

# Vesta: Distant Lover



The industry's obsession with the fluffy ingenue obscures grown women singers into the land of independents which gets richer everyday. Luckily for Vesta she started her career at a time when there was more appreciation for the Old School singer. Whitney Houston, Regina Belle, and Anita Baker were other singers in that '80's class to know the difference between singing and relying on a machine-operated image to distract from vocal expectations. "Don't Blow A Good Thing" and "Congratulations" are Black R and B anthems reminiscent of their time period and tireless sentiments about lost love. When other performers with less lung power arrived Vesta kept performing on the Black theater circuit and released music intermittently. Distant Lover goes back to the classic material most soul singers have studied at some point to sharpen their craft. Cover songs are dreadful when there is no balance between individual personality and original integrity which Vesta accomplishes well in this collection. Ms. Williams' clean pipes poses well as another Williams (Deniece), matching her high notes on "Free" but using her own subtle phrasing in the delivery of words. Marvin Gaye's tortured torch bearing "Distant Lover" is transformed into a heavenly confession of devotion by Williams' replacement of angst with felicity. No frills production and luxury from the pure voice enlivens this great songlist gingerly chosen by a singer of great worth who puts in her own panache without plucking the music from its roots.

Check out Vesta on the web:

Could It Be I'm Falling In Love:

[read more](#)

Free:

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# Carl Thomas' New CD "So Much Better" Coming Soon



New York, NY Mar 23, 2007 Chicago native and platinum-selling R&B star, Carl Thomas gave us R&B music that was reminiscent of the golden days of Marvin Gaye, Sam Cooke, and Otis Redding but with a modern day edge. Who could forget the cinematic Emotional released in 2000 that made any serious R&B crooner step up their game. Now he's back and under the tutelage of the legendary music man Jheryl Busby's Umbrella Recordings and Hit maker Mike City's Unsung Entertainment for a one-off deal with his new soulful disc So Much Better set for release in the summer of 2007.

The new single from So Much Better, "2 Pieces," is already having success at radio as the #1 most added single at Urban AC. On "2 Pieces" Thomas expresses raw intensity on the track with sweet lyrics about the woman he loves. "Baby I can't take the thought of losing you/cause I know that it would break, break my heart in 2 pieces."

In addition to releasing the new disc on his label, Unsung Entertainment's Mike City is the producer that gave us Carl Thomas' stellar hits "I Wish" and "You Ain't Right" from Emotional and has produced seven songs on So Much Better. Other producers on the disc include: Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis with Big Jim Wright, Brian Michael Cox, and up and coming producing team, Pitch Black. Guest features include: Brandy, Dave Hollister, and Lalah Hathaway.

"In addition to being collaborators, Carl and I are long-

time friends. We decided that while he was in between deals we would do an album together which would be released on my Unsung Entertainment label. Thanks to Carl and Mr. Busby, who gave us the one-off deal, on his Umbrella Recordings imprint, I am able to launch my label with a major star," states Mike City.

On *So Much Better*, Carl Thomas keeps it sweet, but with an edge of street on "Another You" which serves as an aural testimonial to the object of his desire. The melodic and hypnotic sounds of "Something About You," sounds like nothing else currently blaring from the radio. Featuring vocals from Brandy, "Something About You" is a timeless song that embraces the best of pop and soul.

Umbrella Recordings'™ first release was on five decade diva Patti Labelle where she released her first gospel album, *The Gospel According to Patti Labelle* which has been in the Top 5 on Billboard's "Top Gospel Albums" chart for 14 weeks and held the number one spot for 10 weeks.

"To have Carl Thomas as our second release is truly a blessing," says Busby, "He is the ultimate male soul singer of the day and we are very pleased that he decided to help his friend and do a one off deal with us. I am certain that this record will help to further cultivate his career and solidify his growth for his next deal."

For the latest news on Carl Thomas be sure to check out his myspace page [www.myspace.com/carlthomasfanpage](http://www.myspace.com/carlthomasfanpage)

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# The Hypeman Cometh: Flavor Flav



William Drayton's performance alter ego Flavor Flav became the biggest star of reality TV last year with the hugely successful Flavor of Love. A house full of women vying for his affections created the right amount of drama to keep viewers interested in TV's first Black bachelor's search for love. The show came on the heels of Flav's romance with the tall blond Brigitte Nielsen on "The Surreal Life." Flavor of Love spawned the current first Black bachelorette reality show starring the equally entertaining New York and her stern but funny mother Sister Patterson. Flav's trademark phrase "Flavor Flavvvvvvvvv" entered pop culture but not without criticism. His dark skin, Viking-inspired crowns, gold-toothed grin and hip-hop inspired speech fascinated viewers and made some of them decide that he was too much of a minstrel and misogynist.

Messageboards posted insults aimed at Flav's complexion that invoked images of the disgraceful Black memorabilia positioned throughout Spike Lee's "Bamboozled." To these viewers the absence of Boris Kodjoe or LL Cool J-type looks disqualified Flav's pursuit of love and reduced the women of the show to desperate victims. He was again casted into the role of a public enemy scorned in some ways for what he once said in song for "being too Black."

Television was always driven by the need to promote something and the man and women of Flavor Of Love used this fact as the motivation for doing the show. Since the show's end some of the women have attained their own 15 minutes of fame particularly the new reality TV star New York. Flavor's eventual choice of a mate, Delisshus has moved on in the media world as a fixture at hip urban events. The jester-like hypeman who laid the foundation for future famous hypeman including Eminem's best friend Proof has returned to touring with his legendary hip-hop band Public Enemy. PE had the honor last year of its pioneering work Fear Of A Black Planet being

entered into the National Recording Archive.

The artwork from the album grabbed critical eyes in the industry and art direction on hip-hop albums gained a new importance. Their prominence as the most-successful politically inclined rap group seemed to be in contradiction with Flavor's television career but both gigs require amounts of humorous charisma and a tad of the fantastic. Beyond Flavor Flav's stage persona there is musical talent that can play several instruments and still rhyme silly over hip-hop beats. After years of stops and starts the native of Long Island, New York finally released a passionate solo album with music for Old School hip-hop fans, Country and Western lovers and all the urban music fans in between. Now touring North America Flav took the time to answer some questions about his solo jaunt and accusations of crass cooning.

**What were you trying to do with the album?**

The main thing I was trying to do with these album was to show all different sides of Flav I am a musician I can play instruments.

**I heard you play eleven instruments?**

I play over eleven but that's cool. I play over fourteen different instruments and self-taught also you know when I grew-up in church I was in the choir and I could sing a little bit. That's just a talent I wanted to express to the world you know I am a musician. I'm into all kinds of music so that's why my album has different kinds of music on it. You got rap stuff, R and B stuff, then on the end of it you even got country-western. The last one's called "Hotter Than Ice" and I do like country music but see music is a universal message and I want my album to be universal so that's why I did not put the same kind of jams for my record I wanted to put all different kinds of jams on this record so that way I can sell it to all different kinds of audiences instead of just

catering to one audience.

**I noticed you had different kinds of sounds one song sounded like the early Bum Rush The Show material.**

A lot of people think my album has no direction the world ain't got no direction either. So once the world gets direction I'll put out an album that has direction till then while the world is mixed up I'll put out an album that's mixed out. At least I can sell it to everybody instead of just one audience.

**Who did the production on the album? I could tell that some of it was live instruments and some of it was samples and stuff.**

Which is today's music and not only that Public Enemy we were the first to ever sample. We were the first ones to put out samples in our music. I'm thinking of going back to basics. I produced the whole album but at the same time I had other people come in and produce as well. On "Two Wrongs Don't Make It Right" "Bridge Of Pain" all of these are different producers. But then again it was my production money that put it out there so I'm the producer.

**What made you decide to put out the album independently? It would seem with the success of your TV show you could grab a major deal.**

I've been signed to record companies and all record companies have made money off of me. I feel that it's my turn to make some off of me I wanted to wait until I was really scott free so I could sell this album myself and make my own doggone money.

**You said this was going to be your only solo album because you wanted it to be a collector's item does that still stand?**

Definitely that still stands but I'm still working on another Public Enemy album with my partner Chuck D and The Bomb Squad

we're putting The Bomb Squad back together for the first time in years. We're going to come out with this next Public Enemy album and I guarantee it's going to be a banger.

**How was the European Tour you just came back from and what is going with PE?**

I know that Public Enemy is going to do a North American tour

**How do you feel about the criticisms of Flavor of Love that it's a lot of cooning and the women are degrading themselves by fawning over you?**

I just want to say that everybody is entitled to their own opinions not only that everyone's opinion is to be respected by Flavor Flav even if they have the wrong opinion. Let me say this my purpose of doing TV is I'm looking forward to a TV career. I'm looking forward to a movie career that's why I moved to LA in the first place. Now with this TV show Flavor Of Love I am the bachelor on TV so I'm going to have to pick and choose from girls. Girls that came on my show you gotta remember I didn't put them there they put themselves there. And every time you seen disagreements in the house fighting and brawls and all of that they were not fighting over Flavor Flav that was personality conflict.

You got a bunch of different personalities for the first time in one house ever yes you gonna have conflicts. So that's why I'm saying people right now have the wrong perception of Flav when it comes to the Flavor Of Love only thing I've tried to do is mediate. I tried to be the mediator of the conflicts. I don't really like violence. To all of the people that don't understand hopefully one day they will understand.

**How do feel about today's hip-hop?**

Today's hip-hop is in all different kinds of directions because that's how we're living. It's not just in one

direction anymore it's all mixed-up right now. Rap music has taken its own course and it's up to us to put it back on course. I'm proud of all the music artists congratulations to all you new artist making records welcome aboard.

**What are you most proud of about your album?**

That it's done and it's out. I've been trying to come out with a solo album since 1990 but I worked on this album for about two years.

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## **Mixtape Inc. Hip Hop Documentary Featuring Kanye, Gnarls Barkley, Lil Jon & more**



Director Walter Bell presents "Mixtape Inc. The Movie" the controversial DVD documentary that takes an in-depth, unprecedented behind-the-scenes look into the gritty world of illegal Hop-Hop Mixtapes including up-close and personal interviews with Kanye West, G-Unit (Lloyd Banks, Young Buck, Tony Yayo), Chuck D., Lil' Jon, Fabulous, Danger Mouse (Gnarls Barkley), David Banner, Xzibit, Kool DJ Red Alert, Ed Lover & Doctor Dre, DJ Clue, DJ Kay Slay, DJ Enuff and DJ Vlad as well as RIAA President Carey Sherman and various Hip-Hop label executives who discuss the music, the money, the history, the hustle, the players and the prosecutions



Mixtape Inc. is the definitive film on the controversial mixtape industry. Directed by Walter Bell of Cando Entertainment, the DVD (113 minutes) is an in-depth, unprecedented behind-the-scenes look into the gritty world of illegal Hop-Hop Mixtapes. It's the first hip hop documentary to go behind the scenes and document the music, the money, the history, the hustle, the players and the prosecutions. The voices heard and images seen in this film will take you into the world of illegal Mixtapes and its game of Russian roulette with the powerful music industry. The viewing audience will sit down with, and get up-close to, such talents as Kanye West, G-Unit (Lloyd Banks, Young Buck, Tony Yayo), Chuck D, Lil' Jon, Fabulous, Danger Mouse (Gnarls Barkley), David Banner, Xzibit, Kool DJ Red Alert, Ed Lover & Doctor Dre, DJ Clue, DJ Kay Slay, DJ Enuff and DJ Vlad as well as RIAA President Carey Sherman and various Hip-Hop label executives.

Now two filmmakers want to bring mixtape DJs and MCs to the big screen via "Mixtape, Inc. The Movie." Bell and partner Jerry Thompson have been filming such MCs as Kanye West, Joe Budden, Lil Jon and David Banner. DJs like Kay Slay, Vlad, Ron G., Big Mike, Kool Kid and Red Alert have also sat down to discuss mixtapes with the team.  MTV News

The plot centers around the battle brewing with the Mixtape DJs, Performers, Retailers and Buyers on one side and the multi-billion dollar record labels and copyright infringement authorities (RIAA) on the other. What began as a promotional tool for generating awareness and self-hype has evolved into a multi-billion dollar business under scrutiny by the federal government. It's a love/hate relationship and some have paid the price which include jail, fines and more. Yet, mixtapes have become an essential and hot commodity in the Hip-Hop culture, revolutionized the music industry and changing the way we hear and buy Hip-Hop music. The financial stakes are extremely high. These entrepreneurial compilations are now the root of a new power struggle; the urban streets of America vs.

Wall Street. This documentary will take you inside the riveting unflinching dramas of this volcanic battle.

Cando Entertainment prepares to drop "Mixtape Inc. The Movie" after over 17 months and 77 interviews, Cando Entertainment's Walter Bell and Jerry Thompson have amassed countless hours of exclusive footage for the DVD. In addition to a preview of the feature film, the DVD includes interviews with Kanye West, GLC, Consequence, DJ Kay Slay, DJ Vlad, Ron G and countless others. Also, G-Unit's Sha Money XL and Tony Yayo recount 50 Cent's rise to stardom and Xzibit hangs in the studio with DJ Vlad for an exclusive freestyle. SOHH.com

"Director Walter Bell says, "We're doing a documentary about the entire mixtape universe the culture, the product, the people that's centered around it, nationally and internationally. Basically we're trying to lock down something that's historically significant. Something like [the 1982 hip-hop/graffiti movie] 'Wild Style' that kids can look back at 10, 20 years from now. War games have existed for a long time; mixtapes became hip-hop's war games."

"This documentary will show the history of Mixtapes, their rise to phenomenon status on CDs, and their current status as major marketing and financial endeavors. The show will also highlight the growing frequency of the Recording Industry Association of America anti-piracy raids and copyrights infringement enforcement actions by telling the stories of Alan Berry, a Mixtape merchant in Indianapolis, Indiana and Mr. Merc, the first online Mixtape distributor (Mixtapes.com). Both men were raided and prosecuted by the RIAA. Resulting in the loss of their businesses, families and homes. Their parallel stories illustrating how bootlegging, law enforcement and fear of prosecution are inundating the industry.

Walter Bell's film rightly approaches the phenomena as an important new era in hip-hop, where 50 Cent's debut proper

followed over a dozen unofficial releases hitting the street on an almost-weekly basis. Mixtape Inc. The Movie makes an entrance worthy of a WWE wrestler. The credit sequence cut-and-pastes mixtape covers on a street wall like heroes and villains of the Wild West; masking effects and computer graphics draw out the connections between players in the scene. It makes the pulse race like a set by The Drama King, aka DJ Kay Slay, the first player with whom we visit. There's nothing wrong with business and art hopping into bed together; hip-hop is a catalytic reaction between the two, with one fueling the other. But as Chuck D says, you hope for a balance between commerce and artistic merit and skill.-Stylus Magazine

â€”â€” The controversy surrounding the lyrics and illegal appropriation of copyrighted music has grabbed headlines in key publications: The New York Times, MTV, Village Voice, USA Today, Vibe, XXL, Rolling Stone and countless others. Mix tapes, Hip-Hop and sales go hand-in-hand and numerous multi-platinum rap stars are rooted in the world of mix tapes. 50 Cent released no less than 20 underground mix tapes (before his major label debut) and generated over \$20 million in revenue.

With the recent Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) raid on DJ Drama's Gangsta Grillz operation the mixtape has been thrown into the news headlines and Mixtape Inc goes some way to explain exactly how the mixtape business straddles the complicated legal maneuverings of the police and the record labels. The film frames its argument with the story of Indianapolis record shop owner Alan Berry, who was facing 13 felony counts including royalty theft, copyright infringement and fraud for the sale of bootleg mixtapes. Berry explains how he was seduced into the world of rap by Public Enemy and how he came to stock illegal mixes on his shelves. Chuck D, Xzibit, Kanye West, Green Lantern, DJ Clue, Joe Budden and brilliantly named Vlad the Butcher all offer their opinions. But it's the lesser names that leave the biggest impression.â€”

## In The Mix

â€”Â Cando Entertainment has produced new media projects for Def Jam recording artists including LL Cool J., Ludacris, N.O.R.E., Nelly, Ashanti, Bon Jovi, Linkin Park as well as numerous others.