLUME 10 *Sunbeams* (3:57)
PRODUCERS: Coze, Soup & Stone
WRITERS: D. Hawkins, E. Goodman, Jr., A. Holmes, A. Trotter III
PUBLISHERS: Volume 10/Immortal/BMG/Solar/Tobini/Sony, BMI; One In The Chamber, ASCAP
Immortal/RCA 62913 (c/o BMG) (maxi-cassette single)

Haughty hip-hoppers rejoice: Bold and brazen, this snazzy track integrates elements from Shalamar's 1979 album cut "Take Me To The River" into a psychedelic backing track and fumbling funk foreground. The remixed version, produced by the Baka Boyz, adds a relentless, twangy bass beat. Instant retro rhythms to brighten your day.

PICKS (►): New releases with the greatest chart potential. CRITIC'S CHOICE (★): New releases, regardless of potential chart action, which the reviewer highly recommends because of their musical merit. NEW AND NOTEWORTHY: Highlights new and developing acts worthy of attention. Cassette, vinyl or CD singles equally appropriate for more than one format are reviewed in the category with the broadest audience. All releases available to radio and/or retail in the U.S. are eligible for review. Send copies to Larry Flick, Billboard, 1515 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036. Country singles should be sent to Billboard, 49 Music Square W., Nashville, Tenn. 37203.