

Throwback: Phyllis Hyman - Living Inside Your Love



Somewhere In My Lifetime is Phyllis Hyman's third studio album and first for Arista Records. Six of the songs were on her previous album, *Sing A Song*, which was on the Buddah label. Skip Scarborough, who had written songs for Earth, Wind, & Fire, among others, co-wrote "Living Inside Your Love" with Renee Taylor, which is one of the songs that appeared on both albums. Scarborough also produced and arranged *Somewhere In My Lifetime*. Her core fans and R&B audiences were awed by her voice, despite critics believing that the material hindered

her abilities. Black radio played “Living Inside Your Love” at night, usually during Quiet Storm programming segments. The song was one of many album cuts by Hyman that still built her legend, in addition to signature songs like “You Know How To Love Me” and “What You Won’t Do For Love.” Hyman’s 10th and last studio album, *Forever With You*, was released in 1998, three years after her death.

Johnny Burgos Releases All I Wonder



Johnny Burgos’ *All I Wonder* has dropped and the Brooklyn singer, songwriter, and producer has collaborated with

producer Jeremy Page to bring his latest collection of classic soul to fruition. Burgos' candied falsetto and warm tenor is at home with Page's methods which are a composite of styles from the '70s to the present. Album opener "Play For Keeps" is a mesmerizing ballad filed under The Dramatics meets A Tribe Called Quest with Burgos' pipes bearing some semblance to El DeBarge. The past/present/future aesthetic is noticeable again with "Get Back" where a dreamy melody and a Dillaesque beat encircle Burgos' suave promises of love. Slow dance songs do not always represent the makings of romantic relationships—the sunny "This Vibe" curses insecurity and emotional barriers with busy rhythms and a nifty bass. Burgos' reconstruction of Neil Young's "Old Man" follows the ways of The Isley Brothers by casting a folk-rock classic into the soul music canon. *All I Wonder* carries all of the pain and romantic aspirations so many have felt making Burgos' newest album another testament to the redemptive power of a good R&B album.

**Hiatus Kaiyote Release Love
Heart Cheat Code**



Credit: Rocket Weijers

Hiatus Kaiyote break their three-year absence with the release of their fourth studio album *Love Heart Cheat Code*. Frontwoman Nai Palm credits the album title to her belief that moving through the world with love is the ultimate cheat code to life. Three years ago they released the Grammy-nominated *Mood Valiant* which earned them an AIR Award in their Australian home. The band's musical syncretism of R&B and jazz led by Palm's soulful and very elastic vocalisms addresses different kinds of love in 11 songs. The daring but still close to the tradition of R&B sound that got them co-signed by Prince has matured and even expanded. "Make Love's" swanky and funk-fortified meditation on authentic friendships is the crux of their eclectic vibe. They give birth to psychedelic dreams on

the acidic “Cinnamon Temple” and get tribalistic for “White Rabbit.” The title track shows respect for the power of love when Palm says, “Love fragile like a flower, fragile like a bomb” and the last minutes spazz out into fiery dissonance. *Love Heart Cheat Code* keeps the torch burning for the essence of soul and R&B while grasping the spirit of innovation.

Keke Wyatt Is Still Certified



Credit: Nathan Percy

Keke Wyatt's *Certified* is her first album in seven years and she ends her long player absence with a playlist of mostly

original songs. Wyatt's role as Avant's duet partner on a cover of Rene & Angela's "My First Love" two decades ago introduced her as a precocious vocalist with mighty pipes far beyond her 15 years. *Certified* is her fifth album and her honest co-writing and the production guidance of Blac Elvis who is known for his work with Usher and Beyoncé, reveal that Wyatt's voice is still pure and full. The relationship tales on *Certified* come through with the wisdom of an experienced romantic. "Water Into Wine" uses a biblical reference to accept a relationship stalemate as Wyatt sings with the stance of a weary lover. She owns up to not having miracle power but the smooth ridges in her vocals are embedded with the gospel.

Wyatt acknowledges another iconic vocalist with the Sade tribute "She." The riffs on "Smooth Operator" are transformed into a different kind of late-night allure emphasizing soul instead of jazz like the UK singer's version. Wyatt's mastery of the cover song is well-known and "Unchained Melody" is completely renewed under the weight of an epic interpretation that holds heartstrings captive. *Certified* refuses to get into a sonic rut and "Scared" is a bubbly reggae surprise featuring Mix Master David. The Insecurity that can come from conflicts in love is a sensual twirl with a rocking rhythm guitar and Wyatt's calm confession. The church roots and magnificent runs she's famous for are heard throughout *Certified* but go harder when she ends the album with choral fanfare on the autobiographical prayer "Deliver Me." *Certified* is a worthy return for one of the best vocalists of her generation who is still wowing audiences after more than two decades.