

Throwback: Marvin Gaye: I Want You



Leon Ware and Diana Ross's brother, Arthur Ross, co-wrote "I Want You" for Marvin Gaye's 13th solo album, also titled *I Want You*. Gaye's sensual showpiece was a serious yearning inspired by his relationship with Janis Hunter that was taking place while he was still married to Anna Gordy. Leon Ware's arrangement of mood-inducing congas, sizzling guitar, horns, strings, and Marvin alternating between desirous wails and soft crooning captured the turbulence and tenderness of his relationships.

Gaye was coming off the success of *Let's Get It On* and a collaboration album with Diana Ross, both released in 1973. *I Want You* was the next step of the sexy image Gaye had

established with *Let's Get It On*. His ability to share the urgency of new love with Ware's dreamy disco suite kept Gaye relevant in the '70s and the single became a mainstay of quiet storm radio. "I Want You" did well on the Soul Singles, Disco Singles, and Billboard Hot 100 charts. Ernie Barnes's Sugar Shack painting on the cover was just as iconic as the music and it asserted its place in pop culture by also appearing on the TV show *Good Times*. Ice Cube, Mary J. Blige, Madonna, and most recently, Kendrick Lamar are among those who have sampled and covered "I Want You." A remastered deluxe version of the album was released in 2003 with a booklet, unreleased material, original liner notes, and an essay from David Ritz, who later collaborated with Gaye on his biography, *Divided Soul*.