

**WHAT A GIRL WANTS
(East West)**

WHAT A Girl Wants, a motion picture soundtrack that is perfect summer listening for all ages. A refreshing blend of solos and groups, males and females on vocals, and great music.

Most notable to British fans is the appearance of Holly Valance with the Turkish cover Kiss Kiss, and the indomitable Craig David with r'n'b anthem What's Your Flava. Continuing the pop theme, new talent Willa Ford gives a strong vocal performance on the Britney-esque I Wanna Be Bad.

Love interest in the film, Oliver James performs two sentimental, if rather bland ballads, but these do little to hamper the quality of the album which continues with guitar-driven rock.

Rock music comes in many different shapes and sizes, most of which appear here. Meredith

Brooks, and The Clash fly the flag for commercial pop/rock, whilst The Donnas up the tempo and add some funky attitude to the mix.

The albums highlights come, somewhat predictably at the start, and finish. Leslie Mills and John Gregory, provide two spine tingling, melodic soft rock numbers. These easy-on-the-ear, acoustic numbers titled Good Life and Ride Of Your Life are just two possible candidates for singles from a good quality showcase of new, and established singers and song-writers.

Lauren John

**LATE NIGHT LOVE - VARIOUS
ARTISTS (BMG)**

THIS album heralds a new era in the Love Song compilation. No longer are the shelves going to be full of CDs containing the same old slushy songs from years gone by.

Now we are going 'hip', trendy', and 'up to date'. Billed as a contemporary album it features some of the hottest artists around - and no Simply Red!

However, this 40 track collection does feature songs like Holding On For You by Liberty X, What My Heart Wants To Say by Gareth Gate and Another Level's From The Heart with their lyrics illustrating the good and bad points of Love; typical subject matter there then!

But where this album differs is by choosing tracks like Pink's Don't Let Me Get Me and Coldplay's Trouble which don't strike me as standard choice for a compilation of this nature.

The variety doesn't stop there though - along with the ballads I've mentioned, up-tempo pop, rock, soul, and R&B also make an appearance. There's something for everyone, and everyone will have their personal favourites.

The song that stands out above all else though is the Candlelight Mix of Heaven by DJ Sammy. Once a lively, up-beat number, this track has been transformed in to a slow, sultry, piano-based song. It's different, and unexpected but it works.

So if you're a fan of the radio show on which this is based, a pop fan, or you just want the perfect soundtrack to your Valentines Day then put this on your shopping list. It's a breath of fresh air amongst all the Urban/ Club albums around at the moment.

Lauren John

SINGLES

**MACY GRAY - SHE AIN'T
RIGHT FOR YOU (Epic)**

FROM the album The Trouble With Being Myself comes another classic Macy Gray ballad. The soaring She Ain't Right For You is a beautiful love song, with an honest, feminine lyric that captures just one of the many emotions we experience in a relationship.

Macy's distinctive, mature vocal, and a spine-tingling string section add to the sentimental atmosphere that this track creates. A generally instrumental, melodic feel to the music then, and as with all songs from this unique American singer, She Aint Right For You is easy to listen to, and even easier to lose yourself in.

Lauren John

**FABOLOUS - CAN'T LET YOU
GO (EastWest/Elektra)**

FABOLOUS, fresh from his success in the US music scene, and a support slot on the Nelly tour, heads over to our shores with the radio supported track, Can't Let You Go.

From the first note this is a very streetwise song, and perhaps heavier than some of the other urban tracks that have made the charts in recent months, so it's more likely to grow on you than immediately grab your attention. Hip Hop beats blend in well with the rap and mc skills of the artist, and the soulful addition of label-mate Lil Mo.

A song that has the potential to be around for a long time. LJ

**Emma
Free Me (19/Universal)**

2003 saw Emma introduce a 60s/70s lounge feel to the charts with two top five singles. This sound was different, and charming in the beginning, but after hearing the 11 tracks on this album it all starts to sound strikingly similar, and tiresome.

However, there is no doubting that the cinematic qualities of this music suit Emma's smooth vocal down to the ground. Some of the recording of Free Me took place in Spain, and the Latin influence is apparent in several tracks such as Who The Hell Are You, and Brazilian classic Crickets Sing For AnnaMaria. Other songs move between slow, atmospheric sounds, and lively uptempo numbers, complete with 60s dance routines if you've seen the videos!

But whilst Emma has moved through several different tempos and styles, and worked with several different producers on this album, one thing remains the same throughout: all the music has a live, orchestral feel, a refreshing break away from the much favoured electronic sounds of today.

Overall this is a good album, but the music style may be best taken in small doses, and perhaps more variety is needed to ensure longevity.

Lauren John